

Colorado State Forest Service

La Junta District 2007 Annual Report

GREETINGS FROM THE COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE, LA JUNTA DISTRICT

Please take some time to read our 2007 annual report. The purpose of the report is to provide you with information about who we are and what we do, as well as a brief summary of some of our programs and activities in 2007.

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) La Junta District is an outreach agency in the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University. Our mission is to provide for the stewardship of forest resources of the state and to reduce related risks to life, property and the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

COOPERATIVE TAMARISK PROJECT HUGE SUCCESS

In 2007, aerial spraying of tamarisk was successfully completed on the Timpas Creek EQIP Invasive Plant project.

Leonard Felix, of Olathe Spray Service, applied foliar herbicide to tamarisk plants by helicopter. The chemical used was Habitat[®], which is labeled for aquatic use. Leonard and his crew performed the job like clockwork. Felix was very precise and efficient with the application, avoiding drift onto desirable native vegetation, such as cottonwoods and willows. He treated approximately 150 acres, the equivalent of 15 river miles. The treated area will be monitored for any tamarisk regrowth. Since the treatment will take as long as three years to kill the sprayed tamarisk, the plants must not be removed until then. The need for revegetation will be determined in the spring of 2008.

Many landowners in took advantage of Felix's services in southeastern Colorado. JR Philips, of Fremont County, conducted the landowner organization for Felix. This

reduced the cost, as there was only one mobilization charge that was shared by the landowners. A special thanks goes to Fremont County for also providing a 4,000 gallon water tender for the projects — a substantial help to the process!



Foliar herbicide is applied by helicopter to tamarisk along Timpas Creek, southwest of La Junta.

The La Junta District staff extend our appreciation to the following groups and agencies that have supported this project: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), West Otero-Timpas Conservation District, Edgar Ranches, Broken Spear Ranch, the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), Otero County, US Forest Service (USFS), Fremont County, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS AND PLAINS & PRAIRIE ASSOCIATION HOLD JOINT MEETING

In 2007, the Society of American Foresters (SAF) Colorado/Wyoming State Society joined the Plains and Prairie Association for a joint annual meeting. This year's

theme was From Peaks to Plains: Restoring a Diversity of Landscapes. Trinidad, Colorado, was chosen as an appropriate meeting location due to its proximity to both peaks and plains forestry issues. Approximately 65 people from more than eight states and speakers from five states participated in the meeting.



The 2007 annual meeting theme, From Peaks to Plains: Restoring a Diversity of Landscapes, is depicted here with a view of the short grass prairie east of Trinidad, looking west at the Spanish Peaks. Photo courtesy of Rich Straight

SAF National Vice President Tom L. Thompson was this year's guest speaker and spoke about the history of forestry in the US, as well as the future of SAF and the forestry profession. His enthusiasm was catching and many participants commented on the positive affect his presentations had on them. Thompson is originally from the plains community of Lamar, Colorado.

The agenda for the indoor Friday sessions was diverse, and many participants called the sessions revitalizing. Topics and speakers included:

- *Defining and Setting the Stage for Restoration*, Chuck Rhodes, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station
- *Piñon/Juniper and Ponderosa Forest Historic Range of Variability*, Bill Romme, Colorado State University
- *Riparian Forest Health and Restoration-Review of the Contested Plains*, Rich Straight, USDA Forest Service, National Agroforestry Center
- *Rejuvenating Stagnated Riparian Tree Plantings*, Charlie Barden, Kansas State University
- *Riparian Restoration in New Mexico*, Stan Bulsterbaum, Natural Resource Consultants, LLC
- *Windbreak Renovation Case Studies*, Craig Stange, NRCS-North Dakota and Charlie Barden
- *Web-based Windbreak Planning and Design*, Rich Straight

Although nearly a foot of snow was on the ground, Saturday's two outdoor field tours were well-attended. The first concurrent tour — to Trinidad State Park and the Bar NI Ranch — focused on ponderosa and piñon/juniper forest restoration, as well as riparian forest health in the foothills. The second trip to Goodrich Ranch, located east of Trinidad, focused on agroforestry in the plains.

A special thanks goes to those who helped plan, organize and implement the meeting: Naomi Marcus, Ian Hanou, Bruce Short, Robert Darymple, Donna Davis, Charles Barden, Shelly Van Landingham, Rich Straight, CK Morey, Craig Stange, Dennis Adams, Ryan Boggs, Russ Pallone, John Twitchell, Frank Cross, Kristy Berrgren, and Tom and Theresa Goodrich. And, thank you to all of the participants. We hope you enjoyed it — we could not have done it without you.

TOM AND THERESA GOODRICH RECOGNIZED AS PLAINS TREE FARMERS

In 2007, Tom and Theresa Goodrich, of Las Animas County, were recognized as Plains Tree Farmers by the American Tree Farm System at the Colorado/Wyoming Society of American Foresters and Plains/Prairie Forestry Association Annual Meeting Tour. The Goodrich's graciously hosted the tour at their homestead windbreak project west of Kim.

With several plains and mountain foresters from eight states, and sons, Jimmy and Dean present, Tom and Theresa were honored and presented with a Tree Farm sign to display on their property.

The Goodrich's are being recognized for planting, growing and maintaining over 1500 trees, which were started as seedlings on approximately seven acres on their land in southeast Colorado.



Tom and Theresa Goodrich, recognized as Plains Tree Farmers, stand by their new Tree Farm sign that will be displayed on their property.

Their first project was a three-row living snow fence that includes Austrian pine and Eastern red cedar and is located near Highway 160 east of Kim. The Goodrich's project, planned in 1989 and planted in 1990, protects the road from wind and snow, benefits the public's access and decreases highway snow removal costs. The trees also help protect cattle from harsh weather conditions, and provide for wildlife habitat and are of aesthetic value.

The second project, a five-row homestead windbreak, was planted in 1991. It includes Austrian pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, green ash trees and shrubs. The trees provide protection from wind and snow, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide shade and a pleasant surrounding for the Goodrich's homestead area.

With the brutal blizzard conditions this past winter, Tom and Theresa were happy to have their trees. "The trees really helped around our homestead by blocking the snow. And the living snow fence on the highway was a real value this year," Tom commented during the tour.

To be a Colorado Plains Tree Farmer, under the American Forest Foundation Tree Farm System, a landowner must be actively engaged in forest management practices with a tree project, have at least three acres of trees/shrubs with two-thirds consisting of trees, and the project must be at least three years old.

In the Goodrich's case, forest management practices include maintaining the windbreak and living snow fence for the health and growth of the trees, and protecting the homestead and road from snow and wind. Their ongoing practices include replanting, watering, mowing, and/or maintaining weed barrier fabric and drip systems, as needed.

Maintaining healthy, sustainable trees in the harsh southeast Colorado climate is never an easy task. Yet, what a commendable living statement Tom and Theresa have made to family, grandchildren and friends in the southeast plains of Colorado. Through the Goodrich's hard work and dedication, beautiful working trees have become a part of their life — and have touched and inspired us all. Congratulations, Tom and Theresa!

ANNUAL WILDFIRE OPERATING PLAN COMES TO SOUTHEAST COUNTIES

In 2007, the first southeast region Annual Wildfire Operating Plan (AWOP) was introduced to Baca, Kiowa and Otero counties. The AWOP sets forth standard

operating procedures, agreed upon policies and responsibilities to implement cooperative wildfire protection on all lands within Baca, Kiowa and Otero counties.

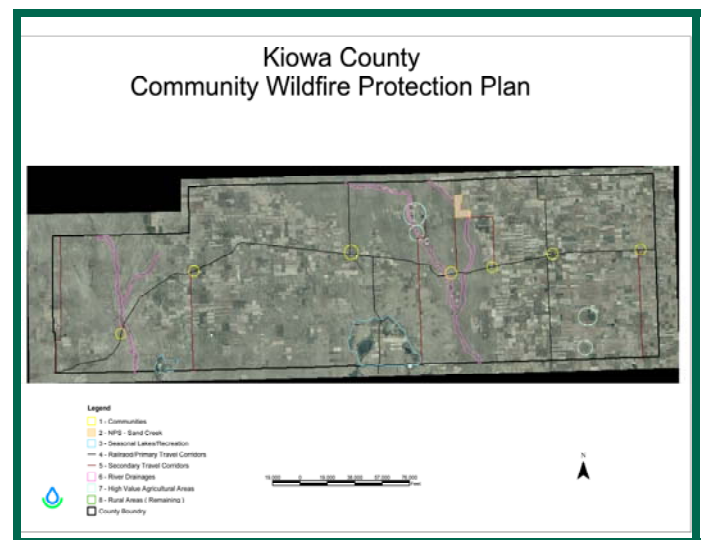
Participants in the plan include commissioners and sheriffs in Baca, Kiowa and Otero counties, the Colorado State Forest Service, Comanche National Grasslands, US Forest Service, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and all fire departments within the three counties.

We appreciate Teradette Wilson's wordsmithing efforts on the project.

KIOWA COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN COMPLETED

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), which was passed by Congress on November 21, 2003, and signed into law by President Bush on December 3, 2003.

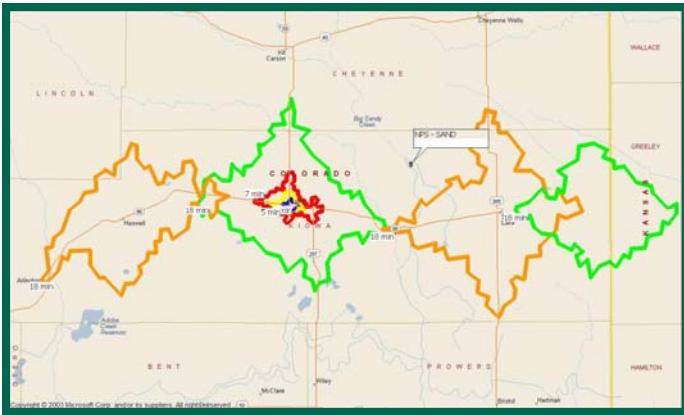
Kiowa County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan provides stakeholders and residents of the county with an overview of the wildland fire risks, hazards and values within the planning area; recommends possible courses of action to reduce the impacts of wildfire in the planned area; and shares a current action plan.



The Kiowa County CWPP map illustrates the geographic area involved in the plan.

Participants in the plan include Kiowa County Commissioners, the Kiowa County Sheriff, the Kiowa County Office of Emergency Management and representatives from Kiowa County fire departments — Haswell Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), Eads VFD and Sheridan Lake VFD. Federal and state partners include the National Park Service Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Colorado State Forest Service. The Bureau of Land Management is also aware of the CWPP development in the county.

Kiowa County's highest areas for wildfire concern are the communities, the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site-National Park Service, the recreational areas, and the railroad and high-use travel corridors in the county (See the map). Also of concern are the river drainages and remaining travel corridors.



Kiowa County's 20-minute Fire Department Response Map

The main plan goals for 2008 are to: (1) share the CWPP and Mitigation Assessment Map with the community at large through club presentations, media, local events and the county fair; (2) educate homeowners and rural businesses on Firewise concepts through club presentations, media, local events and the county fair; (3) purchase and place low/medium/high fire danger signage at ten appropriate highway locations entering the county; and (4) provide Firewise educational materials to elementary school teachers and students during Fire Prevention Week.

Funding for this plan and the 2008 action items are provided through a \$10,000 FY2007 National Fire Plan Community Assistance Grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

FIRE DOLLARS ASSIST 11 PLAINS DEPARTMENTS

In 2007, rural fire departments in southeast Colorado received over \$49,500. Since 2001, almost \$394,000 in Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) funding has been awarded.

- 2001 — \$62,940 — 17 departments
- 2002 — \$64,190 — 16 departments
- 2003 — \$58,842 — 16 departments
- 2004 — \$44,317 — 9 departments
- 2005 — \$59,556 — 14 departments
- 2006 — \$54,593 — 11 departments
- 2007 — \$49,525 — 11 departments

Local fire departments — VFDs, fire (FD) and fire protection (FPD), and rural fire (RFD) — obtained much needed funding through the National Fire Plan. The VFA grant program, which is administered through the Colorado State Forest Service, offers a 50/50 cost-share to organize, train and/or equip rural fire departments that serve communities with less than 10,000 populations. Thanks to the efforts of many firefighters and others in the grant application process, the following personnel received funding for their fire departments:

- LeRoy England, Campo VFD — \$583
- Michael Smith, Cheyenne Wells FPD — \$5,413
- Ray Gonzales and Julie Davis, Hasty McClave VFD — \$8,413
- Aaron Eveatt, La Junta FD — \$8,672
- Jim Pryor, Las Animas/Bent County FPD — \$1,361
- Dale Dillon, Ordway/Crowley County VFD — \$4,061
- Marvin Rosencrans and Staffon Warn, Prowers County RFD — \$3,550
- Gary Cox, Rocky Ford FD — \$5,210
- Bobby Schaller, Springfield VFD — \$8,488
- Monty Weeks, West Cheyenne FPD, Kit Carson VFD — \$2,472
- Jim Farmer, Cathy Smotherman, Wiley FPD — \$1,302

CONGRATS TO RAY GONZALES

Ray Gonzales is our first National Wildfire Coordinating Group qualified Firefighter I in southeast Colorado. He first had to fulfill the following requirements to earn his "red card" to become a Firefighter II:

- Pass a combined 36-hour course: S-130 Basic Wildland Firefighter, S-190 Intro to Wildfire Behavior and L-180 – Human Factors on the Fireline. Complete a one-time course: I-100 Basic Incident Command
- Pass an arduous pack test on your home unit that entails completing a three-mile fast walk in less than 45 minutes while carrying a 45-lb pack
- Course certificate of completion and a letter from your fire chief stating pack test date and test time to be sent to the local CSFS office. Red-carded firefighter information is entered into the Incident Qualification System and placed into the Resource Ordering Status System (ROSS)
- Annual recertification with a six-hour refresher course and a physical pack test

In addition, to obtain his advanced Firefighter I status, Gonzales was required to:

- Attend and pass an eight-hour course: S-131 Advanced Firefighter
- Initiate and complete a Firefighter I task book
- Other recommended classes

To go on paid assignment, any Firefighter II or I must:

- Fill out an agreement for cooperative wildfire protection in the county
- Have a current cooperative resource rate form completed by the fire department and signed by the chief
- Obtain wildland personal protective clothing and equipment
- Add their name to a crew or engine call-out list
- Be available for a two-week period, plus travel days (16 total days)
- Have upfront dollars for travel to/from the wildfire incident

Firefighter training and experiences have many payoffs for local rural fire jurisdictions, from basic fire behavior and operations employed to the larger incident command system and the management of an incident. All enhance our local rural firefighting capabilities.

DISTRICT TEACHES COMMUNITIES PROPER PRUNING AND TREE CARE

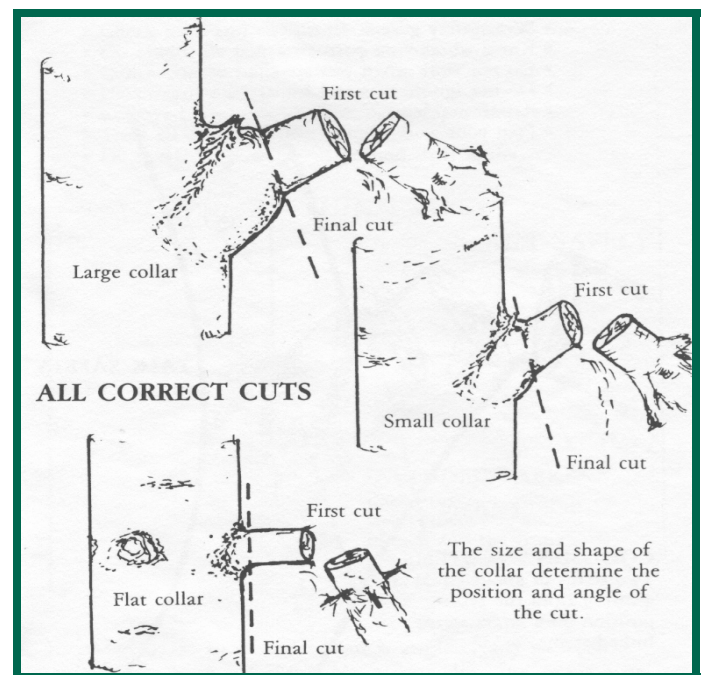
In 2007, the district reached out to over 150 people by teaching critical pruning and tree care techniques. Workshops were held for the communities of Lamar,

Ordway and Holly; the Prowers County Coop Extension Master Gardener series; the City of Trinidad Public Works crews and Tree Committee (assisted by Keith Wood, CSFS staff forester); and the La Junta Public Schools maintenance crews.

Pruning is one of the least understood aspects of tree care. An improperly pruned tree, such as through the practice of topping, causes numerous problems. But, a little knowledge about basic proper pruning techniques and tree care can promote a very healthy tree.

The main emphasis of the pruning workshops focused on the basic pruning cut, as seen in the illustration. Make your cut just outside of the bark ridge and just beyond the branch collar. Leaving a stub or cutting into the bark ridge or collar does not allow the tree to compartmentalize the wound, thus allowing insect and disease problems to occur.

For more information about pruning and tree care, please visit the following websites: www.arborday.org (go to 'trees' and choose 'pruning guide') and www.hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/pruning.



From: An Illustrated Guide to Pruning, 2nd Ed., Edward F. Gilman

INSECT AND DISEASE ASSESSMENT ON THE DISTRICT

Compiled by Shelly Van Landingham, La Junta assistant district forester

Major Native Forest Insect and Disease Issues

Piñon/Juniper

The health of one-seed junipers in piñon/juniper forests in southern Otero and eastern Las Animas counties has remained stable for the last three years. Prior to that, in 2004, patches of dead and dying one-seed junipers, with western bark beetle and flathead wood borers were present. Piñons continue to regenerate in open areas, and regeneration was observed this year within some thicker juniper stands. A few Rocky Mountain junipers (RMJ) exist in the canyon forests, but they are typically found adjacent to the riparian areas or along canyon slopes. Insect and disease (I&D) issues of RMJ have not been observed.

Riparian Forests

For the past two years southeastern Colorado riparian forests appear to have recovered from drought-related stress that started in 2000. Although there are many patches of dead and dying plains cottonwoods, regeneration has been observed. A few patches of fall webworm have been observed this year along the Lower Arkansas River corridor, but nothing out of the ordinary. No abnormal insect or disease issues were seen in our river, perennial stream or dry arroyo riparian areas. Of course, the tamarisk encroachment is the greatest threat to the native trees in southeastern Colorado riparian areas.

Major Community Forestry I&D Issues

Overall, community trees looked better this year due to much needed precipitation received over the past two years. However, some insect and disease issues were still noted.

Blizzard – The most prevalent I&D issue with community trees for 2007 was blizzard damage on all species, but most prevalent on evergreen species of windbreaks and living snow fences. This predominately included breakage from the weight of snow, and also included severe damage from rabbits, deer and other critters that ate the bark of exposed limbs. Coming out of the blizzard, numerous calls came in for problems with browning foliage on juniper and pine species. Most of the damage was associated with limbs that were exposed – not buried by the snow – and subjected to sub-zero temperatures for several weeks. Such temperatures are atypical in this area. To some

extent, winter desiccation is suspected because the precipitation, due to below average temperatures, was tied up in the snow from January until the end of April. Once the snow began to melt, the soil was saturated for at least a month, probably causing stress to the trees.

Honeylocust Spider Mite – A large honeylocust spider mite outbreak, with possible concurrent eriophyid mites, was observed mainly in La Junta and some in Rocky Ford. The cause for the outbreak is unknown, but much could be weather-related. Could pesticides used for mosquito control possibly be killing spider mite predators as well?

Elm Spider Mite – Elm spider mite was also observed to a lesser degree, and mostly noted in Rocky Ford.

Ponderosa Ips – An isolated (hopefully!) infestation of *ips* was found in older, stressed ponderosa at Lamar's Willow Creek Park. Could this species of *ips* possibly have come from firewood brought into the area?

I&D on Elm Species – Trunk attacks by **elm bark beetles** continue to occur. High populations of **European elm scale** also continue to be observed. The **elm leaf beetle** population continues at an elevated level, especially in Rocky Ford. However, in 2007, the elm leaf beetle damage appears to be at about half that of last year.

Leaf Cutter Bees – Signs of leaf cutter bees seemed fairly extensive this year, especially in Otero County.

Cholorsis Symptoms – This is very common in our area, especially in the more clay/shale soils. Ornamental pears and maple varieties tend to show this more than other species. Hackberry also showed more chlorosis symptoms this year. Upon several investigations, we found that these trees had been sitting in low spots, and, as the snow from the blizzard melted slowly, the trees' root systems were inundated with water for about a month. Excess water may have been the cause of the chlorosis-type symptoms that many hackberry trees experienced this year.

Spiny Elm Caterpillar – A few occurrences of spiny elm caterpillar were observed on willow trees in Kiowa County and cottonwood trees in Prowers County.

Piñon Pine Scale – Piñon pine scale was found on three adjacent piñon pine in the Town of Las Animas in Bent County.

Piñon Sawfly – A few instances of piñon sawfly were observed south of La Junta in Otero County.

Oak Gall and Oak Psyllid Gall – Either gouty or horned oak gall and oak psyllid leaf galls were simultaneously observed on bur oak at one locale in Otero County.

Cedar-Apple Rust – Cedar-apple rust again was found in moderate populations on juniper species in Kiowa County.

Septoria Leaf Spot – Septoria leaf spot was found on several adjacent hybrid cottonwood trees in Otero County.

Lilac Ash Borer/Ash Bark Beetles – Lilac ash borer and ash bark beetle again were observed to a great extent this year. All ages of ash trees (predominately green ash), from 1 inch diameter to fully mature, are constantly attacked by these bark beetles/borers. We no longer recommend planting ash trees in southeastern Colorado. If a client insists on planting them, it is recommended that they spray the tree annually for the life of the tree.

FOOD, LAND & PEOPLE WORKSHOP HOSTED IN ORDWAY

Teachers and educators visited the Town of Ordway's community library for a fabulous day of learning how to use the Food, Land & People (FLP) curriculum in the classroom. Project Food, Land and People focuses on helping educators and students become knowledgeable about the many ways that agriculture impacts daily lives — linking agriculture, the environment and people. FLP promotes agricultural and environmental awareness, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, cooperative attitudes and an appreciation for cultural differences.

The curriculum is standards based, meaning that teachers can utilize FLP activities while also meeting Colorado State Content Standards for science, math, language arts and social studies.

FLP trained facilitators who organized and taught the sessions at the workshop included: Teradette Wilson, Donna Davis and Shelly Van LANDINGHAM, all from CSFS; Jennifer Gray, Crowley County School District; Barb Devie, Las Animas School District; and Linda Groat, CDOW.

Workshop attendees focused on a handful of activities from the FLP curriculum to gain an understanding of how to effectively use the materials. When asked at the end of the day if they would use the FLP materials in their classrooms, the overwhelming answer was, "yes." Participants thoroughly enjoyed the workshop.

Of course, like many of our activities here on the district, this was a cooperative project that was sponsored by CSFS, West Otero-Timpas Conservation District, CDOW, the Colorado Foundation for Agriculture and the Crowley County School District.



Teachers engage in a FLP activity that focuses on the water cycle. Here, in this activity, they had to "become a water molecule" and travel through the water cycle.

SHELLY VAN LANDINGHAM RECEIVES 2007 CSFS UNIQUE AWARD

Sometimes you can't plan on things going as expected, especially when weather events seemingly come to the district on a regular basis. We had our share in 2007 – high winds, blizzards and even a tornado.

The Colorado State Forest Service presented a 2007 Unique Award to Shelly Van LANDINGHAM, La Junta District's assistant district forester for her tremendous efforts, personal compassion and professional support that she provided to the Town of Holly and its citizens in the aftermath of the tornado that hit the park and surrounding neighborhood this past spring. She is helping her community tackle the problems associated with the disaster.

She has also involved the community in their long-term tree management choices while helping them plan a volunteer park planting in 2008, and also is suggesting more workshops and training sessions with the town in the future. A tree board may be on the horizon.

Shelly has taken lemons and is making lemonade. The tornado was devastating, but the aftermath is moving in the right direction. This will take time.

MORE GREAT ACTIVITIES

Community Forestry Program — The National Arbor Day Foundation acknowledged seven local communities for their urban and community forestry accomplishments in 2007. Campo, Eads, La Junta, Lamar, Rocky Ford, Springfield and Swink received Tree City USA recognition. The communities of McClave and Ordway also celebrated Arbor Day this year.

Conservation Education Outreach — Our district hosted the Teacher Facilitator Workshop, which included Colorado Project Wild (PW), Project WET, Project Learning Tree (PLT), and Food, Land & People (FLP) curriculums, along with the Teacher Facilitator Conference at Otero Junior College. This was an invigorating and educational teacher training.

Colorado Tree Coalition 2007 — The National Arbor Day Poster Contest displayed 54 schools' fifth grade student winners at the Bear Creek Nature Center, in Colorado Springs; the Colorado/Wyoming Society of American Forester Annual Meeting, in Trinidad; the State Capitol; and the Northfield Stapleton Borders Bookstore (Bass Pro Shop area), in Denver. Way-to-go fifth graders and teachers! S.N.E. Whiteley, from Bea Underwood

School in Parachute, was the 2007 Colorado Arbor Day Poster Contest winner. She was supported by her teacher, Elaine Callister. Congratulations to both of you!

CSFS La Junta District Training — All LJ Staff completed the PLT/PW/FLP Facilitator Training, which prepared them to train teachers in these nationally certified education programs. Staff also completed a team building workshop in Limon. Teradette completed the New Employee Orientation. Donna is a certified arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture this year.

IN CLOSING...

We would like to thank our many customers and cooperators. It is a pleasure to serve and work with you. If you have any questions or need any assistance with forestry-related issues, please contact us.

Donna Davis – District Forester
Shelly Van Landingham – Assistant District Forester
Teradette Wilson – Administrative Assistant

Phone: (719) 384-9087
Fax: (719) 384-9700
Email: csfslj@lamar.colostate.edu
Website: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/>



Colorado State Forest Service
La Junta District Office
208 Santa Fe Avenue, Suite #21
La Junta, CO 81050