



NEWSLETTER

EAGLE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Become a Master Gardener

Colorado State University
Certified Colorado
Gardener Program

The Colorado Master Gardener program is a unique intersection between University Horticulture expertise and community volunteers interested in educating locally.

Join CSU Extension and learn about Colorado's unique gardening and landscaping. Science-based and specific to Colorado's challenging climate, soil, environment, insects, wildlife and plants, this program is designed to learn the basics from horticulture experts.

As a Master Gardener, you'll become a CSU Extension volunteer providing education and outreach for the community.

For more information:
[Colorado Master Gardener](#)



Office Hours

Located at the CSU Extension Office
Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9am-Noon

STAR Comes to Eagle County

Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources



No one knows better than farm operators and landowners how important it is to conserve our nutrient-rich soils and clean water sources.

Conservation-minded production is a perfect set of goals. When we protect our farm and rangeland from runoff and erosion, we are investing in a better future:

- Decrease nutrient loss
- Show your stewardship
- Increase drought resilience
- Position your farm for future market opportunities

Board Meetings

Held at the Road and Bridge Facility in Gypsum
5:30 pm, every second Wednesday of the month

strengths and where you could improve based on your personal goals for your operation.

S.T.A.R.'s evaluation system is simple to use and understand yet detailed enough to give you meaningful results. S.T.A.R. assigns points for each activity on an individual field: cropping, tillage, nutrient application, stocking rates and more. The Science Committee - made up of agriculture experts and experienced practitioners - regularly update the practices included, the points, and ranking system. Those with conservation practices best aligned with principles of soil health management receive the highest point values. You will receive a S.T.A.R. rating between 1 and 5 stars for your field, with a 5 marking the highest score.

If you are just starting out in conservation or trying to figure out how to take the next step and draw income from newly emerging carbon markets, S.T.A.R. is exactly what you need to evaluate where you are today -and help you secure a more productive future.

The S.T.A.R. tool shows that when you focus on building the health of your soil, you are taking the steps needed to make your farm more resilient, efficient, and, ultimately, more profitable!

If you are interested in participating, ECCD is awarding up to \$150/acre in producer incentive payments! We are currently seeking 7 ranchers and farmers to participate in the program. Please reach out to your District Manager for more information.

Community Funding Partnership Opportunity

Colorado River District's Conservation Project

The Colorado River District is now accepting applications in Eagle County for a program called the Community Funding Partnership. The program was created to implement the Colorado River District's mission "to lead in the protection,

Following principles of soil health management, S.T.A.R. is a field-by-field evaluation tool driven by the latest science and farmer expertise. It takes only a few minutes to identify your conservation

Rent a No-Till Drill

The Eagle County Conservation District now has a No-Till drill for you!

Save money, time and soil! Conservation tillage practices, including no-till can improve soil health, and reduce annual fuel and labor investments.

Benefits include:

- Water holding capacity
- Labor savings
- Reduced soil erosion
- Reduced herbicide runoff
- Moisture conservation
- Trapped Carbon
- Higher yields
- Improved soil biology!

For more information on how the rent, please reach out to your District Manager.



conservation, use and development of the water resources of Colorado River basin for the welfare of the District, and to safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which the state is entitled”.

Projects within the River District’s boundaries include:

- Productive agriculture projects
- Infrastructure projects
- Healthy rivers projects
- Watershed health and water quality projects
- Conservation and efficiency projects



To apply, please visit the Colorado River District’s Community Funding Partnership website at [Community Funding Partnership](#). Please review their guidelines, framework and application/budget prior to applying and contact the River District at partnerfunding@crwcd.org to arrange a pre-application meeting.

The Eagle County Conservation District is encouraging applicants to reach out with any questions and is also available to assist throughout the application process. We highly encourage all landowners to apply to conserve water practices and upgrade any aging irrigation systems.

Solar Gardens on the Rise

Agrivoltaics: A New Farming Practice

Around the US, farmers and ranchers are exploring the many benefits of turning unused land beneath solar panels into a space to grow food. Researchers from Colorado State University and the National Renewable Energy Lab are finding opportunities to diversify crop productions and boost landowner income through a symbiotic relationship between the solar panels and the ecologically damaged ground plowed underneath.

Historically, solar land management offered little vegetation management, which led to decreased water retention, less soil stability, and loss of habitat for pollinators, birds and wildlife. The solar industry continues to grow, however, battling against two million acres of American farmland which could be converted to solar in the next decade. But what if the two could coincide with each other?

Originating in Japan, “Agrivoltaics” has successfully shown land users the many advantages of incorporating pollinator farms, grazing lands and crop production with solar panels. Studies show that not only does the shade from the panels help the plants thrive, they also display a lot less evaporation of crucial irrigation water. Furthermore, the solar panels stay much cooler, effectively making them more efficient. Water retention and efficient energy are just a couple of the benefits. Solar gardens have been proven to provide higher crop yields, improved soil, increased habitat, crop protection and economic opportunity. And let’s not forget the bees- bees, monarch and other essential pollinators have been disappearing over time, leaving large concern for the ecosystem. Farmers in New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont are receiving \$300-\$550 per acre yearly to lightly graze sheep at solar sites, producing an abundance of bees and wildflowers.

InSPIRE, a U.S. Department of Energy funding project, understands that we need healthy agriculture communities just as much as we need renewable energy. The project encourages farmers and ranchers to implement solar on their fields while connecting community members and agriculture to clean energy, local food and responsible land use.

Tree Seedlings for Conservation

The Colorado State Forest Service Nursery is now accepting tree orders for 2022!

Grow low-cost seedlings for conservation efforts here in Eagle County. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) Nursery, located in Fort Collins, is the state's leader in Colorado-grown seedling trees and shrubs, producing more than 40 species selected for hardiness and adaptability ideal for landowners and land managers leading diverse environments and conservation practices.

The seedling program allows farmers, ranchers and landowners to obtain trees at a nominal cost to help achieve:

- Restoration after wildfire, flood and other natural disturbances
- Growing shelterbelts, windbreaks and living snow fences
- Creating and enhancing wildlife habitat
- Protecting homes, cropland, livestock and highways
- Increasing soil erosion control
- Practicing "backyard" conservation promoting clean air and water

Click here for the [CSFS Seedling Nursey Inventory](#) and email your District Manager to get your order in today! Keep in mind that the seedlings go fast so get your order in early.

