



Colorado Conserverator

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

Teacher Workshop 2013

The Watershed Workshop Series

The Rio Grande Watershed Conservation Education Initiative announces its 6th year of providing resource conservation education to K-12 teachers throughout the San Luis Valley and the state of Colorado. Through a series of weeklong instructional field studies, we are able to offer three levels of teacher training.

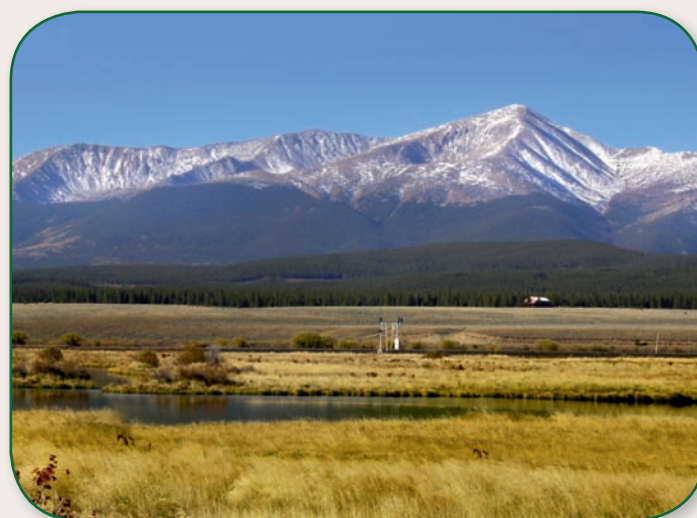
Level one—"Watershed to Cup"—is an introduction to a variety of watershed concepts from how a watershed works, to the difference in stream ecosystems, to the importance of water delivery methods. The workshop helps teachers study water beyond the water cycle, examining both consumptive and non-consumptive needs.

The second level, "Watershed to Sustainability", gives educators a more in-depth look at the connectedness of all resources and how important it is to work to sustain those resources. Again using the watershed approach, teachers come from the top of the alpine watershed down to the valley floor looking at all the resources and the things their managers contend with to why certain decisions are made.

The third level, "Watershed to Table", examines the role agriculture plays in the human scheme, ranging from forest agronomy to small farms to production agriculture. The workshop attendees carry out field studies about water availability, aquifer and soil health, carrying capacity, grazing, and the economics of food. Not only do educators build their background

knowledge, but they learn ready-to-use techniques to get kids engaged and knowledgeable about the world around them.

At each level, participants receive certification in Project Wet (Year One), Project Learning Tree (Year Two), and Food, Land and People (Year Three), along with a host of classroom take-along books, supplies, ready-to-use curricula, and lessons. The workshop takes place on the pristine Trinchera Ranch.



The ranch provides all meals (three per day), lodging, and travel for the week-long workshop as an in-kind donation to conservation education. Upon completion of the class and the week's education project, teachers also receive three graduate credit hours, which go toward their recertification. The Trinchera's commitment to conservation and community is unparalleled. Their willingness to allow us to use their diverse facility for such an amazing learning tool is a gift and we truly thank them for it!

To date, the workshop has graduated its first set of teachers to complete all three sections of the watershed series, and the second set will graduate in 2012. We have a 97% return rate for teachers returning for the repeat years, and currently have a short waiting list for those wanting to attend, so if you are a conservation district who wants to sponsor a Teacher just let me know and they are assured a spot. We will add a new set of recruits in 2013 and look forward to reaching a whole new group of students!

To register for the workshop visit our website at: www.riograndewatershed.org or call Judy at 719-754-3400.



CACD's mission is to serve as the unified voice for the Conservation Districts of Colorado, facilitating education and support of landowners in their stewardship of natural resources.



Message from the President

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts Board members and staff have been very active over the past several months in a variety of activities. In July 2012 CACD board

members attended the NACD summer legislative conference in Washington DC, attending committee meetings, regional meetings, and informing and educating Federal legislators about the issues that face the private landowners of Colorado. The Board's message to these legislators is based on policies adopted by our members, the Conservation Districts in Colorado. Also during July 2012 CACD regrettably had to make a decision to cancel Camp Rocky due to uncontrollable wildfires in the immediate area of the camp. We very much look forward to continuing the camp this coming summer.

In late September a number of CACD board members attended the NACD joint meeting of the Pacific region and the Southwest region in Boise Idaho. At this meeting it was decided that Colorado will host the upcoming 2013 joint region meeting in Durango, Colorado this coming fall. These NACD regional meetings are a great opportunity for each state and region to discuss and educate the others in attendance as to the importance of each states' natural resource concerns and issues.

The annual meeting of the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts was held in Vail, Colorado in mid-November of 2012. This was a very successful meeting with a number of important natural resource issues discussed and a wide variety of presentations about the natural resource issues that face us here in Colorado. There were a number of new policies adopted through the resolution process originating at the local Conservation

District level through a vote of the membership at the annual meeting. This policy making process gives CACD the guidance it relies on for direction of the organization. A total of four of Colorado's new policies established at the 2012 annual meeting have national significance. CACD was successful in moving these four policies through the National Association of Conservation Districts policy making process at the NACD annual meeting in San Antonio Texas the end of January 2013. The result of CACD's success establishes policy at NACD on support for allowing the use of chainsaws in the clearing of trails in designated wilderness areas, support of less stringent regulatory requirements on farm and ranch fuel tank storage, support for the use of humane spaying of mares to control wild horse populations on the range, and support of state governors in conjunction with local County Commissioners having the authority to force that United States Forest Service to clear hazardous fuels from Federally owned public lands.

CACD started the new year welcoming new representatives to the Board. Don McBee from the Prowers Conservation District is the Lower Arkansas Watershed representative to the CACD Board and Kristie Martin from the Delta Conservation District represents the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed. Jolene Arnold is also assisting as a representative for the Upper South Platte Watershed.

The Board also recognized the 2012 Conservationist of the Year awards recipients during the rodeo at the National Western Stock Show in January. Award recipients were The Draper Family from Wetmore, CO as Rancher of the Year and the Burns Family from Del Norte, CO as Farmer of the Year. We're proud to recognize these hard working family operations for the successful conservation practices they have implemented on their lands.

Gary Moyer, CACD Board President

No-Till Drill Use is Popular

The use of the No - Till drill continues to be very popular in the Bookcliff, South Side and Mount Sopris Conservation Districts. During the 2012 spring and fall seeding period the drill was used 25 times. This generated \$3750.00 of income to the Districts. But, perhaps the important thing is the outreach and contacts that is created with the Districts providing this service to the landowners in the area.

A total of 271.7 acres were seeded this year. The average acreage seeded was about 11 acres per user. Over the years the Districts' drill has seeded a total of 1415.3 acres.



Seeding Pastureland with No Till Drill.

The Districts have prepared a form for the users of the drill to return. This will give us a record of settings for various seeding and how well the various boxes worked with different seed mixtures and rates. It also gives us a record of problems that a user may have had while using the drill.

Providing the drill is a great service to the cooperators in the Districts.

Colorado NRCS Announces Application Cutoff Date

For \$21 Million in Financial Assistance for EQIP, Salinity, & Special Initiatives Funding

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado recently announced application cutoff dates of Friday, February 15, and April 19, 2013, to sign up for fiscal year 2013 general Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Salinity Control Program, and Special Initiatives Program funding.

Eligible applications received after the cutoff period may be considered during a later time and will be processed throughout the fiscal year as needed.

A total of \$21 million in financial assistance is available to landowners who implement a quality conservation plan designed to benefit soil, water, air, plants, and/or wildlife resulting in not only productive lands but healthy ecosystems as well.

NRCS continually strives to put conservation planning at the forefront of its programs and initiatives. Conservation plans provide landowners with a comprehensive inventory and assessment of their resources and an appropriate start to improving conservation efforts on their land.



"Landowners must have a conservation plan in place to be considered for funding," said Phyllis Ann Philipps, State Conservationist, Colorado NRCS. "We encourage

them to contact their local field office right away to be considered for this year's funding."

Nearly \$16 million of the total funding is intended to implement practices associated with general EQIP and the Salinity Control Program, while the remaining \$5 million will help fund the following eight voluntary special initiatives:

- Organic – provides financial opportunities for organic producers to address natural resource concerns related to organic production.
- Air Quality – provides financial assistance to implement approved conservation practices to address significant air quality resource concerns for designated high priority geographic locations.
- High Tunnel – provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to allow them to extend the growing season of high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.
- Energy - enables the producer to identify ways to

conserve energy on the farm through Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP), also known as on-farm energy audits.

- Sage Grouse (Gunnison and Greater) – assists landowners within several western slope counties with reducing the threats to the Sage Grouse.
- Lesser Prairie Chicken – focuses on the reduction of threats to lesser prairie chicken in the southeastern portion of the state.
- Ogallala – provides financial assistance to agriculture producers to address water quantity and quality concerns and conserve water in the Ogallala Aquifer.
- National Water Quality - works in priority watersheds to help farmers and ranchers improve water quality and aquatic habitats in impaired streams.

All applications will be evaluated and funded on a watershed basis, with local and watershed workgroup input on conservation priorities.

EQIP provides financial assistance for conservation systems such as animal waste management facilities, irrigation system efficiency improvements, fencing, and water supply development for improved grazing management, riparian protection, and wildlife habitat enhancement.

Interested applicants may apply at their local NRCS Service Center. To locate an office near you please click on this link: [Service Center Locator](#). Applications MUST be received in your local NRCS Service Center by close of business on Friday, February 15 and/or April 19, 2013.

For additional information on EQIP, please contact Dawn Jackson, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, at 720-544-2805 or email her at dawn.jackson@co.usda.gov. You can also visit our website at www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.



Custer County Conservation District

Co-Sponsors Oil & Gas Extraction Forum

On January 22, 2013, conservation organizations and the West Custer County Library co-sponsored a community forum that addressed the potential for oil & gas and mineral extraction in Custer County. The main intent of the forum was to provide an overview of the related issues in an educational manner rather than an opportunity to debate the pros and cons of the current "fracking" process or the desirability of local oil & gas development. Speakers included archaeologist Gary Zeigler, executive director of San Isabel Land Protection Trust, Ben Lenth, paleontologist and retired exploration geologist & manager in the petroleum industry, as well as retired USGS hydrologist Doug Cain. The forum was well received by a "packed" house. It was determined that due to the geology of Custer County; it is unlikely, except in the northeast portion, that oil & gas exploration will become a major concern in the county. The forum raised awareness of the issues surrounding this type of exploration, the methods used,

landowners' property rights in regard to surface and underground mineral rights and information on how to find out who owns those rights. The forum also sparked interest in the attendees as to how the local and state government are handling these issues and responding to their constituents' concerns. Due to the high level of interest in this forum, it is very likely that follow-up forums will be presented in the near future. The sponsoring groups for the forum were CSU Extension, Custer County Conservation District, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, San Isabel Land Protection Trust, Sustainable Ways, and the West Custer County Library. The presentation is available for others to view. Please go to the following web site to view this slide show presentation: http://www.slideshare.net/knackord/custer-county-fracking-forum-12213?utm_source=slideshow01&utm_medium=ssemail&utm_campaign=share_slideshow

Conservator is Going Electronic

We'd like to thank the approximately 200 Conservator recipients who have switched to the electronic version of The Conservator! We appreciate your help getting conservation news and information to you in the fastest, most efficient way. If you haven't sent us your electronic information, please join us in migrating to an electronic distribution of your Conservator. This process will save everyone time and money – to say nothing of resources. Please visit CACD.contact.us@gmail.com and tell us your preferences:

- Email only: YES!! Good for you. Provide the email address if it is not the same as on your message to us.
- Email & Hardcopy Please: This might help you decide in the wisdom of going email only.
- Hardcopy Only: The ideal approach for those who don't have easy access to a computer or want to fall asleep thinking about conservation.

Thanks much., *CACD Board of Directors*

Successful Ag Day Workshop

Every year in January the Bookcliff, Mount Sopris and South Side Conservation Districts host "Annual Ag Day" held in New Castle, Colorado. This year speakers for the 24th Annual Ag Day drew a crowd of 125 to the New Castle Community Center. This year's topics included topics discussing snow surveys, drilling impacts, clean energy and agritourism.

Steve Anthony, Garfield County's weed and vegetation manager spoke first. At the top of the list is common reed grass, which appears to be on the increase around the Western slope. The species, which can grow to 15 feet tall, seems to be moving in to fill the gaps left by eradication efforts aimed at Tamarisk and the Russian Olive tree.

Anthony said the native reed grass was used by historic Native American tribes to make arrow shafts, musical instruments and mats for sitting and sleeping.

"We don't want to target the native plants," he said. "The problem with weeds is that, while some are attractive to the eye, they can

take over huge amounts of terrain and choke out other plant life, including native species needed by wildlife to survive."

Renewable energy, gas development discussed
Joani Matranga of Carbondale, a renewable energy specialist with the Governor's Energy Office, spoke about energy efficiency technologies, such as solar photovoltaic cells and small hydroelectric facilities, that can keep utility costs down on farms and ranches.

Steve Hale, an environmental official with Encana Oil & Gas (USA), spoke of his company's efforts to restore land to its original state after drilling wells for natural gas.

With a wealth of photos and slides in a Powerpoint presentation, Hale lauded Encana for doing as much as it can to leave the land as natural as possible once the drilling rigs move on.

Steve Hale recently spoke at the CACD Annual Meeting in Vail this past November.

2012 AERIAL FOREST HEALTH SURVEY

Announced by U.S. Forest Service and Colorado State Forest



The U.S. Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service today released the results of the annual aerial forest health survey in Colorado, which indicates that the spread of the mountain pine beetle epidemic has slowed dramatically, while the spruce beetle outbreak is expanding.

The mountain pine beetle epidemic expanded by 31,000 acres, down from last year's reported increase of 140,000 acres. This brings the total infestation to nearly 3.4 million acres in Colorado since the first signs of the outbreak in 1996. Most mature lodgepole pine trees have now been depleted within the initial mountain pine beetle epidemic area. However, the infestation remains active from Estes Park to Leadville.

In contrast, the spruce beetle outbreak is expanding, with 183,000 new acres detected in 2012, bringing the total acreage affected since 1996 to nearly 1 million acres (924,000). The areas experiencing the most significant activity are on the San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests in southern Colorado. Spruce beetles typically attack spruce trees downed by high winds. Once the populations of spruce beetles build up in the fallen trees, the stressed trees surrounding them offer little resistance to attack. Similar to mountain pine beetle, the increase in spruce beetle activity is due to factors that increase tree stress, including densely stocked stands, ongoing drought conditions and warmer winters.

"Now more than ever it is important that we work across the entire landscape to ensure forests are more resilient for generations to come," said Dan Jirón, Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. "A vibrant forest products industry, aggressive community actions, strong collaborative efforts and targeted high-priority projects will allow us to make progress to promote forests more suitable for an uncertain future climate."

"The spruce beetle epidemic in our high-elevation forests demonstrates the breadth and complexity of issues affecting Colorado's forests," said Joe Duda, Interim State Forester and Director of the Colorado State Forest Service. "Active forest management and a viable forest products industry will allow

landowners and land management agencies to expand forest treatments on lands available for management, while reducing wildfire risk and protecting important natural resources and infrastructure."

In late 2012, two 10-year stewardship contracts were awarded by the U.S. Forest Service to improve forest resiliency on 20,000 acres affected by the mountain pine beetle on the Medicine Bow-Routt and White River National Forests. These contracts are in addition to the Front Range and Pagosa Springs Long-Term Stewardship Contracts awarded previously. The contracts reduce forest health treatment costs and foster new uses of beetle-killed forest products to benefit forest resiliency and jobs.

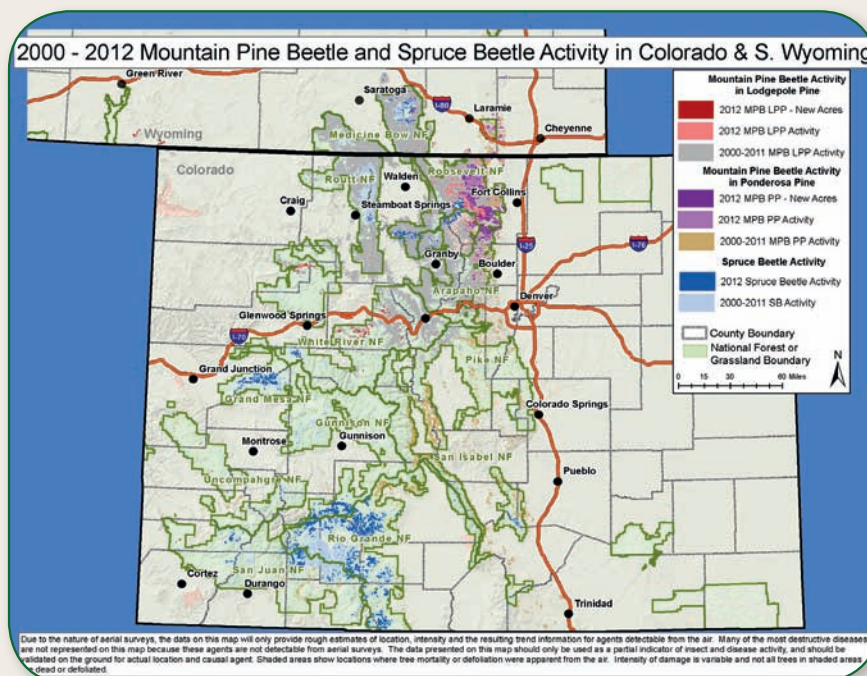
The forest products industry is better positioned as mills come on line to take advantage of trees being removed from forested lands across Colorado. The U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service and partners are working to provide a reliable and predictable supply of biomass for new markets.

"Over the past several years, the Forest Service has worked with local, state and private partners to increase our collective ability to improve forest health and reduce wildland fire and public safety risks," said Jirón. "From encouraging biomass projects, to aggressively treating beetle-killed trees near communities, and

partnering to protect water resources, the Forest Service is working to efficiently fund projects to treat as many priority forested acres as possible."

Through the passage of legislation in recent years, the Colorado General Assembly has supported forest management actions that demonstrate community-based approaches to forest restoration and watershed health. The Colorado Forest Restoration Pilot Grant Program is a cost-share program that provides funding for up to 60 percent of the total cost for projects. To date, more than \$4.7 million in state

funds and another \$1 million in leveraged federal funds have been awarded to 86 projects across the State. Those funds additionally leveraged more than \$8 million in matching funds to restore more than 12,000 acres of forest. In addition, the 17 projects currently in progress will result in treatments on another 1,200 acres.



Weed Manager of the Year: Alan Swartz

The Teller-Park Conservation District's Weed Coordinator, Alan Swartz, received the Colorado Weed Manager of the Year Award from the Colorado Weed Management Association in December. Mr. Swartz has worked with the Conservation District since 2005, helping build and establish the program to its existing level of service. With Mr. Swartz's accomplishments, the Teller-Park Conservation District oversees the weed control for public and private landowners in Teller and Park Counties.

Alan practices comprehensive pest management including biological, cultural, chemical and mechanical. He attends workshops and conferences to stay up to date on current methods and effective chemicals and treatments to use. His educational efforts have included creating weed identification weed tours and workshops for the public and various agencies such as the Fossil Beds National Monument, US Forest Service, and Homeowners Associations. He is always willing to share his knowledge about weed management with anyone who asks.

In addition to his on the ground work in controlling weeds Alan has also secured funding and contracts to do weed management for CDOT, the US Forest Service, and many large private landowners such as the Santa Maria Ranch, Eagle Rock Ranch and the Winding River Ranch. He has also served as a member and the Chair for several years on the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area, assisting in grant proposals to secure funding for distribution to 8 participating counties. He continues to be a member of the CWMA.



An example of one success story in the Teller-Park Conservation District would be in the town of Alma in the northwest part of Park County. A collaboration between the town administrators, citizen volunteers, CDOT and the Teller-Park Conservation District/Alan Swartz proved to be effective in eliminating a huge population of scentless chamomile that was threatening to take over the entire town. This success has been repeated in numerous other locations.

Alan has served as President of the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area, a group of ten counties that coordinate weed management activities and submit grant applications for weed management.

Trent Loos at Morgan Conservation District Annual Meeting



Trent Loos came to Fort Morgan, Thursday, January 24, 2013 and brought his knowledge and sense of humor to Morgan Conservation District's Annual Meeting. When he arrived in town the first thing he did was go on the air and do his live nationwide radio show,

"Loos Tails - All Roads Lead To A Rural Route.

The district held a meet and greet for Trent after the radio broadcast where he signed his new book and CD for the attendees. The group enjoyed the personal attention they received, laughs and jokes abounded.

Trent spoke to the attendees at the district annual meeting on how most everything that a person needs comes from agriculture, including pharmaceuticals.

He also spoke about our current drought and how in the 1930's there was more moisture than there has been in the last three years. The difference now is that there are better farming techniques that safeguard our land, such as no-till farming and seed technology. Technology has advanced farming and ranching so much that these great people feed the elderly, the needy and our children each day. During the meeting Dr. Doug and Jan Ford were recognized as 2012 Conservationist of the Year. Also recognized for his many years of service to the Morgan Conservation District was Irwin Jess, retiring board member.

On Friday, Trent met with the Fort Morgan FFA which has 90 members strong. He spoke to them on how important it is to inspire people and that everyone should inspire someone in their lifetime. He also told the FFA chapter that if someone is passionate enough and works hard enough they can make changes. The story he told referring to was a group of students in Kansas who recently put together a video about the amount of calories a high school athlete needs 5,000 calories a day and what they would get during their lunch according to USDA regulations would be 750 calories. Because of these students and this video the lunch regulations have now been changed.

Recycle Baling Twine

Ft. Collins Conservation District

A rancher's question, an article from our NRCS Range Conservationist, and a cordage company all worked together to initiate our baling twine recycling program.

Our District Conservation Technician discovered consistent interest throughout the communities in our district for a place where people could take baling twine to be recycled. She contacted Bridon Cordage in Minnesota and learned that they recycle twine into

more twine. They explained that when our district can collect a semi-load they will send a truck to get it and pay market price per clean pound (at least .08/pound for loose twine and .11/pound for baled twine). The twine needs to have 8% or less contamination from dirt, stalks or other non-twine items. The company can be contacted for the specific guidelines at : 507-320-7002.



Seemed like a great idea, so we investigated different aspects. We needed a collection site, containers, and some kind of storage as the pile grew. We asked local waste management companies if they were interested or could donate containers. No luck, so far. We asked at auction yards and businesses, we even asked school ecology clubs if they would help. No luck. Finally one business owner wanted to help (see image above).

He had some great ideas about setting up the collection bin

on a pallet for easy moving. He was willing to use his larger bins and a storage barn. It was important to start the collection

in a place where it would be semi-supervised so that people wouldn't confuse the container with a trash bin. We started about 2 weeks ago. Then the local newspaper featured the program on their front page and more businesses contacted us.

When we start a business in the

program we make a laminated poster for them to display and print out about 80 handouts on photo cardstock so they'll be durable. The handouts are about 4 to a page and look like this: So far so good. With limited funding for the project, we decided that we better just get started and work out the details

BALING TWINE RECYCLING

WHERE?.....AT WELLINGTON ACE HARDWARE

WHAT?.....PLASTIC TWINE ONLY, NO TRASH, NO DIRT PLEASE

WHY?.....TWINE CAN BE RECYCLED INTO MORE TWINE,

SAVE \$\$ AND KEEP COLORADO BEAUTIFUL!!!

Thanks to Doug & Ian Anderson at Wellington Ace Hardware in cooperation with the Fort Collins Conservation District. Email questions: ftcollinsconsvdist@qwestoffice.net

as we go. We are greatly encouraged by the way this program has brought a lot of community members together; so many people helped us come up with ideas. Hopefully we'll have more good news and maybe some tips in the next issue of the conservator.



Camp Rocky 2013 Registration Open

Environmental Adventures for Students



CACD is actively taking registrations for 2013's Camp Rocky! Once again, Camp Rocky will be held at the Rocky Mountain Camp near Divide, CO. This year's camp dates are July 7th - 13th and we hope your interested 14-19 year old will attend. After last year's devastating fires, we're thrilled to be opening registration for this year's campers. Find all the registration forms and additional information at www.coloradoacd.org.

This year, we're celebrating 50 years of Camp Rocky. If you're a former Camp Rocky student, Junior Leader or instructor, please contact us at cacd.contact.us@gmail.com. We're working on a day of festivities celebrating Camp Rocky, its alumni and its future!

We're very grateful for our sponsors and scholarship providers over the years, especially the Conservation Districts of Colorado and CACD's partners in conservation including

the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado State Conservation Board and the Colorado State University Extension. The volunteer hours and donations of supplies and scholarship opportunities over the years are immeasurable, and the sole reason for Camp Rocky's existence today.



If you're an interested camper, alum or scholarship provider - contact us today!

CACD - Camp Rocky
PO Box 4138, Woodland Park, CO 80866-4138
719-686-0020
cacd.contact.us@gmail.com

Now is the Time to Address Home & Community Wildfire Mitigation

With the ongoing drought, low snowpack, recent brush fires and Red Flag Warnings in effect along the Front Range today, the Colorado State Forest Service reminds landowners to prepare their homes now for possible wildfire.

"Although there is no guarantee firefighters will be able to save your home during a wildfire, the odds increase if you follow the best-available mitigation guidelines," said Lisa Mason, outreach forester for the CSFS and Colorado's "Are You FireWise?" program manager. "It's a good idea to get started now, before wildfire danger increases this spring."

The CSFS recently updated its two principal guides for protecting property from wildfire. "FireWise Construction: Site Design & Building Materials" and "Protecting Your Home from Wildfire: Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones" were developed by experts in the fields of wildfire behavior and FireWise construction practices.

Although much of the information in the guides was unmodified from previous years, several important changes were made based on lessons learned from recent wildfires in the wildland-urban

interface. Among these changes is an added emphasis on:

- the ongoing need for year-round maintenance of surface fuels around the home, such as mowing grass and raking up thick beds of pine needles
- the importance of keeping gutters, decks and roofs free of pine needles and other combustibles year-round
- understanding how wildfires may start from burning ember showers, and not just direct heat and flame
- describing fuels mitigation in specific forest types

The revised property protection guidelines, as well as information on developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans, are available at CSFS district offices or on the CSFS website at www.csfs.colostate.edu.

The Colorado State Forest Service continues to be the lead state agency for providing forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners, following legislation in 2012 that transferred responsibility for wildfire command and control from the CSFS to the newly formed Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Horse and Burro Coalition Responds to BLM Horse and Burro Policy Changes

The National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition commends the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the recent release of four instructional memoranda (IMs) announced February 1st to ensure the humane treatment of animals and greater transparency during horse gathers.

The need for horse and burro gathers on the western range is paramount to safeguarding healthy rangeland ecosystems—protecting native fish, wildlife, plants and a working lands way of life—and to achieving appropriate management levels (AMLs) for horses and burros. Ensuring the humane treatment of horses and burros, while using sound and effective scientific management tools to address overpopulation, is critical to the long-term health of the range and horses.

As BLM moves forward with IM implementation, the Coalition recommends additional research and emphasis on the environmental and rangeland impacts of the outlined practices. These include range and wildlife impacts, as well as water rights and water availability for native fish, wildlife, and plants. Furthermore, the ability for personnel to adhere to certain practices in remote gather locations—due to the constraints associated with remote work—may pose a concern, potentially warranting further examination and adaption of the IMs.

The Coalition supports BLM's IMs on increasing transparency during gathers. These actions will help to educate the public about the humane process of gathering horses and burros, as well as the negative impacts of overpopulation on rangeland health.

"We are pleased to see the BLM addressing the ongoing issue of horse and burro overpopulation," said National Association of Conservation Districts President Earl Garber. "These recommendations will ensure the humane treatment of animals and greater transparency during gathers that are necessary for the protection of rangeland health."

"It is encouraging to see the agency's attempt to address this ongoing issue," stated Society for Range Management President Wally Butler. "We urge the BLM and other agencies to take the next step in addressing the larger issue of management and the comprehensive ecosystem health as impacted by the nation's wild horse and burro population."

"Safari Club International knows the cooperative development of policies that benefit not only the sound management of wild horses and burros, but of all the wildlife inhabiting the western range, including game species," said Safari Club International President John Whipple. "We have defended the Bureau in numerous lawsuits challenging gathers, and we will do so going forward to ensure western wildlife habitats are appropriately managed for future generations."

The Coalition looks forward to working with the BLM on addressing additional concerns related to horses and burros, including fertility control, scientific management practices, and ensuring healthy rangelands.

The National Horse & Burro Rangeland Management Coalition is a diverse partnership of 12 wildlife conservation and sportsmen organizations, industry partners, and professional natural-resource scientific

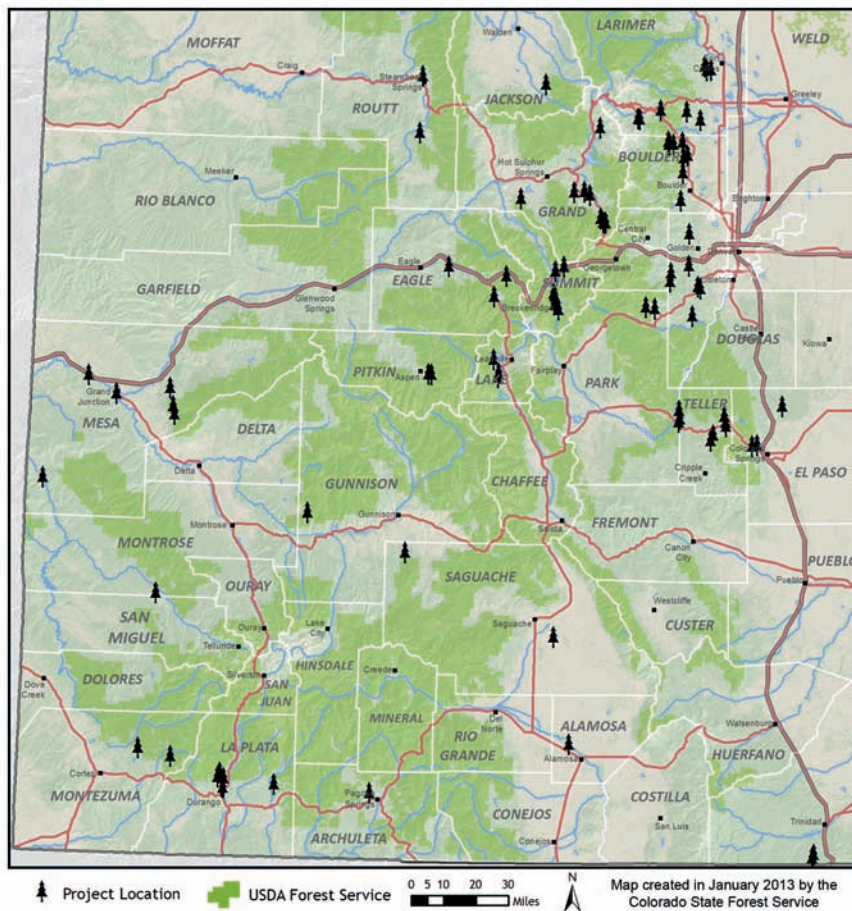
societies working together to identify proactive and comprehensive solutions to increase effective management of horse and burro populations and mitigate the adverse impacts to healthy native fish, wildlife, and plants and the ecosystems on which they depend.

The organizations include American Farm Bureau Federation, Masters of Foxhound Association, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Rifle Association, National Wildlife Refuge Association, Public Lands Council, Public Lands Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, Society for Range Management, and The Wildlife Society. For additional information regarding the Coalition, please contact us at: horseandrange@gmail.com.



Forest Restoration Program Protects Watersheds

Colorado Forest Restoration Grant Projects



Since 2007, a single grant program administered by the Colorado State Forest Service has helped mitigate threats to watershed health on more than 12,000 acres across Colorado, with more acres being treated every year.

The Colorado Forest Restoration Pilot Grant Program helps fund projects that demonstrate a community-based approach to forest restoration. The program first began in 2007 when the Colorado General Assembly, expressing interest and concern for the health of Colorado's watersheds, authorized funds to support forest restoration in Colorado communities to protect local watersheds and water supplies. The Colorado State Forest Service administers what is now referred to as the Forest Restoration Grant Program, which issues grant awards that have resulted in the treatment of thousands of acres of forest land across all land ownerships.

Projects that receive funding mitigate threats that affect watershed health, such as the build-up of

wildland fuels that increase the risk for a severe wildfire. Large, intense wildfires negatively impact watersheds through increases in runoff and erosion, diminished water quality and accelerated loss of snowpack.

A primary purpose of the grant program is to encourage diverse local stakeholders to work together to develop forest restoration proposals that protect critical water supplies and address related forest health challenges such as wildfire risk reduction, community protection, ecological restoration and woody biomass utilization.

The Legislation Behind the Program

The Forest Restoration Pilot Program first emerged during the 2007 legislative session with House Bill 1130, the Colorado Forest Restoration Act. This act authorized funding to support the Forest Restoration Pilot Program, which responded to the Colorado General Assembly's interest in creating a pilot program to demonstrate community-based approaches to forest restoration. During the 2008 legislative session, Senate Bill 071 was authorized to sustain the pilot program, and in 2009, this pilot program continued

through the Colorado Healthy Forests and Vibrant Communities Act of 2009.

Funded projects must meet specific criteria. The state share of the total project cost may not exceed 60 percent per project. Grant recipients are required to match at least 40 percent of the total project cost through cash, stumpage or in-kind contributions. All projects must be associated with a completed Community





Wildfire Protection Plan that has been approved by the Colorado State Forest Service. Additionally, projects that involve the Colorado Youth Corps Association or another accredited Colorado Youth Corps receive additional consideration. Approximately 50 percent of the awarded projects employed the Colorado Youth Corps Association in project implementation.

All funded projects address the program's primary objective of protecting water supplies and related infrastructure, and many of the projects also reduce the threat of large, high-intensity wildfires, preserve old and large trees where ecologically appropriate, and involve the replanting of trees in deforested areas. Some projects even support local communities and the timber industry by providing or selling forest products removed from the project areas.

The other criteria that projects are evaluated on include:

- compliance with all applicable federal and state environmental laws;
- involvement of a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project;
- incorporation of current scientific forest restoration information; and
- an assessment of existing



ecological conditions of the proposed project area, as well as the desired future conditions.

Partnering to Accomplish Watershed Protection

The accomplishments achieved through the Forest Restoration Pilot Grant Program are numerous. Projects have been implemented in 23 counties across the state. The program has awarded more than \$4.7 million of state funds and \$1 million of leveraged federal funds to 86 projects across the state, which additionally leveraged more than \$8 million to restore forests on over 12,000 acres. There are 17 projects currently in progress, and the CSFS anticipates these projects will treat an additional 1,200 acres. Projects range from ponderosa pine forest restoration to eradication of non-native tamarisk and Russian olive trees in riparian ecosystems.

More Watershed Protection to Come

Because this program has successfully brought dozens of communities together to protect forested areas from severe wildfire and other forest health concerns that ultimately impact water supplies, the Colorado General Assembly authorized an extension during the 2012 legislative session. House Bill 1032 will provide state funding for projects that continue the spirit of the original Forest Restoration Pilot Program. Stay tuned to learn more about riparian restoration and watershed protection efforts.





Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

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