



Colorado Forestry

2004 Annual Report

Volume 12, Number 1
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La Junta District

La Junta District 2004 Annual Report

The following is a selection of 2004 Forestry Highlights within the La Junta District. We hope you enjoy!

Highlights –

Fire

- 2003 Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Western States Competitive Grant for \$10,000 completed on Oxbow DOW property winter 2004 through the West Otero Timpas CD. Baca CD also completed one for \$5,000.
- 2004 WUI Western States Competitive Grant for \$36,000 received and work ongoing through West Otero Timpas Conservation District.
- Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants awarded to 9 fire departments for a total of \$44,317.
- Wildland Urban Interface Defensible Space applications for \$5000 completed on two landowner properties (Pinyon/Juniper and tamarisk fuel types).
- A \$13,000 'Firewise for the Plains' Education Grant from the National Park Service, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

has been completed this year. Firewise workshops were conducted along with delivery of 45 Firewise notebooks to fire departments, county sheriffs, county commissioners, and federal partners.

- The Firewise Grant also created defensible space demonstration sites.
- La Junta Fire Department spent two evenings training in a 'Firewise Home Inspection' and ladder fuel mitigation work project on the Arkansas. The Stanley's graciously offered their homesite and property for this effort!
- 23 firefighters completed training course S-130 "Wildland Firefighter," and 30 completed S-190 "Wildland Fire Behavior."
- Congratulations! La Junta Fire Department red-carded 8 firefighters this year - Kit Carson 3, Hasty-McClave 2, Springfield 2, Campo 1, Fowler 1.
- Two County Wildfire Annual Operating Plan renewals were completed in Baca & Otero Counties.

- Many Cooperative Resource Rate Forms (CRRF) were completed in Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Kiowa and Otero counties this year. CRRF's are attached to county agreements allowing for potential interagency dispatch of resources.

Community Forestry

- The National Arbor Day Foundation awarded eight Tree City U.S.A.'s with Campo as the newest! Congratulations Campo, Eads, La Junta, Lamar, Las Animas, Rocky Ford, Springfield and Swink!
- Trinidad hosted 84 people at the 2nd Eastern Plains Community Forestry Conference. Thank you, Jude and Mike Garcia!
- Tree Inventories – data collection, data analysis, written reports and City Council Presentations were completed for La Junta, Las Animas, Lamar and Rocky Ford. A big thank you to the Colorado Tree Coalition, Tree Boards, City Representatives & CSFSers!
- Dutch Elm Disease Contracts for La Junta & Ordway were completed.
- One Rent-a-Forester Contract was completed with Eads.

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- Communities assisted this year were Campo, Eads, Granada, Kim, La Junta, Las Animas, Lamar, McClave, Ordway, Rocky Ford, Sheridan Lake, Springfield, Swink, Trinidad.

Conservation Forestry

- 2003 Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) dollars helped complete 1 Living Snow Fence by Kim and 8 projects in Cheyenne County (\$15,000).
- \$10,000 Insect and Disease Landowner Assistance (LOA-07) projects were completed by four landowners in pinyon/juniper (Ips).
- Conservation seedling trees were distributed this year with the assistance of Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service Offices in our counties.
- Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatoire initiated this year with many partners including the Nature Conservancy.

Conservation Education

- Supported the Division of Wildlife with two 'Teaching Environmental Science Naturally (TEN)' Camps in Southeast Colorado.
- Participated in 37 educational events, reaching out to over 1700 people.
- Educational events include the School Programs, Arbor Days, Tree Plantings, Boy Scout/Girl Scout projects at John Martin, Girls in the Middle Conference at OJC, Firewise workshops, CTC/NADF Poster Contest Events and Activity Modules – and many others.

- Held 18 volunteer events for almost 1800 volunteer hours.
- Through the Colorado Tree Coalition, started distribution of the National Arbor Day Poster Contest Guides to Colorado 5th Grade Teachers for the 2005 competition – over 1300 guides distributed to all public (and many private) schools in Colorado.
- Several media releases to our district.

Fire Mitigation by the Light of a Harvest Moon

Cutting a fuel break under a September Harvest Moon – that's what La Junta Rural Fire Department did at a current Tuesday night training session.

Under the National Fire Plan, Bent's Old Fort NHS received a National Fire Plan Community Assistance Grant to support a Firewise fire prevention education message in our southeast Colorado area - and provide mitigation demonstration sites.

Harry and Caren Stanley graciously provided one site to do a mitigation demonstration.

In southeast Colorado, the infamous tamarisk is a ladder fuel - a step in fuel between grass and trees – creating potential for hotter, longer burning wildfire events. The tamarisk is also continuous and impenetrable in many areas along the Arkansas River making water access for fire suppression efforts difficult at best.

At the Stanley's site (where the tamarisks were continuous), an eighty-foot wide strip was cut through to the river.

Planning for and removing fuel before a fire event is fuelwood or fire mitigation. Strategically placing fuel breaks throughout the Arkansas River system is a long-term strategy to reduce fire risk in these heavier fuel load areas. Fuelwood mitigation attempts to protect property and values, while not straining fire resources and manpower during peak wildfire periods.

Gale and Gene Casebolt have also graciously supported a location for another fuelwood mitigation site adjoining the Bent's Old Fort NHS boundary. Access with a bobcat/tree shear was possible and provided by Tracy White.



La Junta Fire Deptment

Forest Thinning Projects

The one-seed junipers of pinyon/juniper forests in southern Otero and eastern Las Animas Counties started to show signs of stress last year which has continued into this year. Patches of dead or dying junipers have started to show up. Upon investigation, western cedar bark beetle and flatheaded wood borer activity has been found. As stated last year, most pinyons are dead and beginning to fall to the ground. However, we have found

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Dense, overgrown pinyon/juniper forest (with mostly dead pinyon). When this type of forest becomes overgrown, it becomes unhealthy and susceptible to insect and disease.

some seedling regeneration of pinyon this year.

With all of the dead-fall pinyon (due to previous ips infestations) and junipers beginning to decline, we may be looking at a potentially serious wildland fire situation. Even though this forest is not in a highly populated area, it is an extremely important player in southeastern Colorado's economy due to its agricultural base, and it also encompasses a large part of the Purgatoire river watershed.

In order to help landowners mitigate this problem, the La Junta District acquired Land Owner Assistance #7 funds (Forest Health and Protection). Under this cost-share program, four landowners were able to treat 10 acres each through forest thinning, which included assessment, marking and removal of infested trees. Jerry Bower, Hal Mullett, Ted Locke, and Gary Yocam participated in the program. Many thanks to them for being flexible, timely and doing a great job on their projects!

Trees on the Edge

On the sunny day of March 6th, 2004, over 80 people ascended on Trinidad State Junior College to learn about trees. The workshop entitled "Trees on the Edge" included



The forest opens up dramatically when thinning is done, creating a healthier forest and less potential for devastating wildland fires.

presentations on appropriate tree selection for southeastern Colorado (Cindy Rowan), proper planting techniques (Donna Davis), Tree City USA and CTC information (Keith Wood), cost-share programs available for landowners (Shelly Van Landingham), insects and disease of forest and community trees (Dave Leatherman), Colorado's community forest program (Ralph Campbell), and a hands on demonstration of proper structural pruning of young trees (Shelly Van Landingham and CK Morey).

We had many complements on the workshop—folks were very impressed by the speakers and all that they learned. We would like to give a big thanks to Jude and Mike Garcia of the Trinidad Tree Committee for all of their hard work in assisting with the planning and organization of the workshop. We also want to thank Keith Wood, Ralph Campbell, and Kami Fuller of the Colorado State Forest Service for all of their footwork before and during the workshop.

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Town of Campo: A New Tree City USA!

In the extreme southeastern corner of Colorado, there lies a very small, very green spot in the road: the Town of Campo, population 125. While this Town may be very small in population, they have a very large commitment to their community forest. One third of the citizens of Campo have participated in tree activities over the past two years! In 2003 the Town officially established a tree board and tree ordinance, and the Town celebrated its first Arbor Day at the Town Hall by planting three small seedlings. This year, the Town celebrated Arbor Day at the Park with the entire Campo school participating in the event. Two flowering crabapples were planted with the eager assistance of the students. 2004 will mark the first year The Town of Campo will be designated as a Tree City USA—Congratulations!



The Numbers Prove it—There ARE Trees in Southeastern Colorado!

All of the trees have been counted. All of the data has been churned and burned into my computer (and brain!). Take a look below at the results of the four community street tree inventories

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conducted over the past two years: La Junta, Lamar, Las Animas and Rocky Ford. The towns now hope to develop long-range community forest management plans from their inventories with guidance from the CSFS.

La Junta

Total Number of Trees: 2,860

Total Tree Value: \$11,313,592.21

Lamar

Total Number of Trees: 3,437

Total Tree Value: \$11,220,776.48

Las Animas

Total Number of Trees: 1,706

Total Tree Value: \$2,424,911.12

Rocky Ford

Total Number of Trees: 2,521

Total Tree Value: \$9,163,320.45

What's Bugg'in You?

It was confirmed this year that the new banded elm bark beetle (*scolytus schevyrewi*) has found its way to southeastern Colorado. This beetle is similar to the lesser European elm bark beetle, and it is believed they may also be a carrier of Dutch elm disease. Dutch elm disease is a fungus carried by the beetles on their bodies from one tree to another. The fungus clogs the vascular system of the trees, causing them to die. The large leafed elms (American and English) can be susceptible to this fungus. La Junta and Ordway participate in Dutch elm disease surveys every year, conducted by the CSFS. No positive trees have been found in the past two years.

Other insect and disease observations of 2004:

- The number one spot this year goes to eastern red cedar (some rocky mountain juniper) decline in windbreaks: western cedar bark beetle and flatheaded wood borers
- Ponderosa and Austrian pine: Drought stress along with high salts in water
- Silver maple: chlorosis, girdling roots
- Green ash: drought stress, lots of borer/bark beetle activity in all ages
- Honeylocust: honeylocust spider mite
- Cherry and other fruit trees: drought stress, shothole borer
- Hackberry: nipple gall, blistergall, psyllid, apricot scale, fox squirrels
- Blue spruce: drought stress, spider mite
- Elms (Siberian, American, English): drought stress, European elm scale, heavy bark beetle infestations, bacterial wetwood, fox squirrels
- Willow: drought stress, bacterial wetwood
- Ornamental junipers: drought stress, spider mite
- Cottonless cottonwood: drought stress, bacterial wetwood, rot, borers, fox squirrels
- Roses: blackspot of roses

New Living Snow Fence Planted near the Town of Kim



Landowner John Marroney and one of the Kim VocAg Students, plant seedlings with the CDOW's tree planter and the CDOT's tractor.

The Town of Kim is a mile high: very surprising to folks who think of all southeastern Colorado as a flat, low-elevation prairie. Wind and snow often fiercely blow through this small town of about 200. The addition of a new living snow fence on the northwest end of Town will protect 600 feet of Hwy 160 and help lessen the effects of wind and blowing snow. The plum thicket will also help provide habitat and food for wildlife. This project was planned and implemented in the LSF tradition: lots of partners and donations of materials and labor. A big thanks goes to John and Janet Marroney, who initiated the project and lease the state school section where the LSF was planted. They helped with planning and planting, and will also maintain the project. Also, a big thanks goes to the Colorado Division of Wildlife for donation of the weedbarrier, the use of their tractor, weedbarrier machine, tree planter, and labor; the Colorado Department of Transportation who provided the fencing materials, built the fence, performed the site prep, and donated the use of their tractor; and the Kim VocAg class for their

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tireless labor during planting. This project was additionally funded with cost share money from the FLEP program. The CSFS assisted with planning and labor. The next time you take a Sunday drive, take a detour through the Town of Kim and check out their fantastic living snow fence!

Tackling Tamarisk— Can We Do It?

An invasive plant has been hitting headlines during the past few years: tamarisk. From rivers to dry arroyos, tamarisk has taken over many of southeastern Colorado's waterways. In fairly manageable watersheds like the Purgatoire river, tamarisk is manageable at this point, and could feasibly be controlled within the next decade: hence the formation of Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatoire in 2004.

Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatoire is a collaborative project between public agencies, non-profit organizations and private landowners in the Purgatoire river watershed. Initiated by the Colorado State Forest Service, La Junta District (Shelly Van Landingham), and The Nature Conservancy out of La Veta (Ryan Boggs) this project has brought together many concerned partners (with many more to follow!): The Natural Resources Conservation Service, The National Park Service, The Bureau of Reclamation, Southeast Colorado RC&D, USDA Forest Service Comanche National Grassland, US Department of Defense Pinon Canyon, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado State Parks, Southeastern Colorado

Water Conservancy District, Branson-Trinchera and Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River Conservation Districts, The City of Trinidad, The Tamarisk Coalition, Denver University, and private landowners. This project, still in the planning phase, hopes to begin groundwork in the fall of 2005. Thanks to all who have committed and will continue to support this project and its future success!!

Lamar Student is Colorado's 2004 National Arbor Day Poster Contest Winner

(exerts from Katherine Timm, CSFS)

Fort Collins—Parkview Elementary School in Lamar has no formal art program, but that doesn't stop students in this small town on Colorado's Eastern Plains from winning art contests! Darrian Adame, a student in Jean Lunt's 5th grade class, is the 2004 Colorado State Winner of the National Arbor Day Poster Contest. Twice in the last three years a student from Parkview Elementary has earned this honor.

The state contest is part of an annual program sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation and held in conjunction with the Colorado Tree Coalition. The theme of this year's contest was *Trees are Terrific in Cities and Towns!*

Chosen from nearly 700 posters submitted by 5th graders throughout Colorado, Darrian's

poster depicts a city skyline against a backdrop of mountains with a variety of trees in the foreground illustrating how trees help improve urban environments.

Darrian's poster, along with all thirty-two Colorado School winners were on display at the Colorado Capitol for almost two weeks this past spring. Additionally, the National Arbor Day Foundation displays the Nation's State Winners in an exhibit at the U.S. Botanical Gardens in Washington, D.C.

On March 29th at the Colorado Capitol - Representative Brad Young shared Darrian's framed winning poster with the House Assembly! He then introduced Darrian, his family, teacher and principle as invited guests! Dignitaries present were Scott Grimes, immediate past-chairman of the Colorado Tree Coalition and Ralph Campbell, State Community Forester. A tour of the Capitol rounded out the very exciting morning!

Darrian was initially honored at a surprise school celebration on March 26th, which was attended by his family, the school's entire 4th and 5th grade class, his teacher and principal, the Lamar Tree Board, and friends. Ralph Campbell, State Community Forester, Broomfield, made a special trip down to make the announcement and framed poster presentation to Darrian.

Congratulations, Darrian!



Colorado Poster Contest Winner, Darrian Adame, and family.

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2004 Teammate of the Year Award (Ann Randall)

One of the best aspects of working with CSFS is all the other great folks and agencies we have the opportunity to partner and accomplish great things with...

Fran and Karl have been instrumental in the removal of more than 300 acres of tamarisk ladder fuel on their property while also supporting CSFS, CDOW, and West Otero Timpas Conservation District in the removal of tamarisk fuels on adjoining private and public properties. These efforts started well over ten years ago with a shoestring budget and a lot of determination. When the Arkansas River bottom was designated as a red zone and through National Fire Plan grants, their efforts gained momentum. Fran and Karl worked with their partners and did not limit their effort or resources to park boundaries – sharing

resource knowledge, crews, supplies, materials, equipment and conducting Firewise educational programs, safety training, and tours – anything to garner the support needed to make things happen.

CSFS *thanks you!*

Program Excellence

For the past two years Shelly Van Landingham has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the Community Forestry Program.

Her accomplishments include - coordinating the 2003 and 2004 Eastern Plains Community Forestry Conferences; facilitating and completing several street tree inventory projects, utilizing volunteers; instrumental in the implementation of

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competitive grants for tamarisk ladder fuel reduction; increased the number of Tree City U.S.A.'s; and instrumental in installing Living Snow Fences on the District.

Thank you, and congratulations Shelly!

To all our Cooperators a big thank you!

Looking Forward to 2005!

Sincerely,
Donna Davis, District Forester
Shelly Van Landingham, Forester

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You may also visit the Colorado State Forest Service Web site at:
www.colostate.edu/Depts/CSFS/index.html

Colorado State Forest Service

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