



Colorado State Forest Service

La Junta District 2013 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 16 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 District" and then "La Junta District."

Otero County Develops Community Wildfire Protection Plan

In 2013, Otero County completed its first-ever Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The purpose of the CWPP is to provide stakeholders, including those living in Otero County, with an overview of the wildland fire risks, hazards and values within the planning area; recommend possible courses of action to reduce the impacts of wildfire; and to share a current action plan.

The county's highest areas of primary concern have been identified as the existing communities and all development near the communities; the high-use

recreational areas; the railroad/high-use travel corridors in the county; and the Arkansas River watershed and irrigation canals/laterals (due to water quality concerns).



A community interface in the CSFS La Junta District.

The main goals of the CWPP for 2013-14 are:

- 1) Share the CWPP and Mitigation Assessment Map with the community at large (city/town councils, fire departments, local conservation districts and other boards);
- 2) Note mitigation efforts already completed in the county, for future partnering and grant potentials;
- 3) Review local Firewise messaging and possibly do a mitigation assessment exercise with the fire departments;
- 4) Partner with the six-county region Homeland Security Board; and
- 5) As available, share the CWPP and Mitigation Assessment Maps at local clubs/events (via club presentations, media, local events and the County Fair).

The following counties in southeast Colorado have now completed Community Wildfire Protection Plans: Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers.

CWPPs are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), passed by Congress on Nov. 21, 2003, and signed into law by President George W. Bush on Dec. 3, 2003.

A Helping Hand for Walsh's Trees

The Town of Walsh recently utilized a grant of just over \$1,000 from the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC), a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, renewing and enhancing community trees. The grant, titled "A Helping Hand for Walsh Trees," paid for the planting of six trees to replace dead/dying trees in the community's rights-of-way.



One of the new trees planted in Walsh.

The Walsh Tree Board, a group of volunteer citizens within and near the Town of Walsh, offered a volunteer signup program for homeowners wishing to remove, replant or maintain trees within or near the community's street/alley rights-of-way. Due to the number of dead or dying trees in the community, the recent drought and high winds –coupled with wildfire danger – an opportunity was created to remove tree hazards to residents, pedestrians and traffic. On Sept. 26, an Arbor Day proclamation was read and accompanying celebration was held, with participating landowners and town personnel in attendance. Landowners and friends together planted one snow crabapple and three catalpa trees with the help of the Colorado State Forest Service. Landowners

were educated about proper techniques for planting, watering, mulching and staking, and signed a tree-care maintenance promise for their individual tree. The remaining two trees, both honeylocusts, were planted a few days later.

Projects like these can be a jumpstart for Tree City USA recognition with the National Arbor Day Foundation. Those interested in volunteering with a tree committee or tree board near them can contact the CSFS La Junta District for more information. (Note: Thanks to ongoing financial and administrative support from the USDA Forest Service and the CSFS, dues-paying members and financial partners, the CTC has since 1991 awarded 454 grants totaling just over \$696,000. These grants have been matched with more than \$7.6 million in community money and/or time. As a result of these grants, more than 68,600 trees have been planted throughout the state.)

2013 La Junta District Insect & Disease Report

Overview

The CSFS La Junta District covers seven counties in southeastern Colorado, and additional district activities also occur in eastern Las Animas County (CSFS La Veta District). The three main ecosystems within the district are riparian zones, shortgrass prairie and piñon-juniper canyonlands dominated by one-seed juniper trees. The climate is semi-arid, with annual precipitation rates averaging 9 to 17 inches, depending on the area. For example, western Baca County and eastern Las Animas County typically receive about 12 to 15 inches of precipitation annually, while the Highway 50 corridor linking Otero, Bent and Prowers counties typically receives only about 7 to 10 inches annually.

The majority of the district is considered shortgrass prairie, officially dubbed the Central Shortgrass Prairie Ecoregion. Although the district covers a very biologically diverse area, native trees are typically confined to waterways or within canyonland areas that receive slightly higher rates of precipitation. The majority of trees within the district are actually found within its communities or on homesteads located in the country, or on small islands of green linked by highways and roads in between vast expanses of

prairie. Thus most insect and disease activity occurs within the urban forests and homesteads of the district.

General Weather Observations for 2013 – Persistent Drought Conditions Dominated

- Winter/Spring 2013: Very dry, warm and windy. Several late-spring freezes also occurred that were very damaging to trees, especially evergreens. Eastern redcedar seemed to be hit the hardest by the freeze events.
- Early Summer: Extremely dry, hot and somewhat windy for most of the summer over much of the district. Some areas did receive patchy precipitation throughout the summer, such as the Higbee Valley in Otero County and the Kim area in Las Animas County, which provided marginal relief from drought conditions in those areas.
- Mid- and Late Summer: Precipitation was good across many portions of the district, such as western and northern Otero County and portions of Crowley County.
- Fall: The fall of 2013 offered cooler temperatures and many localized areas of significant precipitation.
- Year Overall: Much of the district is still suffering from drought conditions, and as of January 2014 average precipitation is still well below normal for all areas of the district.


Insect and Disease, Other Tree Concerns in 2013

Major

- Winter desiccation of evergreens.
- Drought – again, lots of dieback this year, especially various long-needled pines, blue spruce, and juniper species.
- Walnut twig borer/thousand cankers disease (TCD), which continues to spread and intensify. This is most problematic in Crowley County and the Rocky Ford area due to a high concentration of walnut trees. Trees in communities along the Kansas border are generally showing fewer symptoms of TCD.
- Elm leaf beetle in the La Junta area, which again showed moderate populations.
- Elm flea weevil, which persist, with numbers increasing across the district.
- Elm spider mite, very prolific this year on many large-leaved elms.
- European elm scale – this is always a major insect

issue for elm trees in southeastern Colorado, especially English and American elm.

- Dutch elm disease (DED) – a DED survey for the City of La Junta showed no signs of the disease this year. However, most large-leaved elms are suffering from drought conditions, and those that have extensive dieback are located in landscapes that are not receiving supplemental water.
- Elm bark beetles – this too is always a major insect issue of elm within the district.
- Piñon twig beetle, which is on the increase in landscape trees in Otero County.
- Lilac-ash borer – a regular insect issue for ash within the district.
- Flatheaded wood borer, for which activity has been noted on random juniper species throughout district.
- Carpenterworm, noted on hybrid cottonwood, willow, silver poplar, ash and elm in some locations.
- Anthracnose, noted on sycamore trees in rural areas near Lamar this year.
- Trunk girdling by weed trimmers/lawnmowers—this is always a major cause of stress to community trees.
- Improper watering, planting and pruning, and poor tree selection for a given planting site.
- Tamarisk leaf beetle – On a good note, this beetle, which feeds on invasive tamarisk plants in riparian areas, continues to expand its range in Pueblo, Crowley, western Otero, and western Las Animas counties. Defoliation was heavy to moderate along sections of the Arkansas River between Pueblo and Fowler, north of Rocky Ford and on the Purgatoire River in the Hoehne area. For the most current tamarisk leaf beetle distribution map, please visit www.tamariskcoalition.org.
- Unidentified causes: Colorado blue spruce, pines and junipers are in definite decline across the district. Samples submitted to the lab from several properties have indicated no insect or disease as the causal agent. Short growth increments for the past three years indicate trees are stressed, however, mostly likely from poor environmental conditions.

Trees Recommended for Southeastern Colorado																
Trees Recommended for Southeastern Colorado (Listed by Size Class and then		Drought Tolerance			High Soil pH/Alkalinity Tolerance (pH of 7 or higher)			Soil Texture Tolerance					Protected Site Recommended?	Good Windbreak Component?	Recommended Cultivars	Comments
	Alphabetically by Common Name)	High	Moderate	Fair	High	Moderate	Fair	Well Drained				Poorly Drained			A cultivar is a plant variety that has been produced through selected breeding from a population of plants because of its desirable characteristics	
All trees listed have some degree of drought tolerance after establishment*								Sandy	Sandy Loam	Loam	Clay Loam	Clay				
Large Shade Trees - 50'+ at maturity																
Catalpa, northern (same as western)			X			X		X	X	X	X	X				Can have weak wood: prune for good structure and eliminate codominant stems (stems growing too close together)
Cottonwood, plains				X	X			X	X	X	X				Male cultivars are seedless: 'Jeronimus', or Sargent cottonwood	Not for residential use. Do not plant near structures due to weak wood and breakage potential. Good for riparian area planting, or out in large open areas
Elm, American (Dutch elm disease resistant hybrids)	X				X			X	X	X	X	X			'Liberty,' 'Valley Forge,' 'Princeton,' 'Jefferson,' 'Delaware #2,' 'Accolade'	
Elm, English	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				State champion trees in Rocky Ford and La Junta. Limited commercial availability
Elm, 'Frontier' (Chinese (lacebark) elm hybrid)	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				
Elm, lacebark (true Chinese elm)			X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X			State champion tree in Rocky Ford
Elm, 'Patriot'	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				High tolerance to elm leaf beetle. More upright form
Elm, 'Prospector'	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				Good choice if looking for a somewhat smaller version of American elm
Ginkgo (male cultivars with no fruit)			X			X			X	X	X		X		'Presidential Gold,' 'Autumn Gold'	
Hackberry, common	X				X			X	X	X	X	X		X		
Honeylocust	X				X			X	X	X	X	X		X		'Shademaster,' 'Skyline,' 'Sunburst' (plant in areas protected from south west exposure)
Kentucky coffeetree	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				
Linden, American				X		X		X	X	X	X		X		'Legend,' 'American Sentry'	Not tolerant of de-icing or road salts
London planetree				X	X			X	X	X	X		X		'Columbia,' 'Liberty'	
Oak, bur	X				X			X	X	X	X	X		X		
Oak, English			X		X			X	X	X	X	X				
Pecan			X		X			X	X	X	X				'Pawnee'	
Persimmon, common			X			X		X	X	X	X		X			State champion tree in Rocky Ford. Limited commercial availability
Sycamore, American				X		X		X	X	X	X					State champion tree in Rocky Ford. Potentially affected by antracnose
Medium Shade Trees - 30' to 40' at maturity																
Boxelder, 'Sensation'			X		X			X	X	X	X	X			'Sensation'	'Sensation' is the only cultivar recommended as it is a male cultivar with no seeds and has superior growth habit
Chinese pistache	X				X			X	X	X	X	X	X			
Filbert, Turkish	X					X			X	X	X		X			
Golden raintree	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				Can be a prolific re-seeder in moist, sandy-loam soils
Hackberry, netleaf	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				State champion trees in Las Animas County. Limited commercial availability
Japanese pagodatree			X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X			
Linden, littleleaf				X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X			Not tolerant of de-icing or road salts
Oak, gambel			X		X			X	X	X	X			X		May have problems with suckers
Osage-orange	X				X			X	X	X	X	X		X		Male cultivars are fruitless and thornless for: 'Wichita', 'Pawhuska', 'Chetopa'.
Pear, ornamental	X				X			X	X	X	X	X			'Aristocrat', 'Chanticleer', 'Cleveland Select', 'Autumn Blaze'	
Soapberry, western				X	X			X	X	X	X	X				State champion tree in Baca County - Picture Canyon, USFS Comanche National Grassland. Limited commercial availability
Mulberry, white	X				X			X	X	X	X	X		X	'Fruitless,' 'Russian Mulberry'	Consider planting fruit-bearing trees in windbreaks to add wildlife value.
Small Ornamental Trees - 25' or less at maturity																
Apricot			X		X			X	X	X	X				'Moorpark,' 'Moongold'	Very rarely sets fruit due to early blossom, but makes a hardy ornamental tree
Chokecherry, Canada red			X			X		X	X	X	X	X				Can have a problem with suckers at base
Crabapple			X		X			X	X	X	X	X			'Spring Snow,' 'Profusion,' 'Radiant,' 'Centurion,' 'Coralburst,' 'Prairiefire'	Choose cultivars that are fireblight resistant
Euonymous, winterberry				X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		'Pink Lady'	State champion tree in La Junta. Limited commercial availability
Hawthorn, English	X				X			X	X	X	X	X			'Paul's Scarlet,' 'Crimson Cloud'	'Thornless: requires annual pruning to maintain tree form, or do not prune for more of a large shrub form. Can have suckers at base
Hawthorn, Washington			X		X			X	X	X	X	X				Has thorns: requires annual pruning to maintain tree form, or do not prune for large shrub form. Can have suckers at base
Japanese tree lilac			X			X		X	X	X	X		X		'Ivory Silk'	
Maple, bigtooth				X		X		X	X	X	X		X			
Maple, tartarian			X		X			X	X	X	X				'Hotwings'	
Mulberry, weeping	X				X			X	X	X	X	X			'Chapparral' is fruitless weeping form	State champion tree in Rocky Ford
Redbud, eastern				X	X				X	X	X	X	X		'Lavender Twist,' 'Don Ego!' (small, seedless).	
Serviceberry				X			X	X	X	X	X		X		'Saskatoon,' 'Shadblow,' 'Princess Diana,'	Best used as a multi-stemmed large shrub/small tree
Silver buffaloberry			X			X		X	X	X	X	X		X		Can be large shrub or small tree, depending upon how pruned
Large Evergreen Trees - 30' to 60' at maturity <i>Do not use as street trees!</i>																
Fir, white				X			X		X	X	X	X	X			
Pine, Austrian			X		X			X	X	X	X	X		X		
Pine, ponderosa			X			X		X	X	X	X	X		X		
Spruce, Colorado blue				X			X		X	X	X		X			
Small Evergreen Trees - 15' to 25' at maturity																
Juniper, eastern redcedar	X				X				X	X	X	X		X		Many cultivars are available in many shapes, sizes and coloration for juniper trees. Choose the best one for its purpose: windbreak or landscape ornamental.
Juniper, one-seed	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				State champion one-seed juniper located in Las Animas County - USFS Comanche National Grassland
Juniper, Rocky Mountain	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				
Juniper, Utah	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				
Pine, mugo	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				Wide growing, give plenty of room to spread
Pine, piñon	X				X			X	X	X	X	X				Avoid over-watering
<i>*All newly planted trees, regardless of drought tolerance, must be frequently "deep watered" to become established. Some established trees must also be consistently watered for the life of the tree. Deep watering means maintaining soil moisture to a depth of 12 to 18 inches within the drip line of the tree.</i>																

Minor

- Misapplied herbicide – there are always a handful of misapplied herbicide issues every year.
- Locust borer in Idaho and Purple Robe (two black locust species) is common every year across the district.
- Hackberry nipple gall, common on all hackberry trees in the area.
- Gummosis on peach and plum trees, in tandem with canker and shothole borer.
- Thyronectria canker on stressed honeylocust trees, as seen at John Martin State Park, in tandem with honeylocust borer.
- Honeylocust spider mite, which was relatively common this year.
- A few small, patchy areas of stressed and dying one-seed juniper in the piñon-juniper forests of southern Otero County and eastern Las Animas County.

Summary/Comments

Most tree problems we see stem from poor cultural care and poor planting practices. However, as this drought persists into its 11th year, more and more trees are in decline in the urban forests, and in naturally forested areas.

Even though precipitation averages were generally higher this year across the district, severe drought conditions still persist. Snowpack in both the Arkansas and Purgatoire watersheds was still well below average. Urban forests within the district are in a definite decline.

Monitoring for Walnut Tree Disease in Southeast Colorado

The Colorado State Forest Service continues to monitor the state's black walnut trees for thousand cankers disease (TCD) – a relatively new disease to the state that is lethal to infested trees. First appearing in Colorado a decade ago, the disease has already caused significant tree mortality in many of the state's urban forests, primarily along the Front Range from Fort Collins to Pueblo, and in southeast Colorado, including communities in Crowley and Otero counties.

“We are mapping the black walnut trees in 35 southeast Colorado communities and looking at the crowns for potential signs of this disease. The information we gather will help identify general statewide trends and enhance future monitoring efforts for our state,” said Donna Davis, district forester for the CSFS La Junta District.



The walnut twig beetle carries a fungus that causes Thousand Cankers Disease.

Thousand cankers disease is caused by a fungus carried by the walnut twig beetle. Once the fungus is introduced to a tree, it causes small dead areas in the bark called cankers.

Trees are eventually killed by overwhelming attacks of walnut twig beetles and subsequent cankers that girdle branches.

Nationally, TCD has been reported in the southwestern and western United States, and in Tennessee. If the disease continues to spread east, it could threaten black walnuts, which are high-value hardwoods, in the tree's native range.

Currently, there are no effective methods for saving trees with thousand cankers disease, and many states east of Colorado already have quarantines prohibiting the movement of walnut material into their state.

Landowners with black walnut trees should inspect them regularly for symptoms including sparse foliage, leaf yellowing or wilting, branch dieback, and excessive staining of the bark surface. Any suspect trees should be reported to the CSFS. All Colorado residents can help minimize the spread of this and other tree diseases by taking one simple step: Do not move potentially infested wood, including logs, firewood, lumber and wood chips.

For more information about thousand cankers disease, go to http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/113144_CSFS-1000Cankers_www.pdf.

‘Counting People Because People Count’ – La Junta District Outreach 2013

The following numbers depict the number of individuals seeking assistance from the CSFS La Junta District in 2013, and the topic of each interaction. The La Junta District participated in a total of 23 workshops, planted 170 trees and reached 840 people in 2013.

	<i># People Reached</i>	<i>Total # People Reached</i>	<i># Trees Planted</i>
<u>Landowner Assists</u>		99	
Inquiry Phone Calls/Walk-ins	65		
Site Visits	34		
<u>Arboriculture Workshops</u>		69	
Trees, Turf, Concrete - La Junta	55		
CSU Extension Pesticide Applicators Workshop, Insects & Diseases of Trees in Pueblo	14		
<u>Forest Management Workshops</u>		40	
Baca County CD Windbreak Workshop	22		
2013 ARKWIPP Wkshp - Vegetative Monitoring Techniques - Las Animas County	18		
<u>Youth/Adult Outreach and Education</u>		622	
Lamar Arbor Day	105		150
La Junta Arbor Day	12		1
Swink Arbor Day (w/Modern Woodmen of America)	23		3
Rocky Ford Arbor Day	10		2
Eads Arbor Day	19		2
Springfield Arbor Day	70		2
Campo Arbor Day	22		1
Olney Springs Arbor Day (w/Modern Woodmen of America)	15		3
Ordway Arbor Day Program (w/West-Otero Timpas CD)	38		
Manzanola Arbor Day Program (w/West-Otero Timpas CD)	8		
Fowler Arbor Day Program (w/Olney-Boone CD)	45		
CTC 5th Grade Poster Contest Recognition Ceremony in Denver	15		
Manzanola School 4th Grade Firewise/Fireworks Activity	10		
Parkview School Field Day (w/DP&W, Firewise/Fireworks Activity) in Lamar	110		
Girls in the Middle, OJC - Firewise, PLT Act#7	23		
Career Day, OJC	30		
Walsh Arbor Day	7		6
Firewise Workshop - Rocky Ford Library	60		
<u>CSFS Outreach and Education to Local Groups, Others</u>		10	
Rocky Ford Rotary Club	10		
<u>Partner Projects</u>			
John Martin Reservoir State Park Forest Inventory and Management Plan			
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site - DAR Tree Inventory			
Totals		840	170

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:

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