

# Rocky Mountain Conservation Times

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## FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 275-4465 x 101

### Meeting Time:

7:00 p.m. 1st Wednesday of each month, USDA Service Center, Canon City

JOAN ADAIR, President  
LINDA STONE, Vice Pres.  
JOHN SANDEFUR, Sec/Treas.  
RICH GREEN, Member  
GARY RATKOVICH, Member  
TONY TELCK, Alternate Member  
DEBBIE MITCHELL, District Manager  
DAVID HALLOCK, Farm Bill Tech  
MELANIE SCAVARDA, Outreach Tech  
[www.fremontcd.org](http://www.fremontcd.org)

## LAKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 539-7331

### Meeting Time:

7:00 p.m. 3rd Thursday of each month, 10544 Hwy 24 South, Leadville

RAY DAWSON, President  
KEVIN CANNELL, Vice Pres.  
EDWARD SHOBER, Sec/Treas.  
ROBERT HOCKETT, Member  
MARY SCHROEDER, Member  
JOAN DAWSON, District Manager

## CUSTER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 783-2481

### Meeting Time:

9:00 a.m. 1st Thursday of each month, USDA Service Center, Silver Cliff, CO

BUDDY DRAPER, President  
BOB LEE, Vice Pres.  
BEN LENTH, Treasurer / Secretary  
ROBIN YOUNG, Member  
CAROL KUISLE-FRANTA, District Mgr.

[www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org](http://www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org)

## UPPER ARKANSAS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 530-3966

### Meeting Time:

7:30 p.m. 1st Monday of each month, U.S. Forest Service Building, Salida

BRADY EVERETT, President  
SANDY CRUZ, Vice Pres.  
BRETT MCMURRY, Sec/Treas.  
NANCY ROBERTS, Member  
DAVID LYNCH, Member  
Ed Berg, Member  
MARCELLA HELTON, District Manager

## MARCH 2014

### USDA EMPLOYEES

#### NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

##### Canon City Service Center:

Rick Romano, District Conservationist  
Nick Trainor, Rangeland Mgt. Specialist  
Patty Knupp, Soil Conservationist  
Rob Fontaine, Civil Engineering Tech  
Melanie Scavarda, Farm Bill Clerk

##### Silver Cliff Service Center:

Jim Sperry, District Conservationist  
Carol Kuisle-Franta, Soil Conservation Tech

##### Salida Service Center:

William Gardiner, District Conservationist

#### FSA SERVICE AGENCY

Brent Fillmore,  
County Executive Director  
Julie McCullar,  
Lead Program Tech

#### County FSA Committee

Charlie Newlon, Chairperson  
Tony Telck, Vice Chair.  
Steve Oswald, Member  
Buddy Draper, Member  
Seth Richardson, Member  
Bridget Gay, Advisor

# Upcoming Events

### April 25, 2014—The Fremont Conservation District's 68th Annual Banquet.

Our Annual Banquet will be held at the Quality Inn, Highway 50 and Dozier, Canon City. Reservations for dinner can be made by calling Debbie Mitchell at 719-275-4465, extension 101, by April 16th. Ticket prices are \$20.00, with a choice of beef, chicken or vegetarian. Peggy Godfrey, Cowboy Poet, from Moffat, Colorado will be our entertainment for the evening.

### May 3, 2014—Wildfire Community Preparedness Day— Canon City Area Fire District will have a booth at Blossom Festival with other local agencies, including Fremont Conservation District. Check with your local Conservation District to see what they are participating in that day.

### UPDATE— Work has been continuing on the Upper Arkansas River Restoration project (UARRP).

**COLORADO LAND LINK A PATHWAY TO LAND ACCESS** — For more information visit [www.GuidestoneColorado.org](http://www.GuidestoneColorado.org) or, contact David Lynch, Colorado Land Link director, at [david@guidestonecolorado.org](mailto:david@guidestonecolorado.org) or by calling 719-966-2237.

### Upcoming Events for Custer County Conservation District:

The District will continue to monitor the Wetmore Fire Rehabilitation project.

An Arbor Day tree planting with the local 4<sup>th</sup> graders will be held at the Community Garden.

Contact the District Office for more information at 719-783-2481.

# DISTRICT NEWS



## Fremont County, CO Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan

### Public Involvement/Participation

Fremont County is in the process of developing the County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan. Community input and involvement is instrumental in the development of a mitigation plan update that truly reflects the perceptions and needs of Fremont County residents.

We have developed a community survey and would like as much input from Fremont County residents, businesses and interested citizens as possible. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey so that your ideas may become a part of the plan to make Fremont County a safer and more resilient county to natural hazards!

#### Community Survey Link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FremontCountyHMPCCommunitySurvey>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact: **Laura Johnston** at:

Tetra Tech Inc. [laura.johnston@tetrattech.com](mailto:laura.johnston@tetrattech.com) or 303-312-8807



# FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

Farm Service Agency (FSA) celebrated with Kathy Gaylord as she retired on July 31, 2013, after many years of dedicated service to the area's farmers and ranchers. Kathy was a valued member of the Fremont and Pueblo County shared management team and she will be missed. Julie McCullar was welcomed as the new Program Tech as of December 1, 2013!! Julie had been serving in the Fremont County local office after Kathy retired. Please stop by and welcome Julie and see her for all your FSA needs!!

## Royal Gorge Bridge & Park

About 2200 acres of city property burned during the June 2013 Royal Gorge Fire. Crews have begun to work on an Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) that includes about 850 acres that are watershed drainage areas that impact the Arkansas River. Crews aerielly dropped about 25,000 pounds of native grass and wild flower seed February 11<sup>th</sup> over that portion of the burn area. Four hydroax machines now are working to mulch the burned trees on the less sloping areas within the burn to provide some extra protection from erosion and to help protect the seeded areas.

“The tires and the weight of the (hydroax) machines help press the seed into the ground and leave small depressions where the cleats of the chains are,” said Rick Romano, District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Services. “It really pushes the seed down into the ground and makes really good seed-to-soil contact.”

Hydroaxing is expected to last about 60 days; the phases on the north side of the bridge are expected to be completed by March 15 when the Royal Gorge Bridge & Park plans to open for weekend guided tours; work then will continue on the south side until it's completed. Plans are to treat some of the steeper areas within the burn using hand crews, and then the final step will be to plant at least 10,000 seedlings in April or May on about 100 acres to begin to re-establish the pinyon and juniper forest.

The work is paid for by a \$485,200 grant through the Colorado Water Conservation Board and a \$385,000 EWP grant through the Natural Resources Conservation Services. Hydroaxing services are provided by West Range Reclamation of Hotchkiss, with assistance from Rue Logging of South Fork. Romano and his team are providing technical assistance on the project, and the NRCS was part of the original resource team that created the plan that is underway.

Article taken from excerpts from Canon City Daily Record March 1, 2014  
Written by Carie Canterbury

# DISTRICT NEWS

## FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT CACD's DISTRICT OF THE YEAR

Fremont Conservation District (FCD) was honored to be CACD's District of the Year for 2013. With a year of big changes FCD managed to pack quite a bit of outreach to the community in! We co-sponsored three landowner workshops; numerous youth programs including sixteen garden boxes at Canon City High School; and, coordinated efforts with local agencies on the Garden Park Community Wildfire Protection Plan, with total grants awarded of \$31,100 through the BLM. Fremont Conservation District was also awarded CACD's Camp Rocky award and sponsored five students for the summer conservation camp. Fremont Conservation District also had five cost share applications completed by local landowners in the District for irrigation, seeding, and water control structures in 2013. Fremont Conservation District also supports Fremont County Weed Management with cost share for landowners, which pays for the technical assistance and herbicides on invasive species.

For 2014, FCD is planning to partner with several local Conservation Districts to provide informational workshops to local landowners – check our website for upcoming events!! Fremont Conservation District has also coordinated efforts with local agencies on the Southwest Canon Community Wildfire Protection Plan in the Dawson Ranch, Wolf Park and Eagle Heights area in Fremont County. Cost share is also available for landowners in the District for 2014 for irrigation, seeding, water control structures, and ditch repair caused by flooding. The cost share is for materials only paying up to 50% or \$700 maximum. There is also \$3000 in cost share for one ditch company in the District available in 2014. Fremont Conservation District has again provided cost share assistance through Fremont County Weed Management for weed control to landowners to help defray costs associated with herbicides and technical assistance. Fremont Conservation District is here to serve you with your conservation efforts – let us know how we can help!!

### **USDA StrikeForce Initiative in Colorado**

The StrikeForce initiative is designed to better serve persistent poverty communities and socially disadvantaged farmers through the coordination of activities among USDA agencies and the use of Community Based Organizations (CBO). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado has identified 44 Counties as high priority areas for which it will focus its efforts.

Strikeforce allows USDA to illustrate its commitment to improving access to USDA programs while enhancing the visibility and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. It also provides the opportunity to promote and assist in the development and sustainability of rural communities, recognizing that 90% of all persistently impoverished communities are in rural areas.

## Custer County Conservation District Hosts Water Forum

The 4<sup>th</sup> Custer County Water Forum – *Water on the Land & in the Ground* - was held on Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup> in Westcliffe. The forum brought out 85 attendees eager to learn about water and the forum also coincided with the arrival of some much needed water falling from the sky in the form of rain and snow. No one complained about the weather. The forum was co-sponsored by the Custer County Conservation District and the San Isabel Land Protection Trust with support from the local NRCS office and Custer CSU-Extension.

The agenda included updates from the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District by Custer County Director Bill Donley, and Water Issues in Custer County by Jerry Livengood, Lead Water Commissioner for District 13. Ken Watts, USGS Hydrologist, spoke on groundwater in the Wet Mountain Valley. Ben Lenth, Executive Director, San Isabel Land Protection Trust, explained how conservation easements can help tie water to your land. Huerfano County Commissioner Max Vezzani discussed how Huerfano County has utilized 1041 regulations. Steve Witte, State Division 2 Engineer, explained the regulations for ponds on private property. The keynote speaker of the day was Colorado Supreme Court Justice Greg Hobbs. He regaled the audience with a lively discussion of the history of Colorado water and water rights. The speakers were well received and provided clear and concise answers to audience questions. A few questions touched on controversial issues – to which Justice Hobbs remarked “Do you grow hot potatoes up here?”

The Colorado Foundation for Water Education provided 100 copies of its Citizen Guides to be distributed free – the normal cost of the guides is \$10 each. These guides can be viewed or bought online at the CFWE website – [www.yourwatercolorado.org](http://www.yourwatercolorado.org).

Water is a complex and vital subject that it seems we can never quite learn enough about. We will continue exploring this complex topic in future workshops.

## Custer County Conservation District Annual Tree Sales

The Custer Conservation District Annual Spring Tree Sale fundraiser will begin at the end of March. The District is offering six foot trees and also three foot potted trees that are suitable as windbreaks, shade trees, or for landscaping. The potted species that are available include Colorado blue spruce, Austrian pine and bristlecone. Examples of the potted trees may be viewed at the District Office. Our six footers include pinon pine, white fir, ponderosa pine, juniper and Colorado blue spruce. Twelve foot aspens are also available. The trees are provided by local nurseries and are dug locally; thereby the trees are already acclimated to the local conditions. Tree orders will be taken by phone (783-2481), via the website [www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org](http://www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org), or by visiting the District office at 10 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff. Discounts are available when larger numbers of trees are ordered. The deadline for ordering trees is Friday, May 2nd and the trees will be ready for pick-up by mid-May (this timeline is subject to change due to weather & snow conditions). The proceeds of the tree sale help the District provide workshops and conservation education programs to landowners and to the local school district. Custer County Conservation District is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation education and helping landowners manage their natural resources.

## **Healthy Forest or Devastating Consequences?**

Now is a good time to think about a NRCS EQIP Conservation Activity Plan and/or a Colorado Forest Service Forest Ag plan. Are you happy with the conditions of your Forest? Do you have problems with insects, diseases and dying trees? Are you aware that there may be things happening in your Forest that you can't see? Our forests are becoming more susceptible to insects, diseases, overstocking and wildfire as a result of little or no management for a long time. Although some parts of our area have had a wetter and sometimes colder than normal winter, we have also had unseasonably warm weather. Our climate is changing with warming temperatures allowing insects to become more active and wildfire danger to increase. The best way to save our forests is to manage them by treating insect and disease infestations while they are small, if they have the potential to become damaging and to manage sustainably. Sustainability is having the appropriate stocking of trees on your property for the climatic conditions your property is like to experience. You need a proper mix of species and age class diversity, if you want your forest to prosper and to be healthy enough to pass on to your younger generation. If you continue to do no management, you increasingly run the risk of losing your forest to natural disturbances like insects, diseases or wildfire in an increasingly changing environment.

By Floyd Freeman

**Society of American Foresters** - Certified Forester No. 3856

**Natural Resources Conservation Service** - Technical Service Provider No. 11-7538

**Colorado State Forest Service** - Tree Farm Inspector

Bachelor of Science Forest Management – University of Montana 1973

40 years of experience with the US Forest Service and BLM

3 years of experience as a Consulting Forester

### **USDA Launches Tool to Help Farmers' Markets Accept SNAP (Sustainable Agriculture)**

MarketLink is a website, recently launched by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, which helps farmers' markets and direct-marketing farmers become authorized to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly food stamps) benefits; the site also provides information on obtaining the equipment necessary to process SNAP benefits. USDA is also offering up to \$4 million in equipment grants through September 30, 2014. MarketLink is the result of a partnership between USDA and the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition. Please contact Bart Bushman at 303-844-0310 or [bart.bushman@fns.usda.gov](mailto:bart.bushman@fns.usda.gov) if you would like more information on this opportunity.

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