

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

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

ROBERT MILLER, President
BEN LENTH, Vice Pres.
BOB LEE, Treasurer / Secretary
BUDDY DRAPER, Member
SHERON BERRY, Member
ROBIN YOUNG, Ex-Officio, Custer County Extension
CAROL KUISLE-FRANTA, District Mgr.

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

OCTOBER 2014

USDA EMPLOYEES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Canon City Service Center:

Rick Romano, District Conservationist
Josh Tashiro, Rangeland Mgt. Specialist
Vacant, Soil Conservationist
Rob Fontaine, Civil Engineering Tech
Cheryl Lawson, 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

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

Upcoming Events

The Custer County Conservation District is holding its 74th Annual Meeting Friday, November 7th, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Location to be determined

This year's theme is "75 years of Soil Conservation in Custer County". The Conservation District is celebrating its 75th Anniversary and will be presenting a field workshop on Soil Health and Pasture/Rangeland production. The workshop will include hands-on demonstrations and presentations by the Colorado NRCS Soil Health team. CSU – Extension will also present on optimizing soil health for rangelands.

The District will also honor past Conservation District Board members and give a brief history of the District.

The program will also include the judging of the 6th grade conservation poster contest and a short presentation on Camp Rocky.

Reservations are encouraged and may be made by calling the District Office at 719-783-2481. Cost is \$5 per person for the workshop and lunch.

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 or, contact David Lynch, Colorado Land Link director, at david@guidestonecolorado.org or by calling 719-966-2237.

DISTRICT NEWS

- REGISTRATION -

Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area Informational Meeting

Wednesday, November 5, 2014
8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Holy Cross Abbey
Canon City, CO

*Registration fee of **\$25.00** per person includes refreshments, lunch, materials, a full day of informative programs, and continuing education credits.*

*Return this form by **Thursday, October 23, 2014** with check payable to:*

Custer County Conservation District

P.O. Box 389, Westcliffe, CO 81252

Phone: 719-783-2481

E-mail: carol.kuisle-franta@co.usda.gov

Name & Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

The above information will be included in workshop materials. If you **do not** want this information included in the workshop materials, check here:

The Fremont Conservation District is offering scholarships of \$12.50 to **FREMONT COUNTY RESIDENTS ONLY** for this workshop. Residents who wish to attend will have to pay the additional \$12.50 for their portion of the registration fee. To take advantage of the scholarship, send your registration form and checks to **Fremont Conservation District, Attn: Debbie Mitchell, 248 Dozier Avenue, Canon City, CO 81212, by October 22, 2014. Make checks payable to Fremont Conservation District and we will take care of the rest!!** For more information on this Weed Management Meeting, visit our website at www.fremontcd.org.

We hope to see you there!!

FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

FSA PROGRAMS

Disaster Assistance Program - If you have not done so already, livestock producers that have experienced grazing losses since October 2011 may be eligible for benefits. Contact the local Farm Service Agency by calling **719-275-4465 X2** for more details or to schedule an appointment. Additionally, the 2014 Farm Bill eliminated the risk management purchase requirement. Livestock producers are no longer required to purchase coverage under the federal crop insurance program or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program to be eligible for Livestock Forage Disaster Program assistance.

USDA Notifies Producers on Acreage History and Yields—Written notifications from USDA are underway to farmers that provide updates on their current base acres, yields and 2009-2012 planting history. Please cross check the letter from USDA with your farm records. If the information is correct, no further action is needed at this time, but if our letter is incomplete or incorrect, contact your local FSA office as soon as possible. By mid-winter all producers on a farm will be required to make a one-time, unanimous and irrevocable election between price protection and county revenue protection or individual revenue protection for 2014-2018 crop years.

Margin Protection Program for Dairy Producers—The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy) for dairy producers. The new, voluntary risk management program replaces the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which expired on September 1, 2014. A decision tool will be made available in the fall of 2014 to help producers make coverage level decisions. Enrollment will also begin this fall. Dairy operators will establish their production history during signup. Verification of the production records will be required. The regulations for MPP-Dairy are still being developed. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

Youth Loans—(available for 4-H Livestock projects) The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000. Call **719-543-8386 X2** for more details and / or an appointment with a loan officer.

Microloan Program—The FSA developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations. FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. Call **719-543-8386 X2** for more details and / or an appointment with a loan officer.

FSA PROGRAM DEADLINES

- Nov 3: FSA County Committee Election ballots mailed to eligible voters
- Nov 17: 2015 Crop Year FSA Acreage Reporting Deadline for Fall Seeded (**call for details**)
- Nov 20: 2015 Crop Year NAP Sales closing for Fruits (**call for details**)
- Dec 1: Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA County Office
- Dec 1: 2015 Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Sales Closing Date for 2015
- Jan 1: Newly elected County Committee Members take office
- Jan 15: Acreage report Date for Crops with Sales Closing date of November 20
- Jan 30: 2011, 2012, 2013, & 2014 LFP, LIP Notice of Loss and Application for Payment Deadline
- Jan 30: Deadline to submit Tree Assistance Program (TAP) Application (**call for details**)

DISTRICT NEWS

LAKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWS

Lake County Conservation District held their Annual Dinner on May 15, 2014. There were 17 people in attendance. The Poster Contest winner was honored. Judy Cole of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery gave a presentation of the history and future of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery.

Lake County Conservation District sponsored student Jonah Osborne to Camp Rocky. Two scholarships were awarded in the amount of \$500.00 each to two Lake County High School senior class students, Ryan Morrison and Kess Hershimer.

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) held their board meeting at the National Mining Hall of Fame in Leadville on August 11 and 12, 2014. Greg Brunjak, Project Manager for the Upper Arkansas River Restoration Project (UARRP), presented a tour of the project to the CACD board.

The Lake County Water Advisory Board meets once per month. There are a Supervisor and a Cooperator on the Board and report to the Lake County Conservation District each month on the information garnered from the meeting pertaining to water issues.

CAMP ROCKY EXPERIENCE

This past July I, Michael Franta, had the privilege to attend Camp Rocky in Divide, Colorado for the second year in the row. I had the incredible opportunity to be a Junior Leader for the camp this summer. For those of you who don't know what Camp Rocky is, it is a one week summer camp hosted by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts. The camp is based around the teaching of conservation practices to students in four disciplines. The disciplines are Forest Management, Rangeland Science, Fish and Wildlife Management, and Soil and Water Conservation. The camp is a great experience with a week full of fun activities, great hands-on learning opportunities from knowledgeable instructors, and a chance to meet new and interesting people. There was a group of about 30 campers this year but some years there are up to 60 or 70 campers. The campers come from all over the state and are from a variety of backgrounds. I greatly appreciate the sponsorship from the Custer County Conservation District which helped allow me to attend the camp. If you know a student that might be interested in this camp and is between the ages of 14 and 19 years, please have them contact their local Conservation District for this amazing experience.

FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Fremont Conservation District (FCD) held their Annual Banquet at the Quality Inn on April 25, 2014 with 65 people in attendance. Our entertainer for the evening was Peggy Godfrey, Cowboy Poet, who kept the crowd well entertained with poetry, stories, and anecdotes. Our Poster Contest Co-champions were both honored, Haley Rodgers and Laiken O'Rourke.

Cost share funds are still available for 2014 from FCD for landowners in the District for irrigation, seeding water control structures and ditch repair caused by flooding. Call 719-275-4465 X101 for more details.

NRCS PROGRAMS

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

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.

For more information or to set up an appointment for any of these programs, please contact the USDA Service Center at 719-275-4465, and we will gladly assist you.

USDA SERVICE CENTER

The USDA Service Center has had several changes since the Spring of 2014. We have had three people move on: Patti Knupp, the Soil Conservationist in our office has been promoted to the Area Biologist and is now out of the Pueblo NRCS office. Nick Trainor, the Rangeland Management Specialist in our office has left for greener pastures and his personal business. Melanie Scavarda, the Program Support Specialist, has moved on to be the Ultima National Trainer for the Program Support Specialists and her media business.

The good news is, two of these positions have been filled! Cheryl Lawson, started on July 28, 2014 as the Program Support Specialist, and will be serving Fremont, Chaffee and Pueblo counties. She will be the person contacting you for any application information that may be required and can be reached at the USDA Service Center, 719-275-4465 X109. Joshua (Josh) Tashiro will be our new Rangeland Management Specialist and will be starting in our office on November 3, 2014. Josh will assist the Canon City, Colorado Springs (including Woodland Park), Salida, Silver Cliff, and Walsenburg Field Offices. Josh was born and raised in Colorado and is a graduate of Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Rangeland Ecology with an emphasis in Forest and Rangeland Management. He began his career with NRCS in the Fort Collins Office as a participant in the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) in 2010, but also worked in other Field Offices while being a SCEP intern until being hired on fulltime in 2012. If you had been working with Nick on any project or need rangeland planning assistance, please contact Josh at the Canon City Field Office, 248 Dozier Avenue, Canon City, CO and 719-275-4465 X107.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural Development (RD) is once again in the Canon City USDA Service Center! Joe Kost is available to answer questions about programs that RD offers and can assist you with questions about your business or home loans. Please contact Joe at 719-221-9352 to schedule an appointment or any questions or concerns about any RD programs.

Our Forests Health: Bark Beetles

Our forests are under assault from many tree killing organisms, insects and diseases. In this short article I will address bark beetles and will discuss forest diseases in a later article. Major mortality in the ponderosa pine forests in Central Colorado and in the lodgepole pines along the I-70 corridor in the 2000's was from the mountain pine beetle. With so much ponderosa pine lost, Abert's squirrel populations (Abert's squirrels are totally dependent upon ponderosa pine) have declined. Few intact stands of ponderosa pine greater than 60 acres now exist. In some areas people are not able to go into the forests because of the hazards of falling dead trees. This is true in the dead lodgepole pine forests along the I-70 corridor and will later become a factor in spruce beetle killed areas. Douglas-fir throughout Colorado are attacked by Douglas-fir Beetle. Douglas-fir beetle tend to be more of a problem where trees have been scorched, yet survived, by wildfire. Spruce beetle have killed Engelmann spruce in entire watersheds in the Southern Colorado Rockies (all Engelmann spruce greater than 3 to 4 inches in diameter are dead in these areas) and are active in the Monarch Pass area. Spruce beetle also attack Colorado blue spruce at lower elevations. With the losses of forests to insects, wildfires may become more of an issue because there is much more dry fuel available and suppression efforts are more dangerous and difficult.

Bark beetles are a natural part of the forests, but, **why have they been so destructive?** These large scale insect infestations happen because conditions are ripe for them. There has been little forest management for decades and we have large tracts of forest land that are growing older and more overstocked. As long as trees live, they continue to grow larger and denser until mortality from competition, insects and diseases occurs. The trees are unable to fight off the insects on their own in their present condition. The natural predators of these bark beetles, birds and other insects, are busily dining but may be outnumbered by the vast numbers of bark beetles. Climate change is making matters worse by stressing the trees with warmer, often dryer conditions that may favor insects. Some people think that cold winters will kill bark beetles. Spruce beetles have evolved methods of coping with cold weather; they produce a kind of antifreeze that allows them to survive bitterly cold temperatures. Bark beetles are capable of flying up to 10 miles on their own and windy conditions can blow masses of them over long distances. In Canada, mountain pine beetles have been so numerous that masses of them have been detected by radar.

What can we do? Active forest management to increase species, age class and structural diversity is needed. If we wait and do nothing, we can expect to see more dead forests and more intense wildfires. If we manage our forests with thinning, patch cuts, clear cuts and other treatments our forests will become healthier and better able to withstand insects, diseases and become more fire resistant. Active forest management is critical, but will not solve all of our forest health problems immediately. We will still have forest health issues, but, we can be working with stressed live forests that are improving rather than salvaging dead forests.

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

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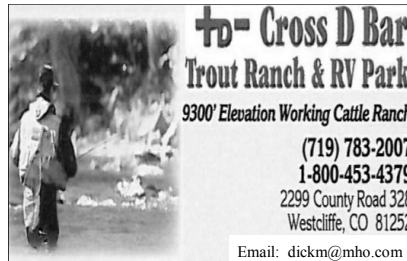
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