



Colorado State Forest Service

La Junta District 2012 Annual Report

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) mission is to achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is proud to be a part of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University (CSU). The CSFS also provides staffing to the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

The CSFS La Junta District serves Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties in southeast Colorado as one of 17 districts located throughout Colorado. The CSFS State Office is headquartered on CSU's Foothills Campus in Fort Collins.

More information about the CSFS and the La Junta District is available at the CSFS website: www.csfs.colostate.edu. Click on "Your Local Forester" and then "La Junta District."

State's Wildfire Suppression Responsibilities Transferred to Department of Public Safety

On July 1, 2012, wildfire management and prescribed fire responsibilities transferred from the Colorado State Forest Service to the Colorado Department of Public Safety – centralizing the state's fire management functions into a single, statewide point of contact for wildfire management. House Bill 12-1283, signed into law by Governor Hickenlooper last summer, created the Division of Fire Prevention and Control under DPS and consolidated wildfire command and control

functions under a single point of authority, with the intent of increasing efficiencies in the state, and enhancing communications and clarifying roles and responsibilities during wildfire emergencies.

A Transition Advisory Committee was created to effect the transition and create the new organization. In addition to transferring fire responsibilities from the CSFS (within the Colorado State University system) to the new DFPC, the bill moved the Colorado Division of Emergency Management from under the Department of Local Affairs to DPS. The new DFPC has assumed previous prevention and control operations of the CSFS, including wildfire preparedness, response and suppression, as well as prescribed fire responsibilities.

Following the recent changes, the CSFS continues to be the lead state agency providing forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners. As a service and outreach agency in the Warner College of Natural Resources at CSU, the CSFS remains committed to its core mission of achieving "stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations." The forest management, applied research, education and outreach aspects of the CSFS remain with CSU and are fully available to agencies, organizations and landowners. The CSFS also will continue to provide technical assistance and outreach related to home and community protection from wildfires, through its State Office in Fort Collins and 17 districts around the state.

For southeast Colorado, as of July 1, 2012, all requests for statewide wildfire emergency support should be made through the Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Proudly Serving Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero & Prowers Counties

Arkansas River Watershed Invasives Plant Partnership (ARKWIPP) Provides Riparian Restoration Workshops

The Arkansas River Watershed Invasives Plant Partnership strives to provide timely and current educational opportunities to land managers and private landowners about managing woody invasive plants (i.e., tamarisk and Russian olive), and about restoring riparian areas impacted by woody invasives. The partnership includes representatives within the Arkansas River Basin from local, state, federal and non-profit agencies.

In 2012, the partnership successfully organized two riparian restoration workshops in the Granada and Pueblo areas. An impressive agenda and line-up of presenters brought more than 80 attendees to the workshops. Participants attended indoor morning sessions, followed by hands-on field sessions in the afternoon, applying what was learned in the classroom. Field session locations included the Arkansas River in Prowers County and the Huerfano River in Pueblo County.

Topics and presenters included:

- Project planning and resource assessment – Dr. Anna Sher, Denver University
- Secondary invasive weed management – Dr. Scott Nissen, Colorado State University
- Soils assessment and seedbed preparation – Robin Bay, environmental scientist for Habitat Management Inc.
- Plant species assessment and selection – Ben Berlinger, Natural Resources Conservation Service Area 3 Range Conservationist
- Restoration equipment and constraints – Rich Rhodes, NRCS Pueblo County; Michael Daskam, NRCS Prowers County
- Cottonwood/willow pole planting and long-stem shrub transplants – Dr. Greg Fenchel and staff, NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center

Participants provided very positive feedback about the restoration workshops. Many commented that ARKWIPP workshops have provided them with local access to current and reliable restoration science that they need to do their jobs effectively.



Los Lunas staff demonstrates equipment used to plant woody riparian plant materials.

Many thanks to the core planning committee for the hundreds of hours of planning and organization it took to implement these workshops (it was no easy task!): Patty Knupp, NRCS; Emily Lockard, CSU Extension; Rich Rhodes, NRCS; Michael Daskam, NRCS; Ken Lair, private consultant; Rusty Lloyd,



Dr. Greg Fenchel demonstrates how to use equipment to plant cottonwood poles into the water table.

Tamarisk Coalition; and Julie Knudson, Tamarisk Coalition. Colorado Parks and Wildlife also provided equipment for demonstrations; thanks to Randy Spitzer, Kevin Kaczmarek, Quentin Springer and Chad Schreivogel. The CSU Extension Pueblo County office staff also played an important role in the workshops by managing registration; thanks to Carolyn Valdez, Christine Pauletich, Marnie Leinberger and Valerie Billings.

Special thanks also must go to the Colorado Water Conservation Board. They provided the majority of grant funding to help pay for workshop costs. Other important sponsors included: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Prowers County, Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District, Hudler Ranch and Enstrom Ranch.

To learn more about riparian restoration, please visit the Tamarisk Coalition's website at www.tamariskcoalition.org.

Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatoire (TTP) Project Partners Receive 2011 CSFS Partner of the Year Award

It's been said that it only takes a few motivated individuals to move mountains – or in this case, approximately 1,400 acres of tamarisk!

Since 2004, a coalition of motivated individuals has been working hard to improve the Purgatoire River watershed, the largest tributary river to the Arkansas River in Colorado. Partners have managed more than \$450,000 in grant funding during the past eight years, and treated more than 1,400 acres of tamarisk and Russian olive. That may not seem like much over an eight-year period, but considering that 95 percent of that work has been completed by employing the cut-stump method (sawyer, swamper, sprayer), then it is very impressive indeed.

There are many individuals and agencies that have made this project successful and are due praise, but

there are some in particular who deserve to be called "Partner of the Year" for this project due to their unfaltering dedication. Without this collective of individuals, TTP would not exist.

Congratulations to the following 2011 CSFS Partners of the Year for their TTP efforts: Matt Moorhead with The Nature Conservancy; Jonnalea Tortorelli with the Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River and Branson-Trinchera Conservation Districts; Katy Fitzgerald with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partner Program; Dick Loudon, TTP field coordinator; and private landowners John and Carolyn Doherty.

All of the success and accomplishments of the TTP partnership are a direct reflection of the hard work, dedication and teamwork of these dedicated partners.

For more information about the TTP project, please visit <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/lajunta-tamarisk-mgmt.html>.

Southeastern Colorado Boasts State Champion Trees!



This netleaf hackberry is a Champion Tree and a native species of Southeast Colorado.

Most individuals reading this probably already know how hard it is to grow trees in the semi-arid climate of southeastern Colorado. Despite this reality, this part of the state has produced several current State Champion Trees.

So what makes a tree a champion? Several measurements are taken: the height, an average of the crown width and the circumference. These measurements are then added together to assign

the tree points. The health and condition of the tree are also taken into consideration. The tree with the highest number of points is crowned the champion tree for that species.

The State Champion Tree registry is organized and housed by the Colorado Tree Coalition, and can be found on the web at <http://www.coloradotrees.org/programs.php#champion>.

Living State Champion Trees found in southeastern Colorado include:

| Tree Species | General Location | Native Southeast CO | Native to other areas of the USA | Native to Europe | Native to China, Japan |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Sycamore, American | Rocky Ford | | X | | |
| Persimmon, common | Rocky Ford | | X | | |
| Mulberry (white), weeping form | Rocky Ford | | X | | |
| Elm, English | Rocky Ford and La Junta | | | X | |
| Elm, lacebark | Rocky Ford | | | | X |
| Euonymus, winterberry 'pink lady' | La Junta | | | | X |
| Osage-Orange | La Junta | | X | | |
| Hackberry, netleaf | Canyon areas of Las Animas county | X | | | |
| Soapberry, western | Baca County | X | | | |
| Juniper, one-seed | Baca County | X | | | |

To find out more information on these and other State Champion Trees, please visit <http://www.coloradotrees.org/find.php>.

Southeast CO Communities Recognized as Tree Cities USA

Ten southeast Colorado towns are now recognized as Tree City USA (TCUSA) communities by the

National Arbor Day Foundation. The TCUSA program awards communities that take an active role in the management of their community trees, as part of the urban or community forest. These communities must establish a community tree board, establish a community tree ordinance, observe and celebrate Arbor Day, and demonstrate expenditures of at least \$2 per capita annually on community forestry. The Colorado State Forest Service provides oversight for the TCUSA program in Colorado, working closely with communities to provide community forestry guidance and technical assistance.

According to the NADF, there are 15 reasons to become a TCUSA:

1. Encourages better care of community forests.
2. Touches the lives of people within the community who benefit daily from cleaner air, shadier streets and aesthetic beauty that healthy, well-managed urban forests provide.
3. Recognizes and rewards communities for annual advancements in urban forestry practices.
4. Increases public awareness of the many social, economic and environmental benefits of urban forestry practices.
5. Provides education to improve current urban forestry practices.
6. Builds cooperation between public and private sectors to effectively manage urban forests.
7. Encourages, supports and strengthens effective urban forestry programs in diverse communities nationwide.
8. Can make a strong contribution to a community's pride.
9. Serves as a blueprint for planting and maintaining a community's trees.
10. Puts people in touch with other communities and resources that can help them improve their program.
11. Brings solid benefits to a community, such as helping to gain financial support for tree projects and contributing to safer and healthier urban forests.
12. Helps present the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live or conduct business.

13. Tells visitors, through signage, that here is a community that cares about its environment.
14. Sometimes gives preference over other communities when allocations of grant money are made for trees or forestry programs.
15. Provides a way to reach large numbers of people with information about tree care.

Congratulations to the following southeastern Colorado communities for achieving their 2012 TCUSA status!

- Baca County: Campo and Springfield
- Kiowa County: Eads
- Prowers County: Holly and Lamar
- Otero County: La Junta, Swink and Rocky Ford
- Crowley County: Ordway and Olney Springs

For more information on the TCUSA program, please visit <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/index.cfm>.



Lamar received its 20-year Tree City USA recognition in 2005. The town is still going strong with the program and has been a TCUSA for 27 years.

Tree Planting Helps Walsh Recover from 2011 Wildfire

The Baca County town of Walsh, in conjunction with the Colorado Tree Coalition and Colorado State Forest Service, recently planted more than 150 trees after receiving a \$1,500 grant to help reforest the community following a devastating 2011 wildfire. The grant was awarded to the ReForest Walsh Fire project under the CTC's ReForest Colorado program, which focuses on post-disaster tree planting efforts.

On May 11, 2012, a total of 24 volunteers from the surrounding community – including landowners, Walsh's Future Farmers of America students and firefighters, representatives from the Walsh Town Council and Baca County Commissioners, and CSFS personnel – helped plant the trees on the edge of Walsh, where a wind-driven grass fire burned 30 acres in April 2011. The fire led to the evacuation of 120 residents and destroyed one home, multiple outbuildings, vehicles and machinery. A separate Baca County grass fire in early April 2011 also burned one residence.

“There was a time when everything here was gray,” said Donna Davis, CSFS La Junta district forester and CTC representative. “This planting brought a lot of healing for residents and the community, who worked together to plant a future and a hope for tomorrow.”

The CTC grant covered the cost of 152 Rocky Mountain junipers – 140 seedling trees grown at the CSFS Nursery in Fort Collins, and 12 larger potted trees from Van Hooks Nursery (La Junta). In addition to grant-purchased trees, Quail Unlimited donated weed barrier fabric and staples and Van Hooks donated two additional trees. Landowners prepared the site by removing burn-scarred trees and provided the drip irrigation, along with gravel to anchor the weed barrier.

The new trees were planted on three separate properties, with the CSFS demonstrating planting techniques and overseeing the installation project alongside the Walsh community.

Watering Trees Properly Necessary During Drought

Eastern Colorado continues to be in a multi-year drought cycle. Prolonged periods of summer drought dry out the soil, stressing not only bluegrass lawns and wild stands of mountain pines, but also landscape trees on the plains and in urban areas. During these same periods of drought, water restrictions can make it more difficult for homeowners to keep their trees sufficiently watered.

“Adequately watering your trees is the best way to ensure optimum growth and vigor during the summer months,” said Keith Wood, community forestry program manager for the Colorado State Forest Service. “Dry trees become susceptible to root and branch die-back and subsequent insect and disease problems.”

U.S. Drought Monitor maps, released each week, indicated that all of Colorado experienced some form of drought in 2012 – with almost the entire state under “severe” or “extreme” drought classifications at times.

The CSFS offers the following tips to keep trees healthy without overly inflating the water bill:

- Water a wide area. Tree root systems, unlike carrots, may spread two to three times wider than the height of the tree, with most absorbing roots in the top foot of soil. Apply water to soak the entire area within the drip line (the critical root zone directly underneath the full span of a tree’s branches).
- Water slowly. To ensure deep penetration, use a deep root fork (inserted 8 inches or less), soaker hose on low setting or soft spray wand to apply water slowly to the full area within the drip line. Placing a running garden hose against the base of a tree for several minutes is far less effective.
- Keep the yard green. Trees located in irrigated lawns generally do not require additional water, as long as the area surrounding the tree receives adequate moisture. Conversely, a dry, yellow yard means the roots of any trees present are also dry.

- Focus on non-irrigated trees. Trees that do not receive water from sprinkler systems or irrigation require additional water. Every week, apply 10 gallons of water for each inch of tree trunk diameter. Water newly planted trees even more frequently; larger trees, which have extensive root systems, can be watered less frequently.
- Mulch. Mulch is an inexpensive solution to retain soil moisture and save water. Apply 4 inches of organic mulch onto bare soil within 2 to 3 feet from the base of the trunk (removing any grass first, if necessary). Do not allow the mulch to directly contact the trunk.
- Follow the rules. When planning a watering regimen, remember to follow any current watering restrictions.

Visit www.csfs.colostate.edu for more tips on tree watering, planting and general care.

VFA Grants Awarded in 2012

The Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program, as part of the National Fire Plan and administered by the Colorado State Forest Service, offers 50/50 cost-share funding for organizing, training and/or equipping rural fire departments serving communities with populations under 10,000 residents. A big thank you to the following firefighter personnel who initiated application in 2012. Through their efforts, their departments received the amounts listed in the 2012 process:

- Cheraw Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) - \$1,999.50
- Cheyenne Wells Fire Protection District (FPD) #1 - \$5,426.50
- Fowler Rural FPD - \$2,546.50
- Hasty-McClave RVFD - \$3,492.50
- La Junta Fire Department - \$6,031.50
- Las Animas/Bent County RFPD - \$1,528.50
- Manzanola RFPD - \$2,496.50
- Olney Springs VFD - \$223.50
- Prowers County RFD - \$4,630.00

- Walsh VFD - \$2,861.00
- Wiley RFPD - \$7,395.00
- Long Canyon VFD - \$4,128.50
- Las Animas County - \$7,347.50

Just over \$570,000 in Volunteer Fire Assistance grants have been awarded in the CSFS La Junta District since 2001.

Bent County Student the Colorado Runner-up for CTC Fifth-Grade Poster Contest

Jordan Parker, a fifth-grade student at McClave School in Bent County, was the Colorado Runner-up in the 2012 Colorado Tree Coalition's Fifth-Grade Poster Contest.

The Poster Contest theme for 2012, Celebrate Trees in Our Community, required artwork depicting the important role trees play in Colorado communities and how trees and forests can be celebrated.

The Bent County Conservation District sponsored the event locally, with Kendra Davis, fifth-grade teacher, the contact at McClave School. Davis supported the educational opportunity for her students, which included a visit from a local CSFS forester. The forester engaged the students in a Project Learning Tree Activity – “Three Cheers for Trees” – which supported



Jordan Parker's entry for the 2012 Colorado Tree Coalitions Fifth-Grade Poster Contest.

fifth-grade education in the sciences, social studies and the visual arts.

Jordan faced high competition with her fellow classmates, but was the overall McClave School winner, the overall Bent County Conservation District Winner, and the Colorado Fifth-Grade State Runner-up. AWESOME, Jordan! We are so PROUD of you!

Outreach Visits from Colorado State University

In the spring of 2012, Craig Beyrouthy, Dean of Colorado State University's Department of Agricultural Sciences, visited the CSFS La Junta District Office as part of the CSU Community Tours outreach program. Otero Junior College President Jim Rizzuto and staff also participated. The CSFS, OJC and the Dean discussed upcoming and future collaboration potentials. CSFS issues specific to these discussions included:

- Drought and water – effects on communities and the state's watersheds, including significant tree die-off and limited funding to assist with restoration of community forests;
- Watershed Health – supporting riparian forest health along with mountain forests;
- Agroforestry – the need for windbreaks/snow fences and funding concerns;
- CSFS Seedling Tree Nursery – importance of continuing to seek a variety of tree species adaptable to southeast Colorado, and providing small amounts of specific seedling species for special projects;
- Working with OJC on course, workshop or class opportunities – basic arboriculture, community forestry and volunteer forest steward projects were examples;
- Linking the CSFS to the CSU Department of Agricultural Sciences.

In late summer, CSU President Tony Frank also made a short visit to southeast Colorado. The agenda was an informal talking forum with the president. The



CSU President Tony Frank visited the La Junta District in 2012.

roundtable was hosted at the CSU Arkansas Valley Research Center, with Otero County CSU Extension, CSU Research and CSFS La Junta District personnel present.

Counting People Because People Count

The following numbers depict the number of individuals seeking assistance from the CSFS La Junta District in 2012, and the topic of each interaction:

| La Junta District Outreach | # of People Reached |
|---|---------------------|
| Landowner Assists | |
| Phone/walk-in | 62 |
| Site visits | 30 |
| Total | 92 |
| Training Sessions for Tree Boards/Towns | |
| Holly - pruning with public works crew | 6 |
| Rocky Ford - how to plant trees, with tree board and Black Hills Energy | 15 |
| Eads - pruning with public works crew | 4 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Total | 25 |
| Arboriculture Workshops | |
| Eastern Colorado Community Forestry Conference (ECCFC) | 60 |
| Trees, Turf, Concrete - Municipalities | 22 |
| La Junta Public | 10 |
| Lamar Public | 10 |
| CSU Extension Tree Care Workshop | 7 |
| Total | 109 |
| Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatoire (TTP) Education and Outreach | |
| Purgatoire River Anglers Trout Unlimited Chapter | 32 |
| Las Animas Co. Farm Bureau | 42 |
| Total | 74 |
| Wildfire Training | |
| S190/130/L180 - La Junta, Manzanola, Fowler | 9 |
| S190/130/L180 - Field Day, Springfield | 4 |
| S190/190/L180 - Field Day, Prowers, Wiley | 9 |
| Total | 22 |
| Forest Management Workshops | |
| Tamarisk Symposium - working with private landowners | 200 |
| Upper Ark Weed Cooperative - project planning and working with private landowners | 65 |
| ARKWIPP Annual Workshops - Restoration Series | 80 |
| Bent County CD - 'What Trees Need to Survive Drought' | 35 |
| Total | 380 |
| Youth/Adult Outreach and Education | |
| Girls in the Middle - Presentation on what a forester does | 20 |
| Boy Scout Troop - tree identification/invasive trees @ John Martin State Park | 10 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Holly Elementary - Arbor Day event on how to plant trees | 40 |
| Arbor Day Presentation (prx) to Fowler fourth-graders - How to plant trees | 52 |
| Swink Arbor Day – Teaching kindergarteners How to plant trees | 17 |
| La Junta Arbor Day - How to plant trees | 10 |
| Rocky Ford Arbor Day - How to plant trees | 7 |
| Arbor Day prx to Manzanola fourth-graders - How to plant trees | 5 |
| Arbor Day prx to Crowley Co. fourth-graders - How to plant trees | 43 |
| Arbor Day prx to Eads fifth-graders - How to plant trees | 12 |
| Springfield Arbor Day prx - How to plant trees | 102 |
| Campo Arbor Day prx- How to plant trees | 23 |
| Ordway Arbor Day - How to maintain trees | 3 |
| Eads FFA/VocAg Workday - How to maintain street trees | 18 |
| Olney Springs Arbor Day @ senior center - How to maintain trees | 13 |
| CTC Fifth-Grade Poster Contest, PLT #30 McClave School | 22 |
| Walsh CTC Reforest Grant, 154 trees planted | 24 |
| Manzanola School – Fourth-Grade PLT#13 & 30 workshops | 8 |
| TEN (Teaching Environmental Science Naturally) w/DP&W | 9 |
| CTC Fifth-Grade Poster Contest Recognition Ceremony, Denver | 15 |
| Total | 453 |
| CSFS Outreach and Education to Local Groups, Others | |
| La Junta Lion's Club | 8 |
| La Junta Rotary Club | 17 |
| Branson-Trinchera CD Annual Meeting | 24 |
| West Otero-Timpas CD Annual Meeting | 28 |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers Commissioners' meetings w/CSFS | 28 |
| Tony Frank and dignitaries visit, Rocky Ford | 3 |
| CSU Tour - Craig Berouty and dignitaries, CSFS La Junta Office | 7 |
| Total | 115 |
| | |
| Total Number of People Reached | 1,270 |



(Above) Wildland Firefighter training.

(Below) The ECCFC conference in Rocky Ford.



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 questions or need assistance with forestry-related issues, please contact us at any time:

Donna Davis – District Forester
Teradette Wilson – Administrative Assistant II

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**We would like to thank our many
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—The CSFS La Junta District



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