



Colorado Forestry

2005 Annual Report

La Junta District

La Junta District 2005 Annual Report

The following is a selection of 2005 Forestry Highlights! We hope you enjoy!

Highlights –

Fire

- 2005 WUI Western States Competitive Grant for \$36,000 completed with West Otero Timpas Conservation District on 74 acres.
- Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants awarded to 14 departments for a total of \$59,556.
- Three County Wildfire Annual Operating Plans were completed in Baca, Kiowa & Otero counties. Participants include the county sheriff, commissioners, USFS, NPS, BLM, Fire Depts & Red Cross.
- Many Cooperative Resource Rate Forms (CRRF's) were updated or brought on board this year. CRRF's are attached to county agreements allowing for potential interagency dispatch of resources and reimbursement. This year reimbursements to seven departments totaled \$23,688 for prescribed burns, initial attack, and Mason Fire suppression support.
- S130/190 Wildland Firefighter/Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior and the Refresher Courses were offered. Thank you to Manzanola and La Junta Fire Departments for hosting courses, and the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site for sponsoring another local training in Eads! Twenty-one newly trained, 19 refreshed & 9 new Red-carded firefighters!
- CSFS, La Junta Engine 6131 went on various assignments this year including the Comanche National Grasslands Prescribed Burns; the Trail East, Dwelling, Bragg Assignment near Durango; and the Bar NI Ranch (Nature Conservancy) Rx Burn near Stonewall. The engine also supported IAs in Otero/Las Animas Cos. This year firefighters from La Junta, Fowler & Hasty-McClave manned the engine. Thanks to Jack Johnson, David Cuilla and Jeff Burns, all Engine Bosses from Alamosa District for helping us out!
- Six Fire Vehicle Inspections were completed at Campo, Walsh, Wiley, Eads, Hasty, Sugar City. A Big Thanks to the CSFS Fort Collins Shop!

Community Forestry

- The National Arbor Day Foundation awarded Eight Tree City U.S.A.'s this year – Congratulations Campo, Eads, La Junta, Lamar, Las Animas, Rocky Ford, Springfield and Swink!
- Eleven communities held Arbor Day Ceremonies, Plantings and/or Workshops.
- Dutch Elm Disease Surveys were completed in La Junta & Ordway – No Positives for the disease, however mortality from mechanical bark beetle injury is causing stress, compounded by past drought.
- The Eads Rent a Forester Contract was completed this year with many tree projects supported by a Colorado Tree Coalition grant.
- The Colorado Tree Coalition/ National Arbor Day Poster Contest hosted a Poster Display & Awards Presentation at the Colorado State Capitol for Landon Meyers, Colorado

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Winner from Fruita Elementary School. Senator Teck, Representative Penry, Representative Buschler, and State Forester Bill Wilcox were dignitaries present, along with parents, teacher, Fruita Tree Board representatives, and many others. Congratulations, Landon!

Forest Management

- Forest Land Enhance Program slippage dollars (\$6058) supported 1 new Living Snow Fence (Kim), 1 LSF Renovation (Sheridan Lake), and 1 new Windbreak (Kim). A Big Thank You to the many hard working folks who supported these projects!
- Shelly Van Landingham shares tamarisk information with other states! – The Republican River Valley Living on the Edge Water Quality Workshop, in Nebraska and the Kansas Alliance for Wetlands & Streams: Create, Protect and Restore Wetlands and Streams Workshop, in Kansas. Thanks, Shelly!
- Conservation seedling trees were distributed this year with the assistance of the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service Offices.
- Four Tree Farms were re-certified this year – Congratulations Laverne Eder, Duane & Olive Ackley, Loyd & Triva Haney, and Evelyn & Carlyle Watters for jobs well done!



An Eastern Colorado Plains Tree Farm, 17 years - Lloyd and Treva Heney.

Conservation Education

- 1137 fifth grade students from 45 schools participated in the 2005 CTC/NADF Poster Contest!
- The Otero Jr. College 'Girls in the Middle' Career Day Conference reached several hundred girls this year!
- Supported the Division of Wildlife and Project Learning Tree with two, teacher training TEN Camps (Teaching Environmental Ed Naturally) in La Junta and Lamar.
- Tom Eikenberry, USFS Comanche Grasslands received a Certificate of Appreciation signed by our State Forester for all his support in the Fire Programs on this District. Thank you, 'Eik!'

CSFS has New Director!

Jeff Jahnke was appointed last summer as our new State Forester and brings exceptional national forestry leadership and experience to the CSFS. Jeff comes to Colorado from Alaska where he was State Forester for eight years. Jeff has a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry from Michigan Technological University, a Master's in Forest and Range Management from Washington State University, and has built a 35-year career in state forestry organizations.

Welcome, Jeff! It's great to have you on board!

New State Office Building and CSFS 50-Year Anniversary!

On October 13, 2005 during the CSFS 50th Anniversary Open House Celebration, the new CSFS State Office Building was dedicated at the Foothills Campus. The new building was named for the agency's director emeritus, Thomas B. Borden, who led the agency from 1959 to 1984. State Forester, Jeff Jahnke; past Colorado State Forester, Jim Hubbard; Colorado State University Vice Provost, Marc Johnson; and Colorado State University President Larry Edward Penley opened the building with a ceremonial tree planting of Colorado's state tree, a blue spruce.

Shortly after the dedication, CSU President Larry Edward Penley also announced on October 17, the Colorado State Forest Service will begin reporting directly to the Dean of the Warner College of Natural Resources (WCNR) – an acknowledgment further improving and linking the close ties this agency has with the faculty and educational mission of the WCNR.

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site Supports FireWise!

A National Park Service, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site Community Assistance Grant for \$13,600 gives a huge boost to the FireWise outreach message for our many Plains publics!

The grant has three fire prevention outreach components.

The first component of the grant included the FireWorks trunk and
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curriculum. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site applied for and received a separate grant to purchase a FireWorks educational curriculum and trunk containing laboratory materials, specimens, and reference materials for students grades 1-10. The interactive curriculum provides hands-on activities for studying fire ecology, fire behavior, and the influences of people on three fire-dependent forest types. The curriculum links each activity to national educational standards with wildland fire providing rich context for understanding and integration of numerous concepts including properties of matter, ecosystem fluctuations and cycles, plant and animal habitat and survival, and human interactions with ecosystems.



Terry Clodfelter teaching Fire Works.

Terry Clodfelter (La Junta Fire Department), and Donna Davis (CSFS), received training on this fire curriculum at the Northern Rockies Coordination Center, in Missoula, Montana. Upon return, a 2-day, one-credit workshop "*FireWorks – 'Getting Fire Wise' – PLT II*" was held at Otero Junior College. Under direction of Terry, Donna, and Shawna Crocker, fourteen teachers and agency representatives did activities from the FireWorks trunk and curriculum. They learned about the fire triangle, biological communities, plant and animal adaptations to fire, people in fire's

homeland, and fire history. They interacted with the 'Burning Issues' CD, and did an actual FireWise home assessment.

The second component of the grant was to support media releases and paid advertisements in nine area newspapers. Media releases touching on each FireWise bullets were distributed. Paid advertisements with the FireWise logo and eight bullets – '*Are You At Risk, Access, Water Supply, Defensible Space, Landscaping, Home Construction, Interior Safety, and 'What To Do When'*' were also initiated in the nine papers.

The 'Plains' FireWise folder was distributed for addition to the 3-ring FireWise notebook binders already residing with 28 fire departments, 7 county sheriff offices, 7 commissioner offices, the USFS Comanche Grasslands office, and the National Park Services' Bent's Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site offices.

In Addition, Fire Education Team materials were distributed to all K-3rd graders in Kiowa and Otero Counties. Last but not least, a new brochure "Safety Tips for Eastern Colorado" has been initiated, and will be ready for distribution in 2006.

The third component of the grant continued FireWise Workshops for fire departments and stalkholders. La Junta Fire Department and Kit Carson Fire Department each did a field FireWise 'Living with Fire' Home Assessment training, and Ordway Fire Department completed a basic introduction to FireWise. More workshops will be completed in 2006.

Thank you, National Park Service, for making this fire prevention educational message opportunity possible in our southeast Colorado communities!

Tamarisk and Russian-olive Mapped in Purgatoire Watershed

The Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatoire (TTP) group was formed in the spring of 2004. The group consists of many partners from private land owners to federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations: Colorado State Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River Conservation District, Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District, The Nature Conservancy, Tamarisk Coalition, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Division of Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, US Department of Defense, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District, Colorado State Parks, City of Trinidad, Bent County Conservation District, US Geological Survey, CSU's Natural Resource Ecology Lab, and many others. Their goal is to help restore the Purgatoire watershed (located in Southeastern Colorado) to a healthy riparian system, improving native vegetation and wildlife habitat, reducing the risk of wildfire to communities, and improving agricultural production. With that goal, the main objective is to begin removing woody invasive plants, namely tamarisk and Russian-olive.

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Original estimates for mapping the watershed hovered around \$80,000. However, TTP accomplished the mapping at a mere fraction of the original estimate: \$15,490 cash. This was made possible with collaboration from several key partners: Tamarisk Coalition (Grand Junction), Colorado Water Conservation Board (Denver), Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District (Trinidad), and the Farm Service Agency (Denver).

The Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Tamarisk Coalition planned to map several areas in 2005, including the Purgatoire watershed. However, matching funds were needed. The Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District granted these funds in the amount of \$8,990. The Tamarisk Coalition also assisted with \$6,500 cash (via the Colorado Water Conservation Board) and \$3,500 in-kind. The total cost for mapping was \$18,990.

The mapping was done by the Tamarisk Coalition mapping crew. The Farm Service Agency provided the most current 2005 NAIP (National Agriculture Imagery Program) aerial photos for Las Animas, Otero and Bent counties. Using these aerial photos, the Tamarisk Coalition ground-truthed selected areas and created a map of infested acreages within the watershed. Tamarisk infested acreage totaled 9,934 and Russian-olive infested another 1,341 acres. Two large tracks of land, not available for mapping due to seasonal uses, may increase the area by an estimated 1,000+ acres.

With the numbers and locations of tamarisk and Russian-olive

infestations in hand, the TTP group will now begin the task of applying for grant funding to help remove these woody invasives from the Purgatoire watershed—a large task indeed that will take many years. But with the continued collaboration efforts of multiple partners and private land owners, the effort has started strong and will remain strong.

CSU's Natural Resource Ecology Lab Studies Tamarisk Biomass in SE CO

On several mild 95+ degree days in early fall, the Natural Resource Ecology Lab (NREL) crew, consisting of Paul Evangelista, Greg Newman, Alycia Waters and Jeremy Goodell diligently threw themselves into their tamarisk biomass study east of La Junta. Their plots and cuttings were located on the Colorado Division of Wildlife Oxbow State Wildlife Area, 10 miles east of La Junta along the Arkansas River. The Colorado State Forest Service La Junta District and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (Terry Marinelli and Kevin Kaczmarek) assisted with equipment needs and arranged logistics for the study. There is an ever-increasing need for land managers to be able to determine tamarisk biomass (or volume) as they begin removal projects. Knowing the amount of tamarisk to be treated in a certain area can help effectively determine the budget for removal projects, and also help decide what type of

treatment would work best for that particular spot. Biomass estimates can also provide insight on how much water is being used by a particular tree or stand.

Determining tamarisk biomass is a challenging prospect. A key variable in typical biomass estimates is the use of tree diameters (or DBH), which can be extremely difficult to measure with tamarisk. Often, tamarisk grows with dozens of stems that have varying diameters and heights: these characteristics prompted the NREL team to develop a formula for determining tamarisk biomass by using only tree height and crown cover.

After the NREL team finalizes its biomass formula, it will be offered as a free tool on the National Institute for Invasive Species Science (NIISS) website. The objective of NIISS is to capture information (location data, species characteristics, and environmental attributes) on all taxa of invasive species to detect, control, and monitor their spread; and integrating these data to serve land managers, land owners, researchers, government officials and the public. This website has been developed by the NREL, US Geological Survey and NASA in cooperation with hundreds of government and academic researchers. It serves two primary functions; first, to collect and store information on all invasive species for the nation; and second, to provide resource managers and private landowners with a variety of tools to manage invasive species in their area. Land managers can create their own projects on the NIISS website and contribute data, as well as have access to existing data, information and tools, which will

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include the tamarisk biomass formula in the near future. For more information about the NIISS website, visit www.niiss.org.

The NREL team will be back in SE CO this February to collect more field data and finalize their study. The Colorado State Forest Service extends our appreciation to these folks for taking time to help us and other land managers in tackling our



CSU's NREL crew in midst of tamarisk biomass study, from left to right: Jeremy Goodell, Alycia Waters, Greg Newman, and Paul Evangelista.
tamarisk problem!

Second Living Snow Fence Planted in Kim, CO

The 2005 Kim living snow fence project (like 2004's) was a great success because of all of the hard working partners involved!

- John and Janet Marroney (Landowners): Initiation, procurement of materials, planning/logistics, site prep, installation of fence, installation of hydrant, tractor/operator, labor for tree and weed barrier/drip system installation, and maintenance for life of the project.
- Colorado Division of Wildlife (Don Lewis, Pito Moncada, Will Spence): use of tractor/operator, weed barrier machine, tree

planter, and labor for tree and weed barrier/drip system installation.

- Kim VocAg Class (Lee Hollingsworth, instructor): Labor for tree and weed barrier/drip system installation, and photographer extraordinaire, Tim!
- Neighbors (John Cranson and Frank Goode): Use of tractor, and labor for tree and weed barrier/drip system installation.
- Kiowa County NRCS (Marvin Watson): assistance with drip system design.
- Colorado State Forest Service: Writing of management plan, planning/logistics, cost share from the Forest Land Enhancement Program, and labor for tree and weed barrier/drip system installation.

This project will provide much needed snow protection for county road 36 as well as provide wind/heat/cold protection for the Marroney's livestock. The shrub component of sumac and four-winged saltbush will also provide wildlife and aesthetic value.

Again, thanks to all for helping make this project Kim's second successful living snow fence planting!



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Town of Eads Completes Three Projects with help from the Colorado Tree Coalition

The Eads Tree Board and the Town of Eads applied for and received a \$1,300 grant from the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) in 2005, helping to complete three community forestry projects!

The Town of Eads equally matched the \$1,300 grant for a total project cost of approximately \$2,600. The first project was the renovation of the windbreak on the north end of Town. The dying and dead ponderosa pines were removed and a new row of 300 rocky mountain junipers was planted. The trees were planted with a drip system and weed barrier. A new drip system was also put on the existing deciduous tree row. The Town of Eads, the Eads Tree Board, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kiowa County, and the Colorado State Forest Service all pitched in to take this project from beginning to end.

The second project was the planting of three new trees in Town. One tree, planted as a part of the Arbor Day ceremony, was a replacement catalpa at Town Hall. The other two trees, aristocrat pears, replaced dead trees on Maine Street. Mrs. Lana Peterson's 5th grade class helped the Town of Eads celebrate Arbor Day this year by assisting in the planting of the new catalpa at the Eads Town Hall. Also attending the Arbor Day ceremony were Eads Tree Board members, Marvin

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Watson, BJ Jones, Dawna Peck (Town Clerk), and Shelly Van Landingham (CSFS).

Mayor, Larry Michael, recited the official Arbor Day Proclamation, and president of the Eads Tree Board, Marvin Watson, talked about the beginnings of Arbor Day to the 5th grade students. The students helped plant the tree and then officially adopted it!

The third project was the replacement of the drip system on the trees at the Hwy 287 underpass. Thanks to Tree Board members Marvin Watson and BJ Jones for their muscle work on this one!

A BIG thanks goes out to all assisting with these projects!

CSFS 'Teammates of the Year Award!'



It is with a great deal of pleasure that we recognize two Kiowa County residents - Marvin Watson, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Vern Harris, Kiowa County Commissioner each for the prestigious 2005 CSFS 'Teammate of the Year Award!'

Below are some excerpts from the nomination:

If Marvin Watson is a member of your project team, there's no need to worry—You know it will be smoothly implemented and a successful project for many years to come!!

As a member and the chairperson of the Eads Tree Board, Marvin is ALWAYS there to help with all aspects of a project, from planning to organization to implementation. Marvin not only helps with projects but he sees them through year after year. Marvin jumps to the front and volunteers to get done what needs to get done and he's always thinking ahead with fresh ideas.

He assists countless landowners with tree planting projects. He is also willing to assist CSFS with other projects outside of Kiowa County and has taken it upon himself to learn many of the insects and diseases that are common in Southeastern Colorado trees.

Vern was instrumental when we started the Sheridan Lake LSF planting in 1986. This one-mile planting is more than 10 acres and was planted for the community.

Vern was there for the 1991, 92 & 93 SBA Grants – '91 was Highway entrance signage and beautification projects for Brandon and Sheridan Lake; '92 was the Sheridan Lake Park (by the renovated School – turned to post office & bowling alley) and Brandon's park; '93 – more trees lining the highway through town.

Vern and Marvin have both been key with the Fairgrounds plantings, the Eads Living Snow Fence by the fairgrounds, the Highway underpass in Eads and the Plainview School Windbreak Renovation – to name a few.

Vern still maintains all the Sheridan Lake tree projects today, including the most recent Sheridan Lake LSF renovation. If you know Kiowa County – you know this is no small task – heat, wind, drought, snow, freezes, tumbleweeds, grasshoppers, and rabbits can be relentless. Vern matches the environment with resilience and maybe, more importantly, with a belief that trees are an important and good part of the community. Living, growing trees are his 'gift' to his 'home.'

Congratulations, Marvin and Vern! You are wonderful to all and it is our honor to know and work with you!



To all our Cooperators a Big Thank You!

Looking forward to 2006!

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

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