JCD Offers Internship for Urban Ag Students
Written by: Jesse Soule, JCD Urban Agriculture Intern 2017

Internships are encouraged by both educational institutions and employers, touted for the wide swath of benefits that they are thought to provide: Bridging the gap between abstract theories taught in schools and real life situations, providing invaluable experience that builds professional skillsets, forming a foundation for future careers, boosting resumes, expanding professional networks, among many others. While I cannot speak for all internships, my internship this past summer as an Urban Agriculture Intern for the Jefferson Conservation District certainly provided all of these benefits and so many more.

With the help of grant funding through the National Association Of Conservation Districts (NACD), JCD was able to offer an internship opportunity in the summer of 2017. Mentored by JCD's Agriculture Conservation Coordinator, Maria Bumgarner, we were charged with a variety of responsibilities, most of which required constant teamwork and communication, allowing each of us to utilize our varying expertise to complete the tasks at hand. One of our most integral responsibilities was to develop and maintain personal relationships with farmers and landowners, which we carried out through on-site visits. It was through these visits that we were able to learn about a wide variety of agricultural practices, while seeing first-hand the conservation measures that had been put into place. For example, we witnessed the implementation and utilization of soil moisture sensors and hoop houses, we learned about and participated in the production of a wide variety of crops, herd management, and sustainable grazing practices in animal production. Furthermore, these visits allowed us to interact with the farmers and the land in a way that could never be replicated in a textbook or lesson, giving us the opportunity to witness their challenges and their feats, and to guide them through the systematic processes of federally funded cost share programs through the Farm Bill.

We have all walked away from this internship with an enhanced skillset, and a much deeper understanding of our field and of the career paths that we wish to pursue. Specifically, our experiences related to urban agriculture, conservation practices, the importance of relationship building and public relations, and the ins and outs of government process, among others, is unparalleled.
In November JCD co-hosted the 2nd Annual "From Our Lands to Your Hands" at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds in Golden, bringing in over 600 elementary students. Students learned about agriculture and conservation, met local farmers and producers, and developed a basic knowledge of where every day food and products come from.

At one station students had an opportunity to "milk" a life-size fiberglass cow with the Western Dairy Association, while at another station Jefferson Alpaca Farm taught students how to make yarn from Alpaca fiber. Students also learned about worm composting, soil health, egg production, and much more!

"From Our Lands to Your Hands" was sponsored by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners, Murdoch’s Ranch and Home Supply, Western Dairy Association, and Colorado Livestock Association. Along with a number of adult volunteers, members of the Green Mountain High School FFA also helped shuttle the students from station to station. This event would not be possible without such generous sponsors and amazing volunteers! Thank you to everyone who made sure the students had a fun, educational day.

Above: Kids had the chance to practice milking "June," a life-sized fiberglass cow

Left: Julie, from Colorado Beef Council, teaches about cattle and beef production

Right: Green Mountain HS FFA volunteers enjoy lunch after shuttling students around to their stations

Native Seed Sales

Interested in seeding your yard or property with native grass or wildflower species? Contact JCD! We sell a variety of seed mixes for low and high elevation, that will thrive in the local climate.

Visit our website: www.jeffersonconservationdistrict.org for species lists, pricing info, and FAQs.
JCD Expands Forestry Program

In recent years JCD’s forestry program has grown significantly with the goal of addressing forest health concerns, particularly high-severity wildfire. Through the delivery of technical assistance and project management services, JCD has assisted landowners in addressing these concerns by implementing forest restoration projects on more than 1,000 acres of forested land since 2010. With over 400 acres of projects currently underway and more in the planning phases, it’s clear that many landowners want to be proactive about mitigating the impacts of high-severity wildfires if they are to occur.

The JCD forestry program expanded significantly under Joseph Hansen, who joined the staff in 2010. After 6 years of spearheading program efforts and establishing the foundation on which these projects now flourish, Joseph left JCD in December of 2016 to pursue a graduate degree. His work continues with Garrett Stephens, who worked alongside Joseph for the final three years of his tenure. With the growing interest in JCD programs and significant increase in number of acres being treated on private lands, JCD has been fortunate enough to continue adding new staff members to the team.

This year, JCD hired two new Conservation Foresters, Frank Falzone and Samantha (Sam) Delfing, to help with the growing workload. Frank joined the staff in April and Sam was brought on in September. The rest of the staff is excited to have new team members to further the mission of JCD.

JCD is fortunate to be able to grow our staff with the help of partners such as the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) and the American Forest Foundation (AFF), who have provided funding to support these new positions. JCD’s partnership with CSCB and AFF, as well as longstanding partner the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), are critical to JCD’s success and ability to address the natural resource concerns facing private landowners in this area.

A Note from the Chair of the Board

Every life zone in Colorado can be found in Jefferson County, from rare tall grass prairies to fragile tundra high above timberline. JCD was created to work with the community to conserve these natural resources. In the early 1930s, conservation districts were born out of concern for soil erosion, loss of productivity, and sky-blackening dust storms. It was realized that these problems can be solved only with participation and cooperation of local citizens.

Today, climate change threatens fragile ecosystems while increasing the potential for droughts and wildfires. JCD works to improve forests in both our wildland and urban areas. Young and growing forests are effective at absorbing climate-altering carbon emissions. Healthy forests also play a critical role in reducing fire potential and mitigating drought. Turning unhealthy forest stands into resilient forests is a monumental task, one which we cannot do alone and cannot do without your support.

Written by: Karen Berry, JCD Board President
Volunteers Collect Data for Noxious Weed Program

Noxious weeds pose issues throughout the Colorado landscape, negatively impacting soil health, pollinator populations, and native plant species. Given that Jefferson County contains 30% of Colorado’s native plant species, at least 35 rare plant species, and 8 endemic native plant species, JCD’s Noxious Weed Program is particularly important. Projects are focused on reducing noxious weed establishment at a community level, working with landowners to establish best management practices for continued weed suppression. The noxious weed program also works closely with the district’s forest management projects, as areas treated by the forestry program are more susceptible to weed development post-treatment.

In order to increase the efficacy and reach of such projects, volunteers have become a vital aspect of the district’s noxious weed program.

Volunteer with JCD!

Volunteering for JCD’s noxious weed program is a great way to learn about plant communities, forestry and native plants throughout the region, while helping JCD preserve the district’s landscapes. If you have weekday availability in spring, summer or fall 2018, contact us to find out how you can get involved!

Once a week between spring and fall, JCD staff takes a group of volunteers to hike private properties throughout the district, identifying and mapping noxious weeds in addition to rare and/or endemic native plant species. In the process, volunteers learn how to identify noxious weeds and other plants, as well as how to utilize maps and GPS units.

The information and data collected by the volunteers is then utilized to instruct ensuing land management decisions, and assist communities in their work to reduce noxious weed establishment. Just this year alone, the district has been able to treat over 800 acres for noxious weeds, which would not have been possible without the help of district volunteers!

Contact Us

Jefferson Conservation District is located in the State Offices of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, in the Denver Federal Center in Lakewood.

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