

# WELCOME TO THE



*DOUBLE E  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT*

# ANNUAL MEETING



*CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR*

*Accomplishments*

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ *SPECIAL RECOGNITION* ★  
\*\*\*\*\*

*GRANTS*

*POSTER CONTEST  
WINNERS*

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ *LIVING SNOW FENCE* ★  
\*\*\*\*\*

*BUSINESS*

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ *SCHOLARSHIPS* ★  
\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ *Guest Article on  
Soil Health* ★  
\*\*\*\*\*



# INVOCATION

*Dear Heavenly Father: Though we are not able to come together in our usual manners, we pray that You will gather us to you, and comfort us. Although we are facing trying times, please help us to see You, Your love, Your spirit, Your truth. Help us remember what really matters, and the reason we are here; to share Your love with those around us. Please give us the strength to show Your character as this world shifts away from You. Please, forgive us when we sin, forgive our angry words, forgive our self-righteous ways, forgive our pride. Lord, please help us to see the beauty You provide to us daily; help us to see others as you see them. As confusion comes, please help us see You through the fog. We thank you for your many blessings; our friends and family, our homes, food to sustain us and your never-ending love. AMEN*

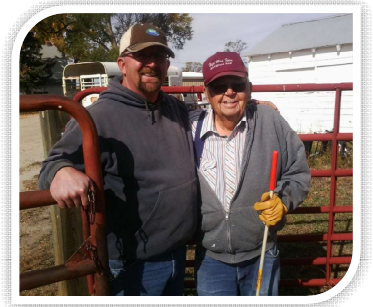


# 2020 DOUBLE EL CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

## JUSTIN JACKSON



Justin Jackson is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation rancher in the southeastern area of Double El Conservation District. He was raised on land where cows and sheep were run and alfalfa was grown. He has two daughters, Joslyn and Ava, who he hopes will take over the ranch someday. He is grateful for those who have helped him along the way, including his grandfather, Lee Meinzer, his step-mother, MaryAnn McKim and his neighbor, Greg Mitchell. Justin currently owns/leases approximately 5,500 acres. He runs a cow/calf operation consisting of both spring and fall calves as well as yearling cattle. His home raised calves are weaned in the fall and sold directly to the feed lot. The yearlings are contracted and sold as feeder cattle.



A passion for conservation has led Justin to install many practices that benefit his land including water improvements, fencing, living snow fences and shelter belts. While completing many projects on his own, he has also worked with NRCS through the EQIP program, and with Double El CD through matching grant programs to complete many projects.

In addition to maintaining miles of perimeter fencing, Justin has installed approximately 2 miles of electrical cross fencing to create a number of pastures for his prescribed grazing plans.



Justin has installed approximately 3,000 ft. of pipeline, a number of water tanks and has switched 6 windmills to solar pumps; all to enhance pasture management. One of the tanks pictured below is located centrally between pastures to further enhance his prescribed grazing plans. He has plans for another 3,000 ft of pipeline in the works.

Justin partnered with Double El CD and El Paso County to install a 2,240 foot living snow fence to protect county roads from blowing and drifting snow. Additionally he's installed shelter belts surrounding water tanks for protection to livestock and to maintain soil integrity around the tank. He is vigilant to protect the tree installations with strong fencing. All together, he has approximately 3,200 feet of trees planted and plans to add an additional 2,400 feet of protective trees to his properties.



In addition to all his hard work on the land, Justin works a full time job at Pro Ag Solutions in Limon. And if that isn't enough, he also volunteers for the Simla Fire Department. We are impressed with Justin's stewardship of the land and are pleased to present him as our 2020 CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR.





**\*\*\*2020 MATCHING GRANTS & COST SHARE PROGRAMS\*\*\***

Double El CD was approved for a \$25,000 Rangeland Health matching grant for 2020. This grant has provided funding of up to 50% of the costs of installing range health practices for 10 local landowners. Projects this year included wells, water tanks, solar pumps, pipelines and noxious weed treatments. We are excited to be able to help landowners install such practices on their land as we all work to preserve our resources. In addition to the Matching Grant program, Double El provided funding for our own Windbreak Cost-Share program, providing approximately \$5,000 to help 10 landowners install windbreaks.



**\*\*\*\*\*SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT\*\*\*\*\***

We have been informed that our applications for Matching Grant funds for 2021 have been APPROVED! We have a Rangeland Health grant of \$17,000 and a Windbreak grant of \$8,000, to which Double El will be adding \$2,500 for a total of \$10,500! We will be opening the application period soon. Look for updates on our website ([conservation4you.org](http://conservation4you.org)) or on our Facebook page (@Double El Conservation District)

*In spite of the challenges this year, our NRCS office has met the programmatic goals in Double El CD as presented here.*

**EQIP:**  
 # of Contracts = 20  
 Acres Contracted = 19,599.3  
 Funds Obligated = /\$671,200

*The NRCS has a multitude of programs aimed at working with ranchers, farmers, and other producers to conserve the resources on their land while helping to sustain their agricultural productivity. To find out more information, please contact your local NRCS office at 719-541-2358 ext 3, or email Blongshia "B" Cha at [blongshia.cha@usda.gov](mailto:blongshia.cha@usda.gov).*

NRCS Summary Conservation Practices	Applied	Applied Count
Fence (382) (Ft)	40,576	10
Livestock Pipeline (516) (Ft)	1,052	4
Water Well (642) (No)	2	2
Watering Facility (614) (No)	4	4
Pumping Plant (533) (No)	3	3
Prescribed Grazing (528) (Ac)	1,078	1
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Est. (380) (Ft)	951	1





## 2020 SIXTH GRADE POSTER CONTEST

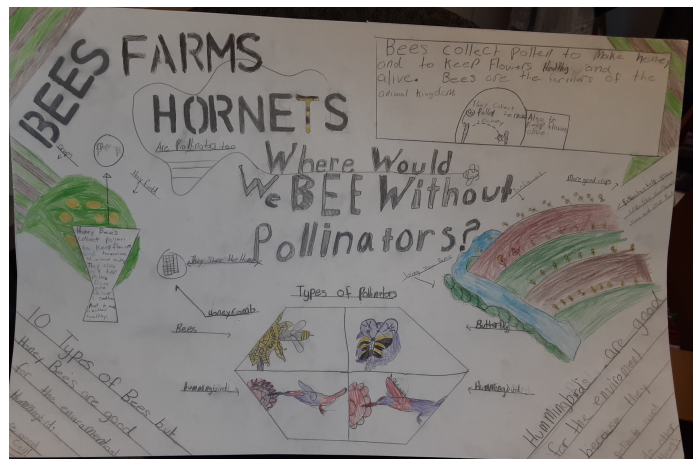
THE THEME: **WHERE WOULD WE BEE WITHOUT POLLINATORS?**



This year we had one school participate in our poster contest. We want to send a big THANK YOU to the Simla 6th graders for your amazing work, and another big THANK YOU to the 6th grade teachers who were willing to find a way to participate. In such a crazy year, it is great to hang on to some of the good stuff, like our poster contest! The posters were judged by our Board of Supervisors, and they had a really hard time. In fact, we even had a tie for 3rd place. Our winners each receive cash prizes, and our top two winners will receive personalized jackets! Good job to everyone who participated. Everyone will get a seedling tree in the spring!



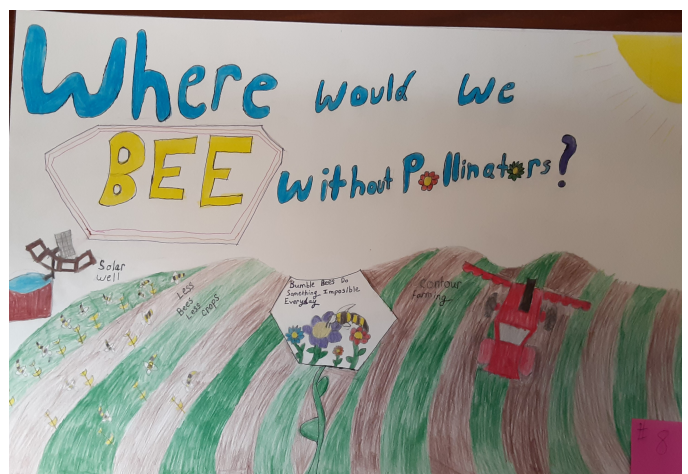
1st PLACE: & Champion Sydney Richardson



2nd PLACE & Reserve Champion: Weston Bunting



3rd PLACE (tie): Hayden Pfost



3rd PLACE (tie): Carlee Cox

# George Fosha and Steve Payne: Moving On

In May, George Fosha and Steve Payne both came to the decision that their time on the Board of Supervisor for Double El had come to an end.

George served on the Board for 20 years! In that time, he was a part of many changes and projects. He was integral in getting the current USDA Service Center building at 504 Washington Avenue built and maintaining the lease agreement with the USDA. This agreement has provided reliable funding for Double El. George has also been an invaluable resource for ensuring Double El meets the requirements for maintaining the 14 PL566 dams in our district. His expertise has served to prioritize necessary repairs. In addition to his position on the Double El Board, he also served on the Board of the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, adding the voices of our landowners to the state level.

Steve served on the Board for 12 years! He is pleased to have been a part of paying off our building. While it was nerve-racking to make such a payment, the financial stability it has provided for Double El is satisfying. The purchase of the adjacent lots was also accomplished while Steve was part of the Board. Steve helped establish a partnership between Double El and our local Future Farmers of America chapters. One of his favorite projects was planting the Living Snow Fence in memory of Dale Lucore on Highway 24. In the midst of such sadness, it was healing to honor a fellow Board member in such a meaningful way.

Both George and Steve have given many hours of their time to various projects for the Board. They participated in many Living Snow Fence plantings, Tree Days, Workshops and have represented our district with professionalism and respect. They will each be very missed, and we wish them the best as they pursue other adventures, and hope they will stay in touch.

*Thank you both for all you have done!*





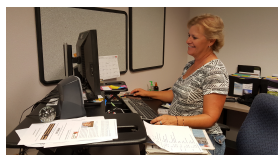
- **Website:** Webmaster (Tamrah Docterman). We continue to expand the capabilities to be more user friendly, increase educational opportunities, improve the online store and have “how to” videos. [www.conservation4you.org](http://www.conservation4you.org).
- Another successful tree program was completed with the sale of approximately 15,000 seedling trees and nearly 1,000 large container trees sold to over 260 customers. Due to restrictions, we were not able to welcome our usual volunteers. Our smaller group of helpers included: Reagan Schinzel, Hagan Ellefson, Tim & Johanna Brown, Ben Hendrix, Board Members & Staff: George Fosha, Valorie Meyer, Steve Payne, Devin Schinzel, Cheryl Churchwell, Lori Ellefson.
- Seedling Tree Windbreak Design workshop was held February 4, 2020. Bulk mailing was sent to over 7,000 postal patrons to provide windbreak and living snow fence education and tree order forms. There were approximately 30 attendees, with three Board Members, our District Conservation Technician and the district manager present as well.
- Application and administration of Conservation District Technician Grant: Double EI provided \$6,116 cash funds for this program. The grant funds one full-time employee to assist USDA with Farm Bill contracts & activities.
- We were awarded a Rangeland Health grant in the amount of \$25,000. We were able to assist ten landowners with various projects including wells, solar pumps, livestock tanks, pipeline and noxious weed control. We have been awarded a grant for 2021 in the amount of \$17,000 and we look forward to being a part of more conservation on the ground projects.
- We provided our own cost-share program for \$5,000 towards wind-break projects. We were able to assist ten participants in designing and planning their projects and reimburse them for up to 50% of their projects. We have been awarded an \$8,000 grant for windbreaks and living snow fences for 2021. Double EI will add \$2,500 of our own funds to increase the amount available to \$10,500.
- In spite of restrictions, Double EI was able to partner with El Paso County to safely install one Living Snow Fence in 2020. In addition, we partnered with both El Paso and Elbert counties for replants on past Living Snow Fences.
- Youth Education: Awarded one \$500 first year college scholarship and one \$1000 second year renewal college scholarship as well as an additional one-time award of \$500. Camp Rocky was cancelled for 2020, but we look forward to supporting interested participants in 2021.
- Maintenance & administration of District Office Building. Double EI leases office space to USDA Service Center and Elbert County Library District. USDA lease has been renewed through Dec 2021. The funds generated by office leases to USDA and the Elbert County Library allows Double EI to provide its own cost share funds to our landowners to achieve more conservation “on the ground”.
- District newsletter, website and news articles for conservation education and concerns.
- Sixth Grade Conservation Poster contest was sponsored. Cash awards for 1st—3rd place winners from 1 area school. Personalized jackets for champion and reserve champion overall. Seedling trees were provided to all participants.
- Double EI is responsible for maintenance and inspection of 14 flood control dams. Inspections were performed with a State Dam Safety Engineer.



**District Conservation Technician:**



Many of you have had the pleasure of working with our DCT, Lori. She has helped so many landowners with various aspects of installing conservation practices throughout our district, covering many acres. Sadly, Lori will be leaving Double EI. We are so excited for her as she embarks on a new adventure. She will always be a friend to Double EI and we wish her the very best!! Thank you for everything, Lori! You will be missed.





## 2019 Financials

<b>BEGINNING NET WORTH BALANCE</b>		<b>\$358,623.32</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Sale of Supplies	97,374.06	
Administrative Fees	3,716.80	
Office Lease/equip rental	70,278.58	
Miscellaneous Income	2,531.53	
Direct Assistance	6,924.38	
Investments Interest	168.84	
PERC & Tree Planter Equip Lease	1,001.41	
Dist Cons Tech Grant	26,377.45	
Matching Grant	13,221.14	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>221,594.19</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Cost of Sale Supplies	66,756.15	
Labor & Benefits	31,359.84	
Taxes	2,375.15	
Physical Inventory Adj	1,204.37	
Reconciliation Expense	-0.31	
Workman's comp	240.50	
Education/Website	1,358.77	
PERC Equip Expenses	486.45	
Maintenance/bldg proj	5,498.23	
Janitorial	6,325.00	
Utilities & phone	7,839.86	
Office Expenses	3,801.93	
Credit Card & PayPal Processing Fees	1,822.62	
Advertising/Election Fees	159.25	
Annual Meeting	1,857.07	
Board & Travel	4,391.40	
Insurance	6,642.75	
Professional Services/Dues	3,130.00	
Donations	830.00	
DCT Grant Match	6,594.04	
Matching Grants	14,269.74	
Freight/Sundry/Licenses/Penalty/EOY Adj	3,900.00	
Scholarships	1,850.00	
Tree Program	6,222.02	
Living Snow Fence Special Projects	2,051.87	
Dist Cons Tech Grant Expense	25,407.71	
Workshops	38.14	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>206,412.28</b>	
<b>INCOME BEFORE DEPRECIATION</b>		<b>\$15,181.91</b>
+ Depreciation	14,533.58	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$ 648.43</b>
<b>NET INCOME FOR 2019</b>		<b>\$358,563.69</b>
<b>ENDING NET WORTH BALANCE</b>		
-----		
<b>Ramah Dam Operations &amp; Maintenance Account Expendable Trust Fund</b>		
<b>BEGINNING NET WORTH BALANCE</b>		<b>\$21,050.85</b>
Emergency Reserves	\$344.61	
Total Revenues	<u>\$215.93</u>	
Total Income	\$560.54	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Maintenance (Fence & Ground Work)	<u>\$0</u>	
Total Expenses	\$0	
<b>NET INCOME FOR 2019</b>		<b>\$ 215.93</b>
<b>ENDING NET WORTH BALANCE</b>		<b>\$21,266.78</b>



The Board of Supervisors of Double E Conservation District take the stewardship of funds very seriously. We strive to be transparent in all sources of income and all expenditures.

# Soil Health at a Glance

By: Scott Nicholson—Simla Soil Conservationist

Healthy soil is the foundation for sustainable land use and is the #1 asset for farmers and ranchers. Improving soil health plays a vital role in long-term sustainable agricultural production and landowners and operators can use a variety of practices to keep their soils healthy. Managing soil health through proper land management strategies is one of the most effective ways to increase productivity and profitability. Good management can improve agricultural soils just as bad management can destroy them.

Healthy soils consist of organic matter, a variety of minerals such as sand, silt and clay, and a good supply of air and water that fill the spaces in between. Healthy soils should have a good mixture of aggregates that crumbles easily, have deep roots, earthworms and a good earthy smell. Soil organic matter is present in the top 10 cm of the soil and controls more than 90% of the soil function. The organic matter consists of plant residue and animal tissues at various stages of decomposition and include; fungi, bacteria, and inputs from wildlife and/or livestock.

As soil organic matter increases, the water holding capacity of the soil also increases, enhancing the soils ability to absorb and retain water. Each 1% increase in soil organic matter can help the soil hold 20,000 gallons more water per acre (USDA-NRCS, 2018). Plant roots not only provide organic matter but also creates a suitable habitat for which soil microorganisms can thrive. These organisms add to the volume of soil organic matter and aid in nutrient availability to support plant growth. Living soil connects what is above ground and what is below ground, but without the influence of plants, soils lose stability and erode.

The interaction between soil and plants stabilize the soil and creates a more resilient ecosystem. The resilience of an ecosystem is its capacity to regain its structure and function following a disturbance, such as drought, overgrazing, or soil erosion. Utilizing the living roots of plants is one of the most important tools to protect the soil surface from erosion, to improve water quality and quantity, and to improve forage for livestock and wildlife.

Additionally, maximizing vegetation cover will also reduce the risk of erosion, will help intercept more rainfall that can infiltrate into the ground, will help control soil temperature, and will reduce evaporation. Increasing infiltration will save water and can increase vegetation drought tolerance. As plants and soils interact, soils become more fertile, but without fertile soils, plants can die. Plant species adapt to outcompete other plant species on soils with particular properties. Therefore, healthy soils should remain undisturbed and consist of a desirable plant composition that is free of noxious weeds. Healthy soils provide healthy rangelands which in turn are more productive.

Soil is an intergenerational resource and we must take action to ensure soil erosion does not outpace soil formation. Improving soil health is not difficult but it can be a lengthy process that is dependent on topography, soil type, climate, vegetation and land use. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that it takes approximately five hundred years to produce an inch of topsoil, therefore conserving and improving topsoil is the utmost importance for long-term sustainable land use for us and our children's children.

According to the NRCS Principles for High Functioning Soils (2018), landowners and operators can protect and improve soils by: 1 - maximizing continuous living roots, 2 – minimizing soil disturbance, 3 – maximizing soil cover, 4 – maximizing biodiversity, and 5 – integrating prescribed grazing. Some of the recommended conservation practices include: Conservation Crop Rotation, Cover Crops, No Till, Mulching, Nutrient Management, Planned Grazing and Pest Management. Remember, if you are trying to make your soil healthier, you should not see it very often.

If you have questions, comments or ideas for future articles, please email [scott.nicholson@usda.gov](mailto:scott.nicholson@usda.gov).

Did you know? The earliest known semi-agricultural people lived on the slopes of the Zagros Mountains between Iraq and Iran about 11,000 to 9,000 BC (or thirteen thousand to eleven thousand years ago). (Montgomery, 2012, p. 31)

Sources:

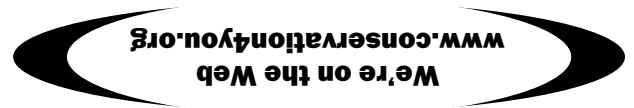
Montgomery, D. R. (2012). *Dirt, The Erosion of Civilizations*. University of California Press.

USDA-NRCS (2018), Principles for High Functioning Soils. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/soils/health/?cid=stelprdb1049236>



Return Service Requested

Double E! Conservation District  
PO Box 215  
Simla, CO 80835



Non-Profit  
Presorted  
US Postage Paid  
Simla, CO  
Permit No. 23

**Double E! C.D.**  
**P.O. Box 215 Simla, CO 80835**  
**719-541-2359 Ext. 180**  
**double.agatecd@gmail.com**

President  
Devin Schinzel

Vice President  
Cheryl Churchwell

Secretary/Treasurer  
Valorie Meyer

Member  
Ben Hendrix

Member  
Tim Brown

District Manager  
Heather Cross

District Conservation Technician  
Lori Ellefson

**Natural Resources  
Conservation Service**  
**P.O. Box 188 Simla, CO 80835**  
**719-541-2358 Ext. 3**

Regional Team Leader  
Deric Clemons

Civil Engineering Technician  
Benny Kitten

Resource Conservationist  
Blongshia Cha

Soil Conservationist  
Scott Nicholson

PSS  
Linda Janssen

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. (Not all prohibit bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information ( Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA’s Target Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”