



Office of Community Services



2002 Annual Report

Assisting rural communities, state and federal agencies,
and non-profit organizations with planning and
community development projects.

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Center of Southwest Studies



The Office of Community Services (OCS) is a community outreach organization that assists Four Corners communities, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations in building capacity to address social, economic and ecological needs. It facilitates and coordinates projects in land-use planning, historic preservation, and public policy that are inclusive and participatory, that value community heritage and ecosystem stewardship, and that build opportunities for future generations. It offers Fort Lewis College students educational and career-building opportunities.

Overview

The year 2002 was a busy one for the Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College in which staff and associated consultants continued progress on multi-year projects and initiated new ones. After 24 years of operation, OCS extends its achievements as Fort Lewis College's oldest outreach program, providing wide-ranging assistance to diverse partners and clients throughout southwest Colorado and the Four Corners region.

OCS programs and projects benefit residents of the regional community; institutions and non-governmental organizations that provide services to communities; municipal, county, state, and federal governments and land management agencies; post-doctoral, graduate and undergraduate students; educators; and social and scientific researchers.

We thank the several partner-consultants who have worked with us to expand the efficiency of our services. We look forward to continuing our good work and positive relationships with them.

- *Bill Ball*, Website Development
- *Gail Binkly*, Journalist
- *Ken Charles*, Colorado Dept. of Local Affairs
- *Ross Curtis*, Historian, Archeologist
- *Dr. Richard Ellis*, Historian
- *Whitney Fletcher-Howell*, Intern
- *Patricia Gavelda*, Colo. Office of Emergency Management
- *Dr. Andrew Gulliford*, Historian
- *Laura Lewis*, Fire Rehab Consultation
- *Marsha Norton*, Fire Rehab Consultation
- *Lori Porreca*, Intern
- *Jill Seyfarth*, Historic Preservation Consultant
- *Dr. John Watson*, Atmospheric Chemist & facilitator

Regional Education Provider

The Colorado General Assembly approved legislation last year establishing Fort Lewis College as an independent college with its own board of trustees. This same legislation also designated Fort Lewis College as a *Regional Education Provider*. The Office of Community Services has been given the assignment to help the college understand its responsibility as a *Regional Education Provider* and help to develop alternative strategies that may be implemented in order to improve higher education opportunities for the citizens of the region.

Montezuma County Hospital District Planned Unit Development Assistance

During February 2002, the Montezuma County Hospital Board of Directors asked the Office of Community Services to assist the Montezuma County Hospital District in preparing a P.U.D. (Planned Unit Development) for land surrounding the existing hospital. The plan will pave the way for consolidating community healthcare services into a single complex. The initial development concept emerged after a series of meetings with the hospital board and administration staff, city planners, and local architects. The concept includes expansion of the current nursing home, additional private healthcare facilities, more parking, future hospital expansion, dedicated park and open space to the city, and connections to the existing city street system and adjacent developments. The initial concept has been forwarded to the project engineer and will be submitted to the city planning and zoning division for review and approval in March 2003. The Office of Community Services will continue to provide support to this project by developing a landscape plan as required by the city.

Dolores County Comprehensive Recreation Plan

During the past 12 months, the Office of Community Services has assisted Dolores County in developing a Comprehensive County Recreation Plan. The plan was funded through a four-way partnership between the county, the Town of Dove Creek, the Town of Rico, and the Dolores County School District, each of which contributed \$1,500 cash, as well as through OCS in-kind services.

OCS prepared the project using input from the community and advice from key community leaders and personnel. The plan will help guide future development of recreational facilities within Dolores County and coordinate funding efforts between stakeholder groups by pooling existing resources and fostering a cooperative spirit. The Office of Community Services will continue to provide services in the design devel-



Dolores County Rec. Site Plan



Rico, Colorado

**Southwest
Technical
Assistance**

opment and cost projections of six community parks, a school athletics complex, and a county fairground master plan.

Town of Mancos Design Assistance

The Town of Mancos has received design assistance from the Office of Community Services in the development of a Recreation Master Plan. The planning process was started in June and completed in October. The Master Plan will be used as a community guideline for the physical development of existing and future parks, as a tool to prioritize projects and to project future needs, and as a way to strengthen their position for project funding. Following the master plan, designs for five community parks that include athletic fields, trails, rodeo grounds, playground structures, open space and habitat restoration were developed with participation from residents and parks and recreation directors. Funding was made available from a Great Outdoors Colorado grant and a \$600 donation to the Office of Community Services from the Town of Mancos. The Office of Community Services was given the honor of naming "Cottonwood Park," one of the largest town parks.

Town of Bayfield Community Park

The Town of Bayfield has received ongoing support in the design of their community parks and trails. Funded in part by a Great Outdoors Colorado grant, the project is being developed in partnership with community members, the town's recreation department, and Colorado State Forest Service. Plans for rehabilitating an abandoned mobile home park along the Pine River were completed during spring. Currently, three acres are under construction and being transformed into a community park featuring a river trail, fishing access, passive-use areas, a playground, picnic facilities, a cultural events area, restrooms, and parking.

Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park Trails

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe received onsite design consultation and construction supervision in the rehabilitation of a heavily used trailhead and eroded segment of a trail in the Tribal Park. A volunteer college labor force was assembled with help from park staff and the San Juan Mountains Association to construct shade structures at the trailhead and stone steps along a steep portion of the main ruins trail. The student labor force also conducted fire mitigation work around the perimeter of the trailhead and the park campground in preparation for the summer fire season.



Volunteer Student Tribal Park Trails Crew

Montezuma County Land Use Plan and Code

The Montezuma County Planning Office has received continued assistance in the implementation of the Montezuma County Land Use Plan and Code. Updated versions of public information publications are being prepared. Additional GIS mapping of county facilities is underway.

Dolores River Valley Plan Citizen Working Group

The Office of Community Services is coordinating and facilitating the Dolores River Valley Plan Citizen Working Group appointed by the Montezuma County Commission to study current conditions, anticipate future development scenarios, and recommend land-use policy tools and incentives to guide the future of the Dolores River Valley. In-depth and up-to-date information on the planning process is available at the website: www.co.montezuma.co.us.

TDR Citizen Working Group

The Office of Community Services is facilitating a Citizen Working Group appointed by La Plata County and the City of Durango to explore the application of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and other land conservation tools to increase density in the Grandview area being annexed by the City of Durango while reducing sprawl in other rural areas. The potential use of TDRs in Grandview, site of a new Mercy Hospital complex, will be used as a demonstration to consider TDRs as a tool in other urbanizing parts of La Plata County.

Pagosa Springs Trail

The Office of Community Services will provide planning and design assistance to the Pagosa Springs School District and the Town of Pagosa

Springs in efforts to establish a two-mile trail loop that will encircle the school district property and connect with a newly established town park situated on the banks of the San Juan River. Once completed, the trail will be used as the official course for the high school cross-country team.



Bayfield Community Park Design



Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership Demonstration Grants Program Evaluation

OCS has received two consecutive, single-year grants (2000, 2001) from the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership to evaluate selected recipients of the FCSFP Demonstration Grants Program. OCS was instrumental in conceptualizing the FCSFP regional approach to community-based forestry. Grantee projects evaluated in Four Corners rural communities are seeking to close the gap between community economy and forest restoration. Partners are working to increase the ability of small, local timber-related businesses to adapt economically and socially to ecological changes in surrounding forests. OCS researchers gathered stories from members of partnerships, coalitions, and small businesses in an effort to construct a mosaic of the larger narrative of community and ecological sustainability.

This year, 23 FCSFP Demonstration Grants Program grantees were contacted through site visits, phone calls, face-to-face talks, and a questionnaire. Projects evaluated represent a mix of one-, two-, and three-year funding recipients. Sixteen field trips were conducted this year, dozens of individuals were interviewed in person and by telephone, 19 project profiles were drafted, and eight projects in last year's evaluation were contacted for updates. Fourteen Success Criteria Matrices, which quantify project accomplishments, were updated. More than two dozen project stories have been written and shared broadly.

Sustainable Forests Partnership – Transition Plan

The Four Corners Sustainable Forest Partnership (FCSFP) is a five-year demonstration program to develop the capacities of communities to engage in forest restoration, primarily utilizing small-diameter pine. At the end of the program in 2005, the Partnership is hopeful of continuing those efforts that proved successful. The *Transition Plan* being prepared by OCS will address opportunities and actions that might be pursued by the state forest service organizations in the four Four Corners states, by the US Forest Service, and by local community forestry partnerships. The plan is being prepared under the guidance of the FCSFP Steering Committee. It is anticipated that the final draft of the report will be delivered to the Partnership in February 2003.



Community & Public Land Partnerships

Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership

OCS initiated the PFP in 1992 with the Montezuma County Board of Commissioners, Colorado State Forest Service, and the San Juan National Forest in order to address loss of timber

businesses and poor forest health. More recently, a team of independent scientists led by the Natural Resources Policy Institute at Colorado State University conducted an ecological assessment of ponderosa pine restoration harvesting using PFPF guidelines. The team concluded that the approach to restoration was ecologically sound and should be continued and expanded (see Publications List). The restoration treatments have dramatically reduced wildfire hazards in treated ponderosa pine stands, while providing a commercially based model for forest restoration. President Bush recognized the Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership in announcing his Forest Health Plan in August 2002.

San Juan Forest Plan Revision

The Office of Community Services began working in 1995 with the San Juan National Forest to improve the quality of public involvement in its Forest Plan. This year, we plan to resume public involvement efforts with topical working groups, similar to the previous forest plan work groups, to update current issue identification summaries and help develop alternative scenarios for managing the national forest in the future. OCS and the San Juan Public Lands Center will also focus on long-term post-Missionary Ridge Fire rehabilitation related to the Forest Plan.

Fire Risk Reduction Planning

Fire risk reduction planning has been ongoing since August 2001 when work began to develop five county-wide *Community Wildfire Action Plans* to outline strategies for reducing the threat of unwanted damages of wildfire to private and public property. Public meetings were held where community members and fire district staffs identified wildfire hazard areas, then generated GIS maps and plans to develop demonstration sites for education and increasing defensible space. Follow-up work includes more in-depth mapping of fire management areas within each county. Fire management plans will be developed for specific areas and used jointly among local fire districts, federal land agencies, and local landowners to coordinate fuels reduction efforts and suppression. A pilot mapping effort in Montezuma County will be extended to other southwest Colorado counties as funding permits. The plans are stimulating greater community awareness. Demonstration projects are underway or completed. Two Colorado State Forest Service coordinators were hired to increase county residents' awareness and support of defensible space development on private land. Partners and clients include: Colorado State Forest Service; county emergency offices and fire districts; San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management, and; many area residents.

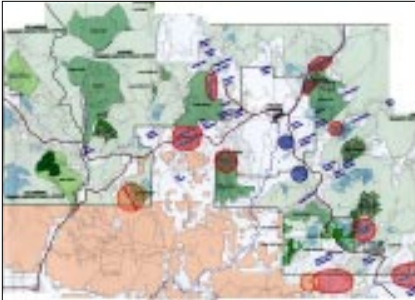


Missionary Ridge Wildfire



Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Rehabilitation Communications Committee

Since summer, OCS has served as convener of a wildfire hazard reduction and rehabilitation communications committee involving the San Juan Public Lands Office and the Colorado State Forest Service. The committee's objective is to enhance local and regional awareness and understanding of wildfire prevention on private land and post-wildfire rehabilitation efforts. The project entails sharing information with fellow service providers, relevant agencies, and the community. Key to the effort is communicating with persons involved in fire prevention and education to reach more residents with messages about avoiding unwanted wildfire damages. A website (www.southwestcoloradowildfires.org) was created to provide updated information on wildfire prevention, rehabilitation, incident status, and links to other wildfire information and assistance sites. In addition, OCS has facilitated the development of a "Community Information Series" of success stories that help property owners learn about preventing wildfires. Several articles have run in regional newspapers and are available at the website. Partners include: Montezuma County Federal Lands Program, Operation Healthy Communities, La Plata County Emergency Management Office, Colorado State Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Archuleta County Fire Hazard Map

Missionary Ridge & Valley Fire Video Project

In addition to its participation in the Communications Committee, OCS was awarded special San Juan National Forest fire recovery funds, some of which were utilized in the production of the *After the Fire* video in partnership with cable channel 22, Durango Community Access Television and La Plata County Emergency Preparedness. The half-hour video, produced during fall, educates viewers about the history of local forests related to wildfire, why the fires struck and burned so severely. The video advises viewers about how to protect themselves and maximize protecting their property during floods, which are expected to continue for years. In addition, several public service announcements featuring a variety of updates and safety tips will air on local cable access channels throughout the winter and spring. The \$6,000 project was funded through OCS with USDA Forest Service Costshare Agreement dollars. Other partners include private landowners and fire victims, individual volunteers, and Ft. Lewis College English-Communications interns. At least 500 copies of *After The Fire* video and PSAs will be distributed across the region to institutions, organizations and cable-access channels.



Missionary Ridge Fire Burn Area

People and Fire – Community Understandings of Fire and Fire Management

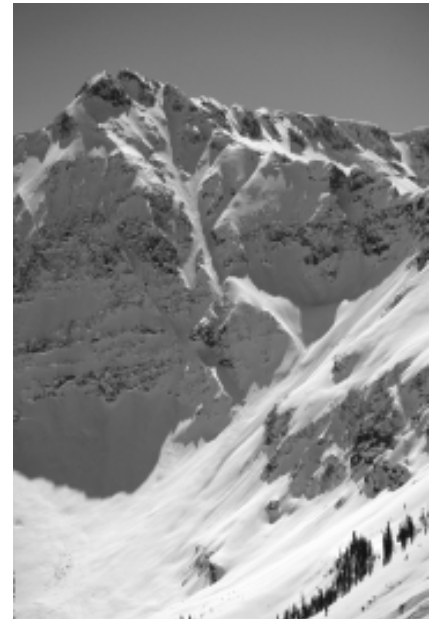
Since June 2002, about 30 focus groups have been held in communities in western Colorado to discover how citizens understand the catastrophic wildfire problem. Funded by the Colorado Bureau of Land Management, as a part of the National Fire Plan, the “People and Fire Project” is addressing community values, opportunities to expand the level of community dialogue about fire mitigation and education, and the preferred methods for fire prevention education. OCS has served as the grant’s administrator and coordinator, with five facilitators hired to conduct the focus groups. The project was funded at approximately \$80,000 and the final report is expected in February 2003.

Polygon Project

In cooperation with the Montezuma County Planning Department, Colorado State Forest Service and San Juan Public Lands Center, a process to refine the fire mapping data and County Fire Plans is underway. This project, dubbed the “polygon project”, is intended to merge the County Fire Plan with the federal fire-management plans that have been developed on public lands. The process includes mapping cultural values such as homes, water sources, critical view-sheds, oil and gas development, archeological resources, etc. Areas where these values intersect with heavy fuel loads are identified and broken up into separate regions based on access and terrain. Specific management plans will then be compiled for each region identifying prevention, mitigation, and response strategies. The plans will be shared with the federal land managers to help develop common goals for lands along the urban interface.

Atmospheric Research Workshop Series

Since August 2001, OCS has coordinated development of a series of workshops among leading national and international atmospheric chemistry researchers and government and private sector sponsors involved in visibility, haze, global climate, and public health issues. The first workshop, the *Secondary Organic Aerosols Workshop*, was held Feb. 4-5, 2002 in Reno, Nevada, and the second, the *Organic Carbon/Elemental Carbon Workshop*, will be hosted by OCS and Fort Lewis College March 4-5, 2003 in Durango, CO. Both workshops, as well as future ones, are bringing together leading researchers seeking to push the bounds of research beyond current limitations of what is



**Research &
Communication**



Trout Lake

known about carbonaceous aerosols and their effects on visibility, climate and health. This unique, productive discourse has generated great interest with the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Western Governors Association, and the National Park Service. Partners and sponsors include: the National Science Foundation, Washington, DC; the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8; EPA Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards; EPA National Exposure Research Laboratory; Western Regional Air Partnership; Desert Research Institute, Reno, NV; EPA Office of Research and Development, Seattle; National Park Service, Intermountain Region; and several university and private sector researchers.

Mountain Studies Institute

Office of Community Services staff served on the strategic planning team for the development of the Mountain Studies Institute. MSI is a not-for-profit mountain research and education center established in 2002 in Silverton, Colorado. The mission of this new organization is to enhance the understanding and sustainable use of the San Juan Mountains by facilitating field research, academic studies, and experiential learning. The institute is a coalition of the Town of Silverton, San Juan County, the San Juan National Forest/BLM and Fort Lewis College. MSI will demonstrate sustainable economic development using research and education as rural development tools. OCS continues to assist the MSI staff and board of directors with fundraising, organizational development and project/program development. OCS also assisted MSI in planning and publicizing its first annual conference. Several news releases were distributed to regional newspapers and radio stations, including the High County News Network that helped to increase attendance during final days before conference from 20 to more than 100.



Ethnographic Overview –San Juan National Forest Plan

As a part of each forest plan prepared by the US Forest Service, efforts are made to sketch out cultural and social backgrounds of the “area of influence” for that forest. In this case, an ethnographic overview is being prepared about the settlement patterns of the Ancient Puebloans, the Ute Tribes, Hispanic herders and timber workers, ranchers, miners, and recent newcomers who tend to be recreationalists, retirees, or urban refugees. Informal interviews have been held with representatives of these groups. In addition, a contracted historical archaeologist-consultant has surveyed 40 historic sites on the San Juan National Forest. To balance research, a team of historians and ethnologists, assembled by Andy Gulliford, Director of the Center for Southwest

Studies at Fort Lewis College, has inventoried and described dozens of *traditional cultural properties*. These properties form the legacy of the groups mentioned in the form of trails, hunting sites, and sacred mountains. This project is funded by a variety of sources, including the Colorado State Historic Fund and the US Forest Service, at approximately \$60,000 over two years.

Red Mountain Project

The mission of this regional project is to acquire from willing sellers 11,000 acres of historic landscapes and structures in the Red Mountain region between Silverton, Ouray, and Telluride. Purchased properties will be added to the Uncompahgre and San Juan National Forests, and, where appropriate, to respective county parks and open spaces. Additionally, key historic structures are being stabilized. The Red Mt. Task Force directs the project, with members representing Ouray and San Juan County Boards of Commissioners, County Historical Societies, San Juan and Uncompahgre National Forests, BLM, The Trust for Public Land, and the Fort Lewis College Office of Community Services. Using \$9.9 million raised through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Great Outdoors Colorado, State Historic Fund and the Idarado Resource Damages Fund over the last few years, 3,152 acres were acquired this year and conveyed to the USDA Forest Service and Ouray County. Another 2,800 acres are under option to be purchased, with closings scheduled in 2003. The Office of Community Services also assisted the Task Force in 2002, raising \$50,000 from the State Historic Fund and Gates Family Foundation for stabilizing historic structures. Structures worked on during 2002 include the Colorado Boy Mine headframe, three historic houses in the ghost town of Ironton, the Silver Ledge Mine headframe, and one historic house near the recently completed Red Mt. Scenic Overlook. There are many remaining historic structures in the project area that also need work in the very near term if they are to be preserved. With funding from the Colorado State Historical Fund, a two-year "Cultural Resources Survey of the Red Mountain District" was completed. This extensive survey includes writeups and photography on 112 sites.

San Juan Skyway Heritage Project

Working with the counties of San Miguel, Ouray, San Juan, Montezuma and the Town of Rico, the Office of Community Services is helping coordinate and manage the GIS mapping and spatial analysis of approximately 200,000 acres along the 232-mile-long San Juan Skyway corridor. Using



**Land
Conservation
& Historic
Preservation**



funding from a \$95,000 Smart Growth Grant prepared by the Office of Community Services for the above parties, with the Town of Rico serving as the grant contractor, the firm Computer Terrain Mapping, Inc. has been retained to map and analyze landscapes along the Skyway that are considered of high resource value (scenic, natural, recreational, historic). These lands will be studied to determine their potential for development. The second phase of this project will then develop land conservation strategies tailored to fit the circumstances of each of the participating entities in order to move forward with protecting those landscapes having highest conservation value and potential for change.

Little Molas Lake Recreation Improvements

A \$100,000 National Scenic Byway Grant prepared by OCS was approved for recreational improvements at the San Juan National Forest's Little Molas Lake complex. The following work will be completed by the USDA Forest Service as part of this project's \$800,000 funding package:

- 20 site-specific campsites will be constructed to replace environmentally damaging dispersed camping practices.
- Two new restrooms and a potable water system.
- Resource protection and interpretive signage.
- Reconstructed access road from US Highway 550.
- Construction of a new Colorado Trail parking area near the intersection of US Highway 550 and the Little Molas Lake access road. The current trailhead access requires driving through the camping area. In the winter, the new trailhead will also provide parking for cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing.

Rico Heritage Preservation

Grant writing assistance was provided Rico as follows:

- A \$3,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation Grant for land-parcel identification and mapping was approved.
- A State Historic Fund Grant requesting \$38,398 has been approved to pay for construction stabilization work on the historic Atlantic Cable and Van Winkle Mine hoist houses and the Rico/Rio Grande Southern water tank—both prized landmarks within the Town of Rico.
- An \$8,000 State Historic Fund Grant was prepared for a structural assessment of the historic Masonic building. The Rico community's goal is to renovate this striking building and use it for a combined visitor center and historic museum.

Selected Reports & Publications Available from the Office of Community Services

- Community Wildfire Action Plans: Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan Counties. (2002.) Durango, CO: Office of Community Services.
- Community Wildfire Information Series. (2002.) Durango, CO: Operation Healthy Communities. Available at www.southwestcoloradowildfires.org.
- Four Corners Sustainable Forest Partnership 2002 Demonstration Grants Program Evaluation Report. Durango, CO: Office of Community Services.
- Natural Resource Stewardship Through Community and Economic Development: A Strategy to Achieve Economic, Community, and Natural Resource Sustainability. (2003.) Prepared for the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership. Durango, CO: Office of Community Services.
- Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership. *An Ecological Assessment of Ponderosa Pine Forest Restoration Treatments in Southwest Colorado*. Cortez, CO: Montezuma County Federal Lands Program.
- Red Mountain Project Class III Cultural Resources Inventory of an 18 square mile area. Ouray and San Juan counties, Colorado: Red Mt. Task Force. Available for review at the Delaney Southwest Research Library, Fort Lewis College, Center of Southwest Studies.
- Soraghan, Mike. (August 23, 2002.) "Bush points to Four Corners forest project." Denver Post Washington Bureau.