

2009 NPS Conference Takes Shape

Conference Set for Price, Utah--August 25-26, 2009

The 2009 Utah Nonpoint Source Water Quality Conference will focus on the Colorado River Salinity Control program and other nonpoint source water pollution control efforts in Eastern Utah.

Set for August 25-26, 2009, this year's conference will be one day shorter than in past years.

"Given the current economic conditions, we thought it would be a good idea to shorten the conference by one day this year," said Roy Gunnell, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, this year's conference chair.

"We will still host the Utah Conservation Commission and the Utah Water Quality Board meetings on

Monday the 24th, the day before the conference, as we have in the past, but the conference sessions will be only on Tuesday this year," added Gunnell.

Following the conference sessions on Tuesday, there will be a barbecue and the annual NPS Water Quality Awards presentation that evening. Wednesday will be a day-long tour of water quality sites in Carbon and Emery counties.

For more information about the conference, including the agenda, conference registration forms and hotel information, log on to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food NPS Conference web page, at: <http://ag.utah.gov/divisions/conservation/npsconference.html>.

Rich Co. Ranchers Sold on Benefits of Time-Managed Grazing Seek to use Proven Technique on 130,000 Acres of Public Lands

One of the keys to successful livestock grazing in Utah is the timely movement of herds from one pasture to another. A group of Rich County ranchers saw how one private land ranch successfully used this philosophy to improve the quality of its land and its animals. Now a group of Rich County ranchers is asking to form a partnership with state and federal land management agencies to help them put this philosophy to work on public land.

Moving cattle or sheep from one pasture to another is vital if you want to improve land health while raising healthy animals. Managers of the state's largest privately owned ranch, the Deseret Land and Livestock Ranch, in Rich County let their cattle graze for just a few weeks at a time before moving them on to...well...greener pastures.



The Utah Grazing Improvement Program and the Rich County Conservation Commission sponsored this tour for ranchers to show off the impressive results of more than 20 years of timed-controlled grazing.

WQ Board allocates \$4 million in Stimulus for 9 water projects

By
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Water quality improvements to popular waterways in the state will move forward as part of \$4 million made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Water Quality Board on Wednesday authorized funding for nine “green” projects that met the criteria for federal stimulus funding.

The Board received applications for 87 projects totaling \$115 million. Priorities were given to projects that improved energy efficiency, reduced pollution to the waters of the state and assisted with public outreach and water quality education.

“There were so many great projects it was difficult to prioritize them, but in the end much needed waterways will be improved as a result of the funding,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. The following projects the Board funded are:

Ogden River, \$1 million to restore the river’s channel as part of a major redevelopment.

Cutler Reservoir, \$500,000 to reduce the phosphorus in Logan’s wastewater lagoons by harvesting the algae to convert into biofuels that would power the city’s garbage trucks.

Sevier River, \$206,000 for stream restoration to remove phosphorus.

Utah Lake, \$251,600 to remove 1.2 million pounds of carp using commercial seines.

Jordan River, \$577,500 and \$484,200 to remove sediment and restore the stream channel. Another \$150,000 will be used to help build a storm water bio-filter to treat runoff from a new “green” education building before it enters the Jordan River

Strawberry Reservoir, \$520,788 to restore the stream and remove phosphorus.

East Canyon, \$300,000 to remove sediment and phosphorus.

The projects are moving forward as the funding recipients are working diligently to meet very stringent deadlines. All Utah “green” ARRA projects must be either under contract or under construction no later than November 15, 2009, or risk losing the funding.

In April, the Board awarded \$40 million in ARRA funds for much needed municipal wastewater improvement projects.

In the next Utah Watershed Review:

The next issue of *Utah Watershed Review* will feature several stories, including:

- 2009 NPS Conference wrap up
- FY 2010 Section 319 project selections
- Survey review and outreach planning in the Bear River drainage
- Survey review and outreach planning in the Price River watershed
- Survey review and outreach planning in the middle sevier watershed
- An update on stimulus money spending for watershed health

If you have any ideas of comments, please send them to Jack Wilbur. jackwilbur@utah.gov

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“We move our cattle to a fresh pasture about every 2 to 4 weeks depending on the pasture, says James Sewell, Ranch Manager for the Deseret Land and Livestock Company. “We do that to give the grass a chance to re-grow. By the end of the season it will look like there wasn’t a cow in there.”

The technique is called time-controlled grazing. The animals are moved from pasture to pasture, which allows the grasses to be eaten down to an ideal height. The pastures are then rested for more than a year, and as a result the grass grows back stronger, helping increase plant health and diversity.

This is not only good for the livestock but it is good for the whole environment. More grass means less soil erosion and cleaner water down stream. A healthy range benefits wildlife such as sage grouse and other bird species. And antelope, elk and mule deer benefit as well.

“Biologically I see with the time-controlled grazing, where you graze for a short time, and put a long period of rest in place, is the best of both worlds,” said Rick Danvir, Wildlife and Sheep Manager, Deseret Land and Livestock. He says the rest period makes for healthy, productive and diverse vegetation.

The Utah Grazing Improvement Program and the Rich County Conservation District sponsored a recent tour of the Deseret Land and Livestock Ranch to demonstrate the land health results of more than 20 years of time-controlled grazing.

These ranchers appear convinced of the value of this grazing system and would like



Ranchers at the state’s largest privately owned ranch move 600 pair of beef cattle from one pasture to another to make sure the grasses are eaten down to the ideal height. This time-controlled grazing technique is credited with helping provide healthy, productive and diverse vegetation and wildlife.

to apply these methods to the 130,000 acres of public lands they lease from the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. These private, state and federal partners are working together to explore options regarding using this time-controlled grazing on public lands.

“Individually these ranchers don’t have enough land economically to put together this rotational system on their own,” says Bill Hopkin, UGIP Director. “But by combining all their allotments together into a large management unit, they have 130,000 acres which will work ecologically and economically,” he added.

Utah’s Grazing Improvement Program is encouraging similar grazing management across the state

“I think we have to go to this timed management grazing instead

of the stubble height, and get them in and get them out,” said Rich County rancher, Craig Hoffman. “I’ve done it with my own place on some pasture. I started 25 years ago where I started with 40 pair. I fenced it off, and now I’m running 120 pair. What’s the difference is? I rotate it. I put them in for 10 days to two weeks, depending on what the weather is like and what the conditions are like.”

The focus here is on sustainable resource health with the goal of introducing time controlled grazing to other ranching areas around the state.

Pew poll shows environment slipping as a concern

A poll released earlier this year by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press seems to indicate that the public is losing interest in making environmental issues a top policy priority. The most likely factor in the decline is the drastic increase in public concern about the economic recession and swelling unemployment rates.

Of the 20 issues people were asked to rate both this year and a year earlier, none slipped more precipitously than the environment, with 41 percent ranking it as a top priority today, down from 56 percent a year ago.

Global warming came in last on the list, with 30 percent ranking it as a top priority -- a statistically insignificant 5 percent drop from 2008.

Illegal immigration, reducing crime and reducing health care costs also fell lower on respondents' agendas, while strengthening the nation's economy jumped 10 points to 85 percent and improving the job situation spiked 21 points to 82 percent.

"We certainly have seen a change from a year ago, and we know that in the interim there has been a big spike in concern about the economy," said Pew Survey Research director Scott Kenner. "In polling that we did last year, both in response to the run-up in gas prices and later in the fall when gas prices were beginning to fall back a bit, we saw some of the long-term trends on environmental protection change, with concerns about the economy trumping concerns about environmental protection."

The environment hit its highest poll mark in 2001, with 63 percent ranking it as a top priority, Pew numbers show. It dipped to 44 percent in 2002 and 39 percent in 2003, as the public grew concerned about national security and the economy in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, before climbing again.

"When the economy goes bad, people lose interest in the environment," said David Kreutzer, senior analyst for energy economics and climate change at the conservative Heritage Foundation. "That's consistent with what we've observed in countries around the world. It's the wealthier countries that are more interested in protecting the environment."

Sanpete Septic Survey Shows Interest in Pumping Incentive Program

A recent survey of Sanpete County's most rural residents related to on-site wastewater (septic) systems indicates that, despite a significant percentage of older systems, very few residents have experienced system failure or are currently noticing problems.

The telephone survey of 176 Sanpete County residents living in areas not on municipal sewer systems was conducted recently by Dan Jones & Associates for the San Pitch Watershed Association, Utah Division of Water Quality and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food.

Results of the survey indicate

that many people do not think about their septic system or actively maintain it when it is working properly. About 15 percent of those asked have personally experienced a failure, and generally only about 10 percent or less are experiencing one or more of the symptoms of potential septic system problems. More than a fourth (26.1%) of those responding never use an additive to help maintain their system. Only about half of the respondents use an additive at least annually. When asked how likely they are to have their system professionally pumped if they were offered a rebate or other

financial incentive, 57.9% said they were likely or very likely to take advantage of the offer. Additionally, 23.3% were neutral about the issue.

After looking at the results of the survey, the local conservation district is considering an outreach campaign to stress the importance of proper septic system maintenance, and an incentive program to entice residents to have their systems pumped. A final decision about how to proceed is expected by the end of the summer or early fall 2009.