

Claunch-Pinto News

Summer 2009



IN MEMORY OF J.W. ANGLIN

J.W. Anglin passed away at the age of 89 on April 29, 2009. Born in Gran Quivira into a family of five sisters and one brother on September 25, 1919, Mr. Anglin was on the Conservation District's Board for thirty-four years. His dedication and service to the conservation district were outstanding, as was his commitment to the community of Mountainair.

The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District, its past and present board members, and staff would like to express their sympathy to his family and friends for their loss of J.W. Anglin.



J. W. Anglin and his Blue Heeler

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WILDFLOWER, BUFFALO & BLUE GRAMA GRASS SEED NOW AVAILABLE

With our monsoon season fast approaching, this rainy time of year provides us with an ideal opportunity to plant seed.

Claunch-Pinto SWCD is offering two grass seed varieties in one pound bags. (1 to 1 1/2 lbs should cover 1 acre) Blue Grama is densely tufted and shows promise in the southwest as a lawn grass, requiring less maintenance and water than many other grass varieties, yet is less resistant to foot traffic. Timely irrigation or rainfall is essential to seedling establishment.

Buffalo Grass has been used for years as a lawn grass around many ranch houses and homesteads where it was part of the native vegetation. The main advantages for lawn and certain recreational area usage are: it has low maintenance requirements, needs little or no fertilizer, requires infrequent mowing, has low water requirements, and is relatively free of diseases and insect damage.

Two varieties of Wildflower seeds are also available. Stop by our office now to purchase your seeds and start planting!

TRASH RACK—SOIL EROSION

Forest/Trash Racks: As part of the Trigo Fire Emergency Watershed Protection Program, local youth from the Manzano Land Grant built trash racks (see image below) in the Manzano Mountain area that was severely damaged by the Trigo Fire. The trash racks were constructed by recycling wood that was burned in the area of the fire.

What is a trash rack? A trash rack is a structural device that can be built in arroyos to capture floating debris. Trash racks also slow down the current of flooding waters, which can be dangerous.



Image above shows debris buildup caught by trash rack built by local youth in the Manzano Mountain area.



Image above shows a trash rack built by local youth in the Manzano Mountain area.

Homeowners be prepared!!!

Monsoon season is right around the corner and with close to 25,000 acres burned, the rate of floods, debris build up, soil erosion, and runoff can increase to dangerous levels. Homeowners need to take extra caution and be prepared for an emergency situation.

REMEMBER: Never underestimate the power of storm water and debris flow!!!

Safety tips to follow during a flood:

- Never walk or drive through flowing water.
- Do not drive through a flooded area.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.
- Turn off the power during floods or when water damage is present.
- Be alert for gas leaks.

CLAUNCH-PINTO PROJECTS BREAK RECORD

Claunch-Pinto SWCD has broken its own record of thinning projects in place with close to fifty projects in the planning stages. District Manager, Dierdre Tarr worked tirelessly to draft and submit six grant proposals to insure funding for many of these cost-share projects. As of the printing of this newsletter, all six grants have received funding guarantees.

Applications are taken all year and funding is provided to applicants on a first come first serve basis. Projects must also be located in an area that has received funding. These thinning projects encourage forest stand improvement through defensible space, brush management, and hazardous fuels reduction. Cost-share programs are also available for soil erosion control.

Please stop by or call our offices at 505-847-2243 if you are interested in completing an application for a cost-share project on your land.

Other important benefits from these programs are improving the watershed, and an increase in grasses and forbs, which reduces soil erosion, all of which contribute to a healthy wildlife habitat.

All wood retained for firewood must be

removed. All slash must be chipped.

ALSO NOTE: NO WORK CAN BEGIN UNTIL A SIGNED CONTRACT WITH THE DISTRICT IS IN PLACE.

*******NO BURNING OF SLASH*******



WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

Evaporative coolers can be major summertime water users. Here's how to be water-wise while keeping your cool:

- Instead of turning on your cooler when it's 75 degrees outside, wait until it's 85 degrees. Your cooler will use 50% less water.
- Turn on the water pump a few minutes before turning on the fan and give the coolers pads a chance to become saturated.
- Open a window 1-2 inches in the rooms you want to cool. This will draw cool air into the rooms and give warm air a chance to escape.
- In the evening or when it's not quite so hot outside, run your cooler fan without running the water pump. You'll get nice, cooling airflow without using any water at all!
- Also run just the fan on rainy and high-humidity days when your evaporative cooler is significantly less efficient.
- To keep your cooler from wasting water, check it monthly for leaks during the summer season and change pads annually.



Conservation—A New Mexico Tradition

For centuries, cultures have been able to thrive here on a very limited water supply because people knew how best to use this most precious resource. Just think, the Anasazi, the Pueblo cultures, the Spanish settlers, and the early Anglo American settlers were able to effectively use nature's intermittent supply of water. (see page five article on Ollas)

Through the use of stone dams, reservoirs and acequias, or irrigation ditches, they were able to store water for dry periods and direct water to their fields. Let's take a hint from our ancestors and save water. It's easier than you think. Just follow some of these water efficient practices, and you'll not only be using less water, but also reduce your water and energy bills.

Think before you flush

You really don't have to flush every time you use the toilet. If everyone in the U.S. averaged four or five flushes per day, more than 5 billion gallons of water wouldn't go down the drain. That's enough to supply drinking water to the entire population of the State of New Mexico for at least 12 years!

Don't be a drip—save a drop You save/New Mexico Saves

If you shorten your shower by 5 minutes, you save 25 gallons per day and all of us save 37.5 million gallons per day.

Turn off the faucet while you brush your teeth, you save 6 gallons per day and all of us save 9 million gallons per day.

Install a 1.6 gallon toilet and you save 16 gallons per day all of us save 24 million gallons per day.

By learning new, healthy habits and encouraging others to follow them too, we can contribute to conserving our most precious resource...water.



LOCAL WORK GROUP SET FOR JULY 17TH

Claunch-Pinto and the NRCS will hold a Local Work Group Meeting, offering local landowners an opportunity to learn and indicate what the priority resource concerns are in our area. Those interested in applying for future cost-share projects, who are agricultural producers (with a minimum of \$1,000 in annual commodities) or non-industrial forest landowners (with land containing a tree population of at least 30% conifers) are encouraged to attend on Friday, July 17, at 9:30 a.m. at the Ancient Cities meeting room. For more info call the NRCS at 847-2941.

Recognize the Dangers of Loco Weed



Loco Weed is a major problem in New Mexico for farmers, ranchers and horse owners. Loco Weed is a common name for any plant that produces swainsonine, a phytotoxin (toxin produced by a plant) harmful to livestock. As neurologic signs may unpredictably recur, working animals, especially horses have a very poor prognosis as they are of little value as saddle or draft animals. With chronic locoweed poisoning, livestock become emaciated and wasted as animals lose the ability to utilize feed. Animals are more susceptible to locoweed poisoning after they have once been affected. Plants are dangerous throughout the year even when they have matured and dried. All plant parts are toxic. Loco weed is usually found on mountains, foothills, and plains and in semiarid desert regions. Growth starts in late fall, winter, or early spring, depending on locality, species, and moisture. When the plant is young it is not as bitter and animals tend to keep going back.

Pregnant animals grazing on locoweed could have a high chance of abortion. Offspring can be small and weak at birth, or fail to survive. Cows may give birth to the offspring with skeletal malfunctions. Hydrops amnii has been observed in pregnant cows grazing Locoweed. This condition is characterized by a distended abdomen due to the accumulation of the fluid in the uterus. In this condition, affected cattle do not show typical signs of poisoning. They do however have increased susceptibility to disease conditions such as pneumonia and foot rot.

When dealing with horses it is always best to keep them well fed so they will not eat locoweed. Horses will usually stay away from locoweed if they are full. However, once a horse is poisoned it will never recover. As little as two pounds can cause acute poisoning in horses and cows within a few hours of being eaten. Animals often seek out plants, and become addicted to locoweed once they graze them

There are many different kinds of locoweed, with flowers in a variety of colors. Mature plants range from 6 to 12 inches tall. Leaves are covered with fine hairs giving it a whitish-gray appearance. Flowers vary in color by species. Flowers are born on a leafless stalk emerging from the center of the plant, forming a spike-like cluster. The plant also produces kidney-shaped seeds which are formed in a hairy, leather-like pod.

Signs of Poisoning

- Depression
- Dull dry hair coat
- Eyes dull and staring
- Irregular gait or some loss of muscular control
- Weakness
- Some animals show extreme nervousness
- Loss of sense of direction
- Withdrawal from other animals
- Some animals develop inability to eat or drink
- Abortions are common; hydrops may occur in some cattle
- Skeletal malformations may occur
- Animal may become violent if stressed
- Reduced libido in males and altered estrous behavior in females

You can reduce losses by restricting access to locoweed during critical periods when the plant is more palatable than associated forages. Remove animals that begin eating locoweed to prevent intoxication and to keep them from influencing others to start eating locoweed. No treatments have been identified that are effective in reversing or minimizing locoweed poisoning.



Locoweed can be controlled by spraying actively growing or budding plants. If plants are scattered, treatment of individual plants or patches may be practical (visit our office for additional info). You can also pull the weeds by hand. The best time to do this would be after a rain, or when the ground is moist.

For color photos & additional information go to:
[www.http://plants.usda.gov/index.html](http://plants.usda.gov/index.html)

Olla Irrigation—Water Saving Gardens

Written about in Chinese texts over 2000 years ago, utilized by the Romans, and still used today across Asia, Africa and Latin America, clay pitcher irrigation, ollas (pronounced oh-yas) is a low-tech method that's helping many communities in arid places around the world cultivate farmland during dry seasons of the year.

Olla gardening by Curtis W. Smith, NMSU Extension Horticulture Specialist

Irrigation of plants by means of ollas, unglazed pottery jars, is an ancient practice. It was brought to the American Southwest by Spanish settlers and adapted to local gardens by Native American gardeners as well as by the Spanish settlers.

Over time, modern systems were adopted, but these modern systems are not as efficient as irrigation by seepage from buried ollas. Modern systems, even surface drip irrigation systems, lose more water to evaporation and are more likely to clog than ollas. When ollas are used properly, plant roots will proliferate around the moist clay jar, intercepting water before it can move through the soil by capillary action. This water intercepted by plant roots will then be used in the plant transpiration stream. This results in almost 100% of applied irrigation water being absorbed by the plants.

Olla irrigation solves problems for gardeners who cannot irrigate frequently, and is a boon for plants that should not be irrigated frequently. Ollas allow gardeners who travel, as well as gardeners whose irrigation frequency is limited by water conservation ordinance, to irrigate infrequently while still maintaining the health and beauty of their garden plants.

Proper plant and olla selection is important. Woody plants may break the pottery jars as their woody roots grow in diameter. Herbaceous plants are less likely to damage ollas. Olla porosity, size, and shape must be matched to plant water needs, root size and root distribution. Deeply rooted plants benefit from deeper ollas, shallow rooted plants are more efficiently irrigated with shallow ollas.

The diameter of the olla may also be chosen to match the diameter of the plant cluster. Shallow, broad, ollas will provide adequate irrigation for clumps of grasses and annuals.

Olla plantings should be planted in clusters to maximize water use efficiency. While the planting group may be of one plant type, mixtures of grasses, annuals, biennials, and perennials may also be planted around a single buried olla. Mixtures of plant types may be used to create a more natural landscape. The olla clusters may themselves be clustered to create more expansive or linear plantings.

The olla pottery may become a decorative element in the landscape along with large rocks and flagstones. Portions of olla left exposed above ground should be glazed or treated to prevent evaporation.

To modernize these ancient irrigation systems, the jars may be recharged by a drip irrigation system, timed and sized to replace water lost from the ollas. This recharge of ollas may be done daily, or as frequently as allowed by water conservation ordinances.

OLLAS CAN BE PURCHASED THROUGH CLAUNCH-PINTO SWCD. PLEASE CALL (505)847-2243 OR STOP BY OUR OFFICE TO PLACE YOUR ORDER.

WE ALSO HAVE INFORMATION ON HOW TO USE OLLAS IN VARIOUS GARDEN ENVIRONMENTS.





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Safety Tips For Preventing Another Bad Fire Season

Having almost no moisture this winter is keeping everyone on their toes when it comes to fire hazards. The Ojo Peak, Trigo and Big Spring fires, all of which happened within the 2008 year, have a lot of people worried about this year's fire season. This is due to the less than normal amounts of snow and rain that we've received. It is already June, with just a few inches of snow through the winter and only a couple of rain showers thus far, this is a very big problem. However, there are many things that people can do to prevent the kind of fire season we had last year. This includes; never leaving a fire unattended, completely put out campfires before leaving, do not use any kind of fire works, always know your county's burning regulations, and when you choose a site for a campfire, make sure there are no campfire bans in place and that it is in a safe location. If we all pay attention to these important guidelines, it will insure that we have a safe and fun summer.

