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Community-Public Land Stewardship

INITIATIVES

A periodical publication from the Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College

Apr-May 2001

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Agencies and
residents meet
this SW
Colorado fire
season
with risk
reduction
strategies

Last March, the Office of Community Services facilitated two meetings attended by about 60 southwest Colorado residents to discuss concerns and actions being planned to reduce wildfire risk in and around forested neighborhoods near Bayfield and Durango.

The meetings introduced community members to a conversation that will continue through summer and fall, one in which local government and fire protection agencies, state and federal land managers, and community members will talk about how best to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in southwest Colorado.

During the meetings, which were sponsored by the San Juan National Forest (SJNF), Fort Lewis College professor and fire ecologist Bill Romme, aided by GIS expert Scott White (Ft. Lewis) and forest ecologist Lisa Floyd-Hanna (Prescott College), described the "fire risk assessment" research he has been conducting in

the area.

Community members left with a clearer sense of their roles in protecting their own property, and for taking an opportunity to participate in a community and ecosystem stewardship project before, rather than after, a crisis occurs.

Colorado State Forest Service forester Dan Ochocki, SJNF fire managers Scott Steinberg and Ron Klatt described the San Juan's fire management program. Local fire district chiefs also gave presentations. As residential development increasingly expands into the "urban-wildland interface," wildfire risk to personal

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Trust for Public Land and mining corp. agree to protect another 2,200 acres on SW Colorado's Red Mountain

The Trust For Public Land, a non-profit land conservation organization, and Idarado Mining Company recently entered into an agreement that gives TPL an exclusive option to buy 2,200 acres of property between Telluride and Ouray.

Last year, Idarado, a subsidiary of Denver-based Newmont Mining Corporation, granted TPL an option to purchase a separate 2,800 acres of high country property above Ouray on Red Mountain.

“ . . . we truly are creating a land legacy . . . ”

Upon completion of both purchases, perhaps by the end of 2001, TPL will convey the properties to the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest. If completed, both transactions will become part of efforts to protect 10,500 acres in the heart of the San Juan Mountains.

The Red Mountain Task Force, a coalition of San Juan, San Miguel, Ouray, and La Plata County residents and officials, is spearheading the multi-year *Red Mountain Project* to protect the mostly small mining claims from development.

“The Trust For Public Land long has been interested in conserving this incomparable part of Colorado. With this second option agreement, we feel we are making significant progress towards realizing the land conservation vision of the Red Mountain Project,” said TPL’s Colorado State Director Doug Robotham. “Together, we truly are creating a land legacy here for the citizens of Colorado and the West.”

In the agreement, Idarado gives TPL the right to purchase the property at appraised fair market value during the agreement’s term. During that time, the Red Mountain Task Force will work with Colorado’s congressional delegation to secure a congressional appropriation of \$5 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

“TPL and Idarado have taken another giant step forward by signing this second option agreement, and last year’s hard work by Colorado’s congressional leaders to secure the [first] \$5 million . . . really positions the project well for success. We look forward to working closely this year again with Senator Campbell, Senator Allard, and Congressman McInnis to secure the [second] \$5 million for fiscal year 2002,” said Bob Risch, chairman of the Red Mountain Task Force.

To learn more, visit TPL’s Website at www.tpl.org and the Red Mt. Project at www.redmountainproject.com. Or contact: Doug Robotham, TPL Colo. Director, (303) 837-1414, Bob Risch, Red Mt. Task Force, (970) 325-4205, or Ken Francis, Community Services, (970) 247-7310.

DISCOVERIES DISCOVERIES DISCOVERIES

Literature review catalogs a wide range of collaborative approaches

In *Collaborative Conservation in Theory and Practice: A Literature Review*, editors Alex Conley and Ann Moote (2000, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, U. of Arizona), bring together a sampling of literature about collaborative, community-based approaches to natural resource management.

Whichever of the many labels you prefer to use, it is collaborative and it is a nation-wide movement. This publication divides the bibliographic entries into two parts: theory and practice. Contact the editors for copies at: (520) 884-4393, or online at <http://www.udallcenter.arizona.edu>.

A new Colorado State Website about sustainability goes on line

Colorado has developed some new initiatives as a result of the 1999 Colorado Sustainability Summit which was held in conjunction with last year’s National Town Meeting.

One project developed was the *Sustainable Colorado Web site*. The site was recently expanded to include information on sustainable businesses and services in Colorado, sustainable practices, as well as links to other sites. The site serves as a clearing-house for sustainable development issues taking place in Colorado. To learn more, log on at:

<http://www.sustainablecolorado.org>

Community-Public Lands Stewardship Initiatives is a periodic newsletter prepared at the Office of Community Services, Fort Lewis College, 1000 Rim Drive, Durango, Colorado 81301. Editor: Tim Richard, Research & Communication, (970) 247-7066; richard_t@fortlewis.edu

The Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College assists rural communities, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations with planning and community development projects. It facilitates and coordinates projects in land-use planning, historic preservation, public policy, and human services. OCS builds partnerships that are inclusive and participatory, that value community heritage and ecosystem stewardship. It also offers Fort Lewis College students educational opportunities as assistants in its programs and projects.

Office of Community Services helps partners in acquiring grants for land and historic preservation

The Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College recently announced the successful acquisition of four grants totaling \$344,000 for landscape and historic preservation in the Red Mountain area.

As part of its outreach mission to local communities, Community Services helped the Red Mountain Task Force to prepare the grant applications to secure the funds.

The State Historical Fund, a branch of the Colorado Historical Society, awarded \$10,000 to the San Juan County Historical Society to stabilize the Silver Ledge Mine head frame. The wooden structure is visible just south of Red Mountain Pass on the east side of US Highway 550.

Also, the Ouray Board of County Commissioners, with Community Service's help, obtained \$334,000 for the purchase of 122.5 acres of historically and environmentally significant land in Ironton Park, just north of Red Mountain Pass. Of the total, Great Outdoors Colorado contributed \$131,000, the State Historical Fund, \$50,000, and Colorado's Idarado Resource Damages Fund, \$153,000.

The property, located on US Highway 550 near a unique "iron fen" wetlands south of Ouray, is vulnerable to development. About two acres includes part of Ironton ghost town, once a bustling town during Red Mountain's peak mining era.

Ouray County plans to have the land appraised and buy it at fair market value, then give it to the Uncompahgre National Forest for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

The funds are in addition to \$5 million of Land & Water Conservation Funds recently approved by Congress for the



THE SILVER LEDGE HEADFRAME will be stabilized with funding obtained from the Colorado State Historical Fund.

purchase of historical landscapes and sites on Red Mountain.

"The Task Force will be working on an additional request for funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for 2002, as part of the overall effort to acquire and protect 10,500 acres in the Red Mountain area," said Ken Francis, Director of Community Services.

Growth small obstacle to know-how

Growth in the historically sparsely populated agricultural area of Lewis-Arriola in Colorado's southwest corner has increased so much that demand has outgrown the community's capacity to provide for recreational facilities. So community members built a recreation center; all in the area's tradition of self-sufficiency, which newly relocated community members seem to take to rather well.

The recreation center was built with the aid of grants and volunteer help from community members.

The 6,000 square-foot building includes a large auditorium with a dance floor, a full kitchen, storage space, a large meeting room, and a nursery. For the area surrounding it, James Dietrich, landscape architect with the Office of Community Services, is assisting in the design development of a softball field, sand volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, a fenced playground area for preteen children, parking areas, and landscaping for the five-acre parcel.

The idea that motivated the creation of the recreation building and its grounds was to provide a hub for community events, such as public meetings, dances, exhibitions, athletic events, family reunions, weddings, car shows, bake sales, auctions, and meeting area for local clubs and organizations.

Chan Chafee, one of the community members most active in the development of the recreation center, said the building was barely complete before many requests were made for wedding parties and from families seeking a place for reunions and other events.

"The real problem will be how to schedule all the requests. The demand is obviously there," Chafee said.

Events at the center, which will be open sometime early this summer, are intended to be free or at very low cost to the public.

Community Services distributes \$73K for sustainable tourism

After two years of examining rural tourism in the Four Corners, a collaborative partnership of federal public-land agencies and the Office of Community Services is now providing funding assistance to sustainable tourism projects occurring in area communities. More than \$73,000 will be divided up among at least 12 communities in the Four Corners.

The Four Corners Gateway Tourism Initiative, established and jointly funded by the Office of Community Services, Forest Service-Rocky Mountain Region, San Juan National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Park Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, aims to enhance quality of life and tourism opportunities in small communities.

The initiative stems from recognition that increased tourism was affecting, and would continue to affect, the physical condition of natural attractions and the ability of agencies to manage them. This concern overlapped with the tendency for some communities to become overwhelmed by tourism, while others are ignored.

During 2000, a survey of heritage tourism and recreation in rural communities and public lands in the Four Corners of Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico, identified community desire for tourism and their capacity to meet both tourism opportunities and pressures.

After more than 100 interviews, survey data were compiled and used to determine which projects of interest to communities and public land agencies would benefit best from available funding. Capital improvements, information sharing, and training emerged as significant themes.

To better understand relationships among communities and public lands, researchers at Community Services collected information about the willingness and capacities of communities, tourism businesses, and public-land agencies to be partners in sustainable tourism development. They gathered ideas for how all three could work cooperatively to plan for tourism with conservation and stewardship approaches, to

OCS awarded \$75,000 to inventory historic structures and traditional cultural properties on national forest

The Colorado Historical Society recently awarded \$75,000 to the Office of Community Services to conduct an inventory and assessment of historical structures, sites, and traditional cultural properties within southwest Colorado's San Juan National Forest. The two-year project will include development of a plan to preserve and interpret some of the sites and structures identified.

Researchers with the *Inventory, Assessment, and Plan for Historical and Traditional Cultural Places on the San Juan National Forest* will investigate historical and other information about mining structures, ranching cabins and corrals, stock driveways, railroad beds used by lumber mills, and scattered mining and logging camps.

They also will identify traditional cultural places of significance to Native American tribes. Stories which connect native people to places and objects, and which are considered as valuable as the physical objects that may or may not have survived history, will be sought out to identify these places.

The research will involve San Juan National Forest heritage and planning staffs, the Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies and Anthropology Department, and the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes' cultural resource management staffs.

The inventory is part of an effort by the San Juan to integrate the story of human settlement with its land and resource management plan which is currently being revised.

All research and photographic documentation will be archived at Fort Lewis College's Center of Southwest Studies. For more information, call Sam Burns at (970) 247-7193, or Ken Francis, (970) 247-7310.

improve residents' quality of life, and to diversify local economies.

They found that one obstacle to addressing the trends was a lack of communication among agencies, businesses, and communities.

They also learned that although many Four Corners communities are located near federal- and state-managed public lands, their relationships differ widely.

Funding from the various agencies is not expected to be renewed for 2001-2002. If more becomes available it will be used to continue the assistance program associated with the Gateway Initiative, said Ken Francis, Office of Community Services Director.

For more information about the Gateway Initiative, or for a copy of the assessment findings, contact Francis at 247-7310, or Tim Richard, (970) 247-7066.

Proposed mountain studies center is becoming a reality

Recently, an effort to develop the North American Center for Mountain Studies (CMS) gained momentum when it began to establish non-profit status.

Local residents, state and federal agencies, universities, nonprofits, and policy makers enthusiastically endorsed the establishment of the center last August during a workshop held at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. Since then, a rapport has continued among representatives from Silverton, Durango, Fort Lewis College, and several federal agencies to shape the center's future. Representatives include members of the San Juan National Forest where the San Juan Mountains,

which inspired the creation of the CMS, are located. ***The Center will consist of a field station located in Silverton with offices located at Fort Lewis College.***

Partners' efforts have led to a more solid vision of the CMS as a nonprofit mountain education and a research program that promotes conservation, natural hazard prediction and mitigation, sustainable community development and the importance of maintaining mountain systems as resources on which national and global populations depend.

The Center will consist of a field station located in Silverton with offices located at Fort Lewis College.

The San Juan Mountains are considered the largest distinct mountain system in the US. They encompass more than 10,000 square miles, an area larger than Vermont. No other mountain province in the lower 48 states contains as much land above 10,000 feet. The San Juans support the last known location of certain arctic mosses that are relics of the last ice age, and host the largest concentration of mid-latitude ice-cored rock glaciers.

The San Juans, which dominate the southwestern Colorado skyline, have not been affected greatly by growth and demands of metropolitan centers elsewhere along the flanks of the Rocky Mountains.

A significant partner in the group is The Mountain Institute which brings its 31 years of international experience to the drawing table. The Institute is a global network of mountain researchers, students, and community development personnel with over 3,000 members. Its North American director Alton Byers has enthusiastically expressed his intention to join with CMS to become a showcase for interdiscipli-

nary mountain research and development.

Proposed programs include education in a mountain "classroom without walls" through field studies, on-site projects, live cams, real-time data recorders, remote sensing imagery and web-sites.

The education model is an interdisciplinary program that emphasizes applied, practical and participatory studies and includes K-20, as well as public and private programs.

Research will be multidisciplinary studies of mountain climate, water, biota, fauna, rocks and human communities.

The center will promote conservation partnerships with local people, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, and foundations. It will focus on sustainable mountain community development, promoting environmental and economic sustainability and social welfare among mountain residents.

The Center will also address research, prediction and mitigation of natural mountain hazards, such as avalanches.

For more information, contact Rob Blair, Ft. Lewis College, (970) 247-7263, blair_r@fortlewis.edu, or Andy Gleason, Silverton Avalanche Forecast Office, PO Box 418, Silverton, CO 81433, (970) 387-5712, silverav@frontier.net.

2002 is International Year of the Mountain

No mountain center currently exists in North America that offers an integrated program involving education, research, conservation, natural hazards mitigation, and mountain community development. The Center of Mountain Studies is an unprecedented opportunity to create such a center in southwest Colorado.

Mountain systems are being degraded with little awareness as to the limits of stress that could jeopardize water quality, quantity and supply of other natural resources on which society depends.

Most people are not aware of society's dependence on water and natural resources supplied by mountain systems.

A steering committee leading the creation of the Center plans to participate in the International Year of Mountains for 2002 designated by the United Nations. Until now, North America was the only continent not actively participating in and developing programs for the year.

Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership selects proposals for 2001 demonstration projects

In its continuing effort to support community economic revitalization and forest restoration in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado, the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership recently selected 15 projects to receive funding from its Community-Based Forest Demonstration Grant Program for fiscal year 2001-02. The partnership allocated \$1.1 million for the newly selected projects, many of which were requests for equipment.

After meeting last April 12 and 13, a selection committee recommended 23 proposals out of a pool of more than 50 to the four state foresters for their approval. Projects recommended for funding range from educational outreach to community planning for fire-reduction projects to business expansion.

The review committee focused on projects that expanded the capacity of existing businesses to deal with small diameter materials. If you would like a list of funded projects currently available, contact Kim Kostelnik at 505-476-3337.

In other Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership news, the steering committee will meet for its quarterly meeting on June 4 and 5 in Moab. Contact Dave Schen for more information at 801-538-5504.

Also, the first annual workshop for all grant recipients and any others interested in the Partnership and its programs will be held next October in Flagstaff (date yet to be determined). Planned for the gathering is a presentation on the findings of the project evaluation conducted by Tim Richard and Sam Burns at the Office of Community Services. They will also discuss strategies for improving community economic revitalization and forest restoration in the Four Corners.

For more information about the conference, contact Herb Hopper, Little Colorado River RC & D in Holbrook, Arizona at 520-524-6063 x 5.

Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership

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Anthology sets a tone for future collaborative resource stewardship

Community-based ecosystem management “has emerged as a result of frustration with interest-based, conflict-ridden approaches to resource management and a sense of powerlessness within communities about resource management decisions that affect their well-being,” write the editors of the recently published volume entitled, *Understanding Community-Based Forest Ecosystem Management* (2001, Haworth Press). Their comments set the tone for the topics included in this anthology of papers on various aspects of community-based ecosystem management.

Each chapter is a refined version of papers presented during a June 23-28, 1998 workshop held in Bend, Oregon and hosted by American Forests and the Forest Policy Center. Written by a diverse and wide-ranging group of practitioners, scientists, agency officials, and interest group leaders, the authors discuss issues in which they are involved.

In part one of the three-part volume, the editors define

for the reader what community-based ecosystem management is, then outline its most fundamental components and overarching themes. These include such themes as processes, building community capacity, creating a “civic science,” understanding worker issues and building an “ecosystem workforce,” and encouraging public and private investment.

Part two includes papers written by work groups that examine the topics of Process, Stewardship, Investment, Monitoring, Institutions and Governance, and Global Linkages.

Part three are papers written by individuals.

The book’s title page highlights a quote by former chief of the USDA Forest Service, Mike Dombeck, which captures the book’s ultimate intent: “This informative and insightful book shows the way to a more sustainable future.”

You can get the book through Haworth Press by calling 1-800-HAWORTH, or go on line at www.HaworthPress.com.

property has increased significantly, they said.

Discussions after presentations centered on the theme of the cooperative roles that private-property owners, local fire-protection districts, and public-land agencies need to play in order to reduce wildfire risks in forested neighborhoods. Indeed, various local, state, and federal agencies have been collaborating since last fall to outline strategies that cross their jurisdictional boundaries.

Romme’s research will continue during the next several months. He will identify high-risk areas in La Plata County based on vegetation type, fire history, topography, and emergency access to properties.

Residents who were present learned the significance of their role in protecting their own property as fire protection officials explained that they would not enter residential or commercial structures and areas during high-intensity fires where “defensible spaces” had not been established.

One or two rural subdivision property owners creating defensible spaces is not sufficient to stem the tide of a major wildfire, they warned. It will take a broad-based community and neighborhood effort, they said.

This year, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management with National Fire Plan funding expect to increase the number of acres burned in their prescribed, or

Early survey results of property owners

- ✓ 75 % are very concerned about wildfire risk in southwest Colorado.
- ✓ 82 % are very concerned about wildfire risk in their neighborhood.
- ✓ 72 % believe it is from 60-80% the responsibility of citizens and 40-20% of government to address wildfire risks in the urban/wildland interface.
- ✓ 73% are either strongly or very strongly willing to work with neighbors to reduce wildfire danger to life and property.

management-ignited, fire programs. Here again, as part of a cooperative effort, community members are needed in planning burning and fuel-reduction projects during 2002-03, the meeting’s hosts said.

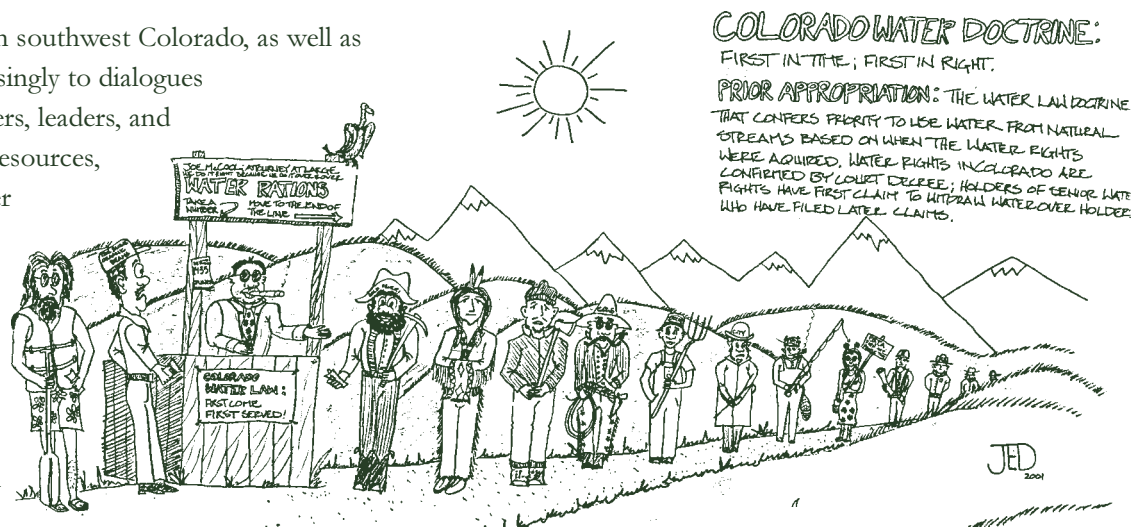
As the managed-fire program gets underway this spring and summer, opportunities will arise for residents to take field trips to inspect future burn-project locations and discuss methods of fuel reduction.

For more information about attempts to invite neighborhoods and private property owners into fire risk reduction efforts in southwest Colorado, contact: Dan Ochocki, Colorado State Forest Service, (970) 247-5250, or Scott Steinberg, San Juan National Forest, (970) 247-4874.

Report gives context and details to water board meetings in SW Colorado

Interest in water issues in southwest Colorado, as well as the West, has led increasingly to dialogues among community members, leaders, and those who manage water resources, such as the Colorado Water Conservation Board. One dialogue was held last fall in southwest Colorado to “constructively address local water issues and the challenges that lie ahead,” say Mike Preston and Don Schwindt, co-authors of the report *Colorado Water Conservation Board: Dolores, San Miguel, and San Juan Basin Meeting Series*.

“Meeting level summaries” contained in the report provide local contexts and details, authors say. They describe the meetings (there were four) as an “intense four-day



outreach” that resulted in “a rich convergence of knowledge, challenges, ideas and opportunities.”

Contact Preston for a copy at (970) 565-8525.

Calendar

Making Locally Led Conservation Work
June 3-5, 2001
Arbor Day Farm Conference Center
Nebraska City, Nebraska

A forum on community-based conservation action and why such activities succeed or fail
National Arbor Day Conference Services
(402) 474-5655
conferences@arborday.org



Whole Land : Healthy People - A Celebration Of Holistic Management
July 27-29th
Chico Basin Ranch near Colorado Springs, Colorado

Developing collective wisdom and relationships between healthy land, healthy people, and strong communities.

www.chicobasinranch.com
Cindy Dvergsten, cindydv@reanet.net
Duke Phillips, info@chicobasinranch.com

Oregon Sustainability Forum
September 6-8, 2001
Portland, Oregon

This is the "how to" of sustainability! Business and community leaders will present the tools, strategies and key concepts they are using to implement sustainability initiatives. You will hear about the successes, lessons learned and emerging opportunities.

Kerry Rae Connolly
Sustainable Northwest
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Working Landscapes in the Midwest: Creating Sustainable Futures for Agriculture, Forestry, and Communities
November 8, 9, and 10
Lake Lawn Resort, Delevan, WI

Dialogue on economic and environmental sustainability for working landscapes, exploring multi-functional agriculture, silviculture, and rural communities compatible with watershed protection.

Interactive discussion to develop agenda:
<http://www.iatp.org/enviroag/>

Marin Bryne, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, (612)870-3436,
marin@iatp.org



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