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# Community-Public Land Stewardship INITIATIVES

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

Summer-Fall 2001

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## SW Colorado workshop brings ideas and energy to heritage site stewardship

Southwest Colorado contains countless Ancient Puebloan ruins. These archaeological gems, as well as many more recent historic European sites and structures, are part of the region's history and its present. Protecting them from the effects of population growth and increased visitation is increasingly a subject of interest among residents and public land agency managers.

Early last August, people gathered for the *First Annual Southwest Colorado Cultural Site Stewardship Conference* to learn about the past, present, and discuss the future of cultural stewardship.

"It's kind of like taking a humanities course in three days," said Kathleen May, who coordinated the conference.

The conference was hosted by the San Juan Mountains Association, which launched a cultural site

stewardship program earlier this year. The program's coordinator, Amy Wise, reported already recruiting 90 volunteers who have begun monitoring both Ancient Puebloan and European structures.

The volunteers record

***"It's kind of like taking a humanities course in three days."***

the impacts of people, animals, and natural forces on the sites and structures, then report findings to public land managers "to help them be more informed about the management decisions they make," Wise said.

The conference was sponsored by the San Juan Public Lands Center, the Office of Community Services, and the Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College where it was held.

Speakers from Mesa

Verde National Park, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the newly designated Canyon of the Ancients, the San Juan National Forest, and the Bureau of Land Management all spoke on the history and management of these

archaeological remains found throughout the Four Corners landscape.

In addition to public-land agency speakers, local historians, museum curators, volunteer program coordinators, and archaeologists gave a variety of presentations to educate participants about how they address issues related to cultural site protection, preservation, and interpretation.

For more about cultural site stewardship in southwest Colorado, contact Amy Wise at (970) 385-1210, or log on to the SJMA Website: [www.sanjuanmountainsassociation.org](http://www.sanjuanmountainsassociation.org).

### SW Colorado landowners group forms to create better information sharing with government officials

Montezuma County commissioners recently appointed landowners to the newly formed Rangeland Stewardship Committee in hopes of improving communications between federal land managers and local ranchers, and to promote ranching and farming ways of life.

The committee plans to meet regularly with federal land agency managers to discuss issues of concern to the ranching community.

Allowing multiple uses on public lands is important, vineyard owner, John Sutcliffe, said, but there needs to be perspective on how competing uses weigh in on land-use decisions. Read Sutcliffe's **Guest Editorial** on page 6 of this issue of *Initiatives*.

Nearly all of the 437,000 acres of public lands in the county are utilized in some way for agriculture, whether it's forestry or ranching, said Mike Preston, federal lands program coordinator for the county. There are 82 active grazing permits on 109 allotments with the BLM's 180,000 acres and 50 permits representing 55 allotments on the USDA Forest Service's 257,000 acres.

"The idea behind the stewardship committee is to improve the communication and information sharing among agricultural people and agencies," said Preston, who was instrumental in creating the committee.

### SJNF Newsletter introduces latest developments in wildfire reduction efforts in southwest Colorado

This summer, the San Juan National Forest created a newsletter designed to help area residents learn more about wildfire in the urban/wildland interface. The eight-page, 11"x14" format was mailed to 1,000 names on the forest's mailing list and distributed to district offices. Articles and photos highlight what local, federal and state agencies, and some residents are doing to reduce risks of wildfire before it strikes.

Public Affairs Specialist and editor, Ann Bond, said she published the newsletter to help improve communication between agencies and the public. As a collaborative stewardship tool, it is useful for information about people and sources, such as Websites, related to the National Fire Plan. Another issue is scheduled for next spring. For a copy, contact Bond at (970) 247-4874.

### Media kit describes new demonstraton grant recipients

Kostka-Gleason Communications, Denver, recently mailed a **Background Information Kit** to news media describing Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership 2001-02 demonstration grant recipients. Materials detail the four-state effort to help revitalize economies and begin restoring forests. Kostka-Gleason is spearheading a campaign to raise national awareness of the plight of rural communities and forests. For more information, contact coordinators listed on page 4.

## DISCOVERIES DISCOVERIES DISCOVERIES

### The Mountain Institute and Mountain Forum

Next year's International Year of the Mountain celebration fits just right with The Mountain Institute's mission of preserving mountain environments and cultures.

Founded in 1971, The Mountain Institute has offices and community-based programs in the Andean, Appalachian and Himalayan mountain ranges. It partners with local people to strengthen their communities and to conserve their natural resources and cultural heritage.

TMI combines community economic development with biodiversity and resource conservation in its projects. Its resource kit, *Community-Based Tourism for Conservation and Development* is a useful resource for those interested in stewardship. **Learn more at [www.mountain.org](http://www.mountain.org).**

The Institute also supports three global initiatives: The Mountain Forum, Sacred Mountains, and Sustainable Living Systems which you can learn about through its homepage or their own homepages. Sacred Mountains promotes the spiritual and cultural relationships between people and mountains.

On the Mountain Forum Website, you can learn all about the International Year of the Mountain. **Log on at [www.mountainforum.org](http://www.mountainforum.org).**

Keep an eye out as 2002 approaches to learn about activities planned to celebrate the year of the mountain in the San Juan Mountains in southwest Colorado.

**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.

# Community action plans to help reduce urban/wildland fire risks

National Fire Plan funding, \$118 million nationwide this year, has created incentives for local, state, and federal government agencies to interact more closely in managing wildfire where public and private land meets. In southwest Colorado, this has meant new equipment for local volunteer fire districts to fight fire when it strikes and to strategize ways to reduce wildfire threat in the urban/wildland interface before it strikes.

A major part of the national fire plan's intent is to include affected residents in deciding where they think the greatest risks of wildfire are and how to go about reducing chances of it occurring in their neighborhoods. To do that, area organizers of fire plan activities are developing community action plans, or "CAPs," as part of addressing citizens' concerns.

Since July, the Office of Community Services has been coordinating three action plans in five southwest Colorado counties involving local, state, and federal fire managers, elected officials, and community members in achieving several objectives.

Three facilitators are holding four meetings each from August through October to gather needed information. In meeting one, they will coordinate with USFS/BLM fire management officers to map areas of recent prescribed burns and proposed future treatment, or analysis, areas.

Meeting two will be to map moderate- to high-risk areas with the help of rural fire chiefs and county emergency staff. Their input will be added to first meeting's information to form a consolidated map of public and private land risks.

The consolidated map will be used

in the third meeting as a starting point to ask residents and other community interests about their own perspectives of wildfire. The facilitators will map social, economic, and cultural values people feel should be protected in planning and actually treating areas to reduce wildfire loss. Those treatments will combine mechanical thinning of thick-growing stands with prescribed burning.

The final meeting will be for getting ideas for demonstration projects, public education, and development of businesses that reduce threats. The opportunity will also be taken to determine interest among participants in becoming members of a "Fire Wise Community Council" that would implement demonstration projects.

The first drafts of CAP reports are scheduled to be completed around October 31. For more information, contact Sam Burns at (970) 247-7193.

## CAP Objectives

- Map areas of moderate- to high-risk of wildfire.
- Document agency and community perspectives of fire risk and their values for such issues as watersheds, residences, recreation resources.
- Identify potential private-public land demonstration projects that are educational and build closer relationships among those affected.
- Identify economic development opportunities, such as fuel-reduction businesses.
- Develop public education strategies and objectives.



## Spotlight On Stewards

Paul Peck, San Juan National Forest Recreation and Wilderness Program Leader, received the 2001 Forest Service Legends Award last June, from the American Recreation Coalition.

For some years, Paul has been active in several local and regional partnership efforts, including the Four Corners Heritage Council, Forestry Initiative, Regional Resources Coordinating Committee, Four Corners Gateway Tourism Project, Southwest Colorado Youth Corps, Southwest Colorado Travel Region, and San Juan Mountains Association.

"It's not just me, but many other folks in and outside the agency that made this happen," Paul says. "Any success in partnerships is a result of all parties working together and the invaluable efforts of the volunteers and stewards who help."

Paul, an Iowa native, received his Bachelor's Degree from Colorado State University in Outdoor Recreation Management.

He has worked extensively with the USDA Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance (RCA) program, facilitating development of community action plans and supporting community projects implemented with RCA funds.

## New revolving loan fund offered to forest-based businesses to reduce fire and to use small-diameter

The Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership has established a Revolving Loan Fund for forest-product businesses in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. It is designed to help reduce fire hazards, utilize small-diameter wood, secondary forest products, or under-utilized species in their manufacturing process.

Currently, \$125,000 in loan funds is available to eligible counties in Colorado (see list in box). It is expected that this amount will

increase with a match from the Small Business Administration.

The loan program was established to specifically assist existing or start-up

**Businesses in the following counties are eligible:**

Alamosa, Archuleta, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Delta, Dolores, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Huerfano, La Plata, Las Animas, Mineral, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray, Rio Grande, Saguache, San Juan, and San Miguel.

forest-based businesses with new equipment purchases or working capital needs. Loan amounts will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 at the prime interest rate with terms of three to seven years.

To qualify, businesses must have a business plan. Assistance is available to those who need to produce or update a plan.

Brief concept papers describing the business expansion or venture that you would like to undertake are due October 15, 2001. Please include phone and address. Applicants are asked to send concept papers to:

## Evaluation report on 1999-2000 FCSFP demonstration projects available

A summary report of the evaluation of projects funded through the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership Demonstration Grants Program was recently completed and is available to those interested in its findings and recommendations. It is hoped that the evaluation and the report will help to discern regional patterns and trends in efforts to renew a rural-community-based timber products industry involved in restoring forests to ecological health.

The evaluation, conducted by the Office of Community Services since summer 2000, aimed to learn what was, and was not, working in projects and how they are progressing towards their goals. Several crucial components needed for progress to occur were identified and are described in the report.

OCS was awarded a second-year grant to continue evaluating nine projects funded in 1999 and 2000 and to add 10 new projects to the study. This year, the FCSFP awarded \$1.2 million in grants to 23 projects. This is in addition to its support of community revitalization and forest restoration efforts in the Four Corners states through its Revolving Loan Fund and Marketing and Utilization Program.

For copies of the report, call (970) 247-7066, or download it from the Internet at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu>, or [www.fcsfp.org](http://www.fcsfp.org).



**Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership**

**State Coordinators**

**Arizona**

Herb Hopper  
Little Colorado RC&D  
(520) 524-6063 x5

**Colorado**

Carla Harper  
Montezuma County  
(970) 565-6061

**New Mexico**

Kim Kostelnik  
New Mexico Forestry  
Division  
(505) 476-3337

**Tribal**

John Waconda  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
(505) 346-7536

**Utah**

David Schen  
Utah Div. of Forestry  
(801) 538-5504

**Tim Reader**  
**Marketing/Utilization Specialist**  
**Colorado State Forest Service**  
**PO Box 7233**  
**Durango, CO 81302**  
**(970) 247-5250**

*Other contacts include:*

**Stu Cohen**  
**Region 9 Economic Development District**  
**(970) 247-0621**

**Carla Harper**  
**Colorado State Coordinator, FCSFP**  
**(970) 565-6061**

**Saul Engle**  
**USDA Forest Service Technical Assistance**  
**(303) 541-2512**

# San Juan Skyway Capital Improvements Plan

The Office of Community Services recently began working with representatives of six counties, the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Colorado Department of Transportation to prepare a capital improvements plan for the San Juan Skyway, A National Scenic Byway and All-American Highway, located in southwest Colorado.

The San Juan Skyway CIP's purpose to enhance visitor experiences by upgrading recreation and interpretive facilities and resource sites has been the

focus of meetings among members of the group. It is hoped that the 15-month-long project, funded as part of a larger National Scenic Byways grant, will lead to a more user-friendly highway for residents and visitors traveling along the 485-mile-long loop route.

"Right now, signs along the highway only tell people where they are, but not what kinds of things they can find to do in places off the main highway," said Ken Francis, Director of the Office of Community Services. "There are six signs along the highway for

Scotch Creek and it's confusing to the person who is not familiar with the area, like locals are."

Specifically, preparing the CIP will consist of four major activities:

- Prepare an inventory of existing recreation and interpretive facilities and resources;
- Determine the adequacy of those facilities;
- Prepare a list of high priority, but feasible, improvements, including any new projects/resources and sites not currently existing;
- Prepare funding and implementation strategies for the high priority projects.

Ken Francis says that the plan will include a financial and implementation section that will outline how to raise money for the improvements which should expedite their actual implementation during the next few years.

It's hard to believe the CIP took this long after designation as one of the most beautiful scenic drives in the world, but the results should enhance visitors' experiences, Francis said.



Community Revitalization and Forest Restoration in the Four Corners  
***Demonstration Grants Program***

**Evaluation Report**

**Available from:**

Office of Community Services  
Ft. Lewis College  
Durango, CO 81301  
(970) 247-7066  
richard\_t@fortlewis.edu  
or online at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu>

## Community Planning and Design News

### Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park plan envisions more than upgrading trails from planning to on-the-ground phase

A trails development and maintenance plan for the next 10 years is currently being developed at the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park just south of Mesa Verde National Park in southwest Colorado. Landscape Architect James Dietrich, OCS, is working with Park Superintendent Veronica Cuthair to strategize designs and identify tools needed to see the plan become a reality.

Dietrich says that the six-month-long project will inventory and map trails in the park. Once complete, it will address trailhead parking, restrooms, picnic facilities, trail stabilization and access issues, as well as signage and public information. It is hoped that the plan will address tourism management and encourage stewardship of Ancient Puebloan sites by instilling in visitors principles of landscape ethics, Dietrich said. Forest management through fuels reduction and thinning is also hoped for. Interpretive programs and public education opportunities are also being envisioned for the plan.

### Highly visible Durango intersection receives a facelift ... FINALLY!

Durango, Colorado is a popular destination of travelers from around the world, but when you drive into town from the west on US Highway 160 and stop at the intersection where it meets US Highway 550, you may not be very impressed. Don't feel alone. Many people in Durango also think the intersection is ugly and that it needs beautification if it is going to be the first impression so many visitors receive. That's why town managers and the Office of Community Services are working together to develop a plan to make the intersection more attractive.

Already on the drawing board: entryway signage and landscaping which employs "xeric" landscaping principles; a large locomotive engine donated by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad that will be displayed at the top of the hill.

Work has already begun, so look for it when you happen by; hopefully real soon.

# Praise for an attempt at meaningful communication in a growing rural county

*(Editor's Note: This is the first of what we hope will be a continuing feature of CPLP Stewardship Initiatives. The objective of the **Guest Editorial** is to provide an occasional forum for diverse and constructive viewpoints about stewardship issues. Send ideas, suggestions, submissions (no more than 500 words) to Initiatives Editor, Office of Community Services, Ft. Lewis College, 1000 Rim Drive, Durango, CO 81301, or e-mail to richard\_r@fortlewis.edu.)*

**By John Sutcliffe**

As an idea, the responsible stewardship of the land is as old as time, and it has always implied more than just efficiently raising food. With survival, for most of us, less of a daily concern, the other elements of stewardship have grown in importance. Pristine mountains are now celebrated for their beauty more than their productive potential and rivers for their darting trout more than the power they generate. Nowhere are these concerns more deeply felt than in the West, where new wealth, and the leisure it affords, has led to a flood of visitors. Some to play, others to settle, but all of them replete with ideas and toys. Rarely are these ideas compatible with the rancher's traditional view of the land. And the task of reconciling these disparate ideas often falls to the administrators of our Public Lands.

Some months ago, a rancher from McElmo Canyon, Bruce Tozer, concerned about the deteriorating relationship between the well-meaning, if heavy-handed Public Agencies and the 'besieged' ranching community, offered a plan. He knew that few people outside agriculture were aware of how threatened ranchers feel, and especially those who rely on leases on Public Land. He wonders how, in the last ten years, the ranching community had gone from being the well-spring of community

leadership to a marginalized, barely tolerated minority.

Tozer's idea was simple. Form a committee from local ranchers and farmers, who share three things: the trust of the local community, experience in dealing with the Public Agencies, and a commitment to reducing the tension that prevents productive discourse. This committee, when asked, would meet with any constituent group facing a deteriorating situation, and

***This committee, when asked, would meet with any constituent group facing a deteriorating situation, and perhaps in the process, learn the thinking behind other, conflicting, positions.***

perhaps in the process, learn the thinking behind other, conflicting, positions.

In the committee's first two months, it has received the scientific data it requested; enjoyed a productive meeting with representatives of the Public Agencies and scheduled a field day with the 'Range Conservationist'. We could not have hoped for a better start.

Promisingly in the meeting with the Public Agencies, which started faltering, we found areas of agreement. One such area was the need to educate people, especially the counties' newer arrivals, on how ranches operate and how agencies manage our vast tracts of



*Vineyard owner John Sutcliffe (left) and rancher Bruce Tozer are members of the newly formed Montezuma County Rangeland Stewardship Committee.*

Public Land. Everyone at the meeting complained of the astonishing level of mis-information they faced, and it was agreed that working together would allow us to reach a far wider range of the community than any group was reaching right now.

Just as Stewardship is more than simply forming the land, farming is far more than a picturesque back-cloth for sprawling homes on sprawling subdivisions. It is the heart of the community. It's the reason to be.

If this committee is able to help, it will be because it has a fundamental understanding of the issues and, unlike many other organization, is deeply rooted in the community. Wish us luck.

*(John Sutcliffe raises grapes in McElmo Canyon, south of Cortez, Colorado. He was appointed member of the Rangeland Stewardship Committee by the Montezuma County Board of Commissioners last summer.)*

# Calendar

## Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership Annual Workshop

October 15-16, 2001

Little America Hotel  
Flagstaff, Arizona

A forum for grant recipients to share experiences and explore opportunities to improve rural community economic revitalization and forest restoration in the Four Corners states.

Contact: Herb Hopper, Little Colorado River Plateau RC&D, Holbrook, AZ  
(520) 524-6063, ext. 5  
hhopper@littlecolorado.org

## Smallwood 2002

April 11-13, 2002

Albuquerque Convention Center  
Albuquerque, NM

Community and economic development opportunities in small tree utilization. Log on to the conference Website to learn more and to register at:

[www.forestprod.org](http://www.forestprod.org)

## TRADE Show

November 9, 20-21, 2001

Plaza Resolana  
(a few blocks from the main Santa Fe Plaza)  
401 Old Taos Highway  
Santa Fe, NM

***"Creative Solutions for the Forests of the Future."***

A juried exhibit of original, functional and decorative woodwork and innovative uses of small diameter timber.

Contact: Lisa Cochran

Tri-Area Association for Economic Development

TRADE

1225-G S. St. Francis Drive

Santa Fe, NM 87505

(505) 986-8906

Fax (505) 986-8973

Email: [trade@nm.net](mailto:trade@nm.net)

Website: [tradenm.org](http://tradenm.org)