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New Mexico

Community-Public Land Stewardship INITIATIVES

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

Jan-Feb 2001

contents

2

News & Notes

Discoveries

3

Red Mt. gets \$5 million

Four Corners Forests
gets \$2 million

4

Themes emerging from
assessment of demos

5

Pine Zone Partnership:
8,000 acres at some
stage of restoration

OCS and Utes work on
Tribal Park trail plan

6

Vallecitos, New Mexico
group starts anew

7

Bayfield, Colo. protects
historic downtown

OCS to move to Center of SW Studies

Since 1978, the Office of Community Services, Fort Lewis College's oldest outreach program, has steadily increased and diversified its offerings and relationships. This spring, OCS will move its office to the newly constructed Center of Southwest Studies, marking a new phase in its development. The move is just 200 yards across campus, but OCS has traveled decades in broadening and strengthening the college's liberal arts mission with services that will benefit the Center's own mission.

The Center's construction realizes a 36-year-old dream to find a home for prehistoric and historic artifacts and documents, for curriculum development, and for research. OCS's four program areas— Community-Public Land Partnerships, Historic Preservation, Community Assistance, and Research— are well-suited to contemporary applications of the studies long associated with the Center.

Along with anthropology, archaeology, archives, library, museum, and gallery, OCS takes its place at the new Cultural Art Complex of Southwest Colorado as a significant resource in the study and participation in the life and history of the Four Corners.

OCS Director Ken Francis and Andrew Gulliford, CSWS Director, have already begun strategizing on potential cooperative ventures. Of the many inaugural events planned this year by a committee co-chaired by OCS Director of Research Sam Burns, one is a series of forums on historical and current issues related to the Four Corners and the Southwest. These "Southwest Seminars" will continue beyond the



inaugural year. We will undoubtedly see ideas and actions develop during the next several months for the Office of Community Services' continued participation in their preparation.

We invite our clients and partners to join us this year in celebrating our move to the new Center of Southwest Studies building. For a schedule of events, contact us at (970) 247-7333 (<http://ocs.fortlewis.edu>), or log on to the Center's Web site at <http://www.fortlewis.edu/acad-aff/swcenter/index.html>.

Humble beginnings turns up a winner

Colorado Public Radio became interested in the New Mexico Site Stewards story that Director Teri Paul wrote in last fall's *CPLP Stewardship Initiatives* and Ms. Paul was interviewed about her work for broadcast in one of its programs. This news shows the impact a newsletter like *Initiatives*, as well as building support for heritage site stewardship.

But the story doesn't end there. The magazine *Archaeology Today* also became interested in the site stewards program in New Mexico and a story about it is expected in its Spring 2001 issue.

That's not all! New Mexico State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) plans to expand site stewardship statewide. Apparently, Ms. Paul and her volunteers have made a positive impression on others about the importance and the public support for protecting heritage sites and structures from vandalism and uneducated visitors. Ms. Paul said she will apply to become the statewide director of the SHPO program expected to be implemented sometime this year.

To know about site stewardship opportunities call Ms. Paul at (505) 632-2013. In Colorado, call Amy Wise at (970) 385-1267.

San Juan National Forest examines newly released planning regulations

After more than 10 years, efforts to revise the rules that guide national forest planning are finally being implemented. The National Forest Management Act Planning Rule, "affirms sustainability as a foundation of national forest and grassland stewardship, further integrates science into planning and management, ensures greater collaboration with people, serves as the framework for management of all National Forest System lands, and provides consistent national direction to address local issues."

Beyond these overarching goals, what the planning rule says about collaboration and stewardship may interest *Initiatives* readers. To learn more, log on to the new stewardship Website (http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/Stewardship/index_stewardship.htm) and click on the page that clarifies the new rule's implications.

Roadless areas decision worth a look

The new designation of inventoried roadless areas has been controversial for prohibiting new road construction and reconstruction in those areas, as well as on cutting, sale, and removal of timber. However, there are many details to its three major sections that tell the story in greater scope. This should interest those who want to understand the reasoning behind the rule.

Learn more at <http://www.roadless.fs.fed.us/>

New Stewardship Website developed by OCS and SJNF

The Office of Community Services recently launched the **Community-Ecosystem Stewardship** Website hosted at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu> (click on the box at the top right of your monitor). The new site's pages are a clearinghouse of links to programs and efforts to study, learn, and practice stewardship where communities and public lands interact. Along with the Stewardship Links page, other pages include Forest Planning and Decision making, Restoration Forestry, a library of papers and reports. You can also log on directly by typing:

http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/Stewardship/index_stewardship.htm.

New conservation economy Web

Ecotrust just launched a Website to build a shared framework for a conservation economy. *Patterns of a Conservation Economy: Vision, Process, and Participation* discusses recurring patterns of urban, rural, and wildlands production and consumption, development and restoration, ownership and human needs.

Ecotrust is a nonprofit organization along North America's rain forest coast whose members work in urban and rural areas to support entrepreneurs whose work improves environmental, economic, and social conditions. Visit at the site at <http://www.ConservationEconomy.net>

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.
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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.



US Congress makes the Red Mt. Project \$5 million richer

After months of intense efforts, Congress awarded the Red Mountain Project \$5 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to buy the first of thousands of acres of mining claims and make them part of a national forest. Right now, 3,200 acres owned by Idarado Mining are being appraised for purchase.

Originally, \$7.5 million was requested for first-round purchases on Red Mountain, an 18-square mile area that the the National Trust for Historic Preservation recently named one of 11 most endangered places. This January, proposals were made to the Colorado State Historic Fund and Great Outdoors Colorado for additional acquisitions and for \$5.5 million from the LWCF in 2002.

Key Red Mountain Project partners are Ouray and San Juan County boards of commissioners and historical societies, Uncompahgre and San Juan national forests, the Office of Community Services, and The Trust for Public Land.

In other historic preservation news, it seems much momentum for protecting historical areas and structures is coinciding with Red Mountain successes. Rico, Colorado recently succeeded in getting real estate development firm, Rico Renaissance, to grant preservation easements to the newly established Rico Historical Society for protecting a prominent in-town Rio Grande Southern Railroad water tower and two headframes along the famed San Juan Skyway. Plus, five structures are being stabilized and \$20,000 more has been raised to protect two others on or near Red Mountain.

For more about Red Mountain, or for ideas on what you might do in you area, log on to <http://www.redmountainproject.com>, or call Ken Francis at (970) 247-7310. For more about historical preservation at the OCS, our Website is at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu>.

FCSFP adds programs with new \$2M earmark

With a congressional earmark of \$2 million for 2001 under its belt the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership is adding two programs to its efforts this year.

The *Revolving Loan Fund* will provide low-interest loans (6 percent). Loans will be made to timber-oriented businesses to purchase equipment or make other capital investments.

The Partnership has also added a *Public Outreach Program* and its steering committee has contracted with a Denver public relations firm to help design avenues for bringing about greater regional and national awareness of forestry issues in the Four Corners.

The two new programs are in addition to the FCSFP's *Community-Based Forest Restoration Demonstration Grants Program*, now two years old. About \$750,000 has been given to support various aspects of restoration efforts in several Four Corners communities.

The deadline for demonstration proposals is Friday, March 16. Call Kim Kostelnik, New Mexico Division of Forestry, for an application at 505-476-3337.

The year-old Marketing and Utilization Program will continue, as well. Coordinator Tim Reader will provide technical assistance and other information to those seeking either. Call him at 970-247-5250.

Also planned is a workshop next June for people working on forest restoration related projects across the Four Corners. The focus will be on providing needed technical assistance and sharing of ideas among project implementers. Look for more information in the spring issue of *Initiatives*.

Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership state coordinators

Arizona

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Utah Div. of Forestry
(801) 538-5504

Assessment is identifying themes for more study

Since July, Tim Richard and Sam Burns at the Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College have been increasingly immersed in learning about efforts in the Four Corners to improve forest-products industries in local rural communities. A list of significant themes are emerging from the 1999-funded projects and few 2000 projects that hold implications for monitoring future progress of community and ecosystem conservation efforts in the Four Corners states.

At least two dozen individuals have been interviewed and a large volume of in-depth information amassed about the seven community-based forestry projects occurring in the Four Corners region. Each of the projects received support funding in 1999 from the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership.

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The FCSFP received funding from Congress to assess the status of the rural community timber industry and to support community and ecosystem restoration efforts in Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico. So far, the steering committee has granted \$750,000 to 19 projects for the years 1999 and 2000. Year 2001-02 requests for proposals are currently available.

Burns and Richard have been looking into two aspects of the projects: 1) the ability of projects to build capacity for community-based forestry, or for community and ecosystem restoration; and 2) criteria for success that measure the outcome of project activities. Capacity-building looks at what works in the project internally. What is learned may help the projects make decisions about the direction they need and want to take.

Success criteria are used to make choices, but they also provide data for sharing with those outside the projects, such as the USDA Forest Service, Congress, state forest services, and other potential supporters and stakeholders.

Richard and Burns identified 12 subject categories

Significant themes

A list of significant themes emerged from the Office of Community Services' evaluation of projects receiving Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership funds.

- How to pay for restoration: direct taxpayer funding of mechanical removal or commercially viable operations that benefit local economies? What is an appropriate balance if both are useful?
- Need for technical assistance that is sensitive to local identities and autonomies.
- Lack of communication infrastructure for project participants to interact on regional scale, to learn and disseminate lessons, to discuss and network.
- Remoteness of rural communities makes it difficult to find technical assistance. This hampers progress.
- Need to improve representation of restoration projects in a regional setting.
- Need more flexibility/mobility on the part of state and federal agency bureaucracies; i.e., budget, staff trained in restoration approaches, information sharing and communication.
- New low-impact harvesting equipment is needed to practice true restoration forestry.
- Need increased education, acceptance, understanding, and practice of ecological relationships between people and forests. Based on premise that it will take at least a generation or two to shift to new ways of thinking and behaving.
- Science of restoration that fits needs of specific localities; how, how much, where, when, and what kind of restoration questions. There is no "one-size-fits-all."
- Lack of presence of ecologists, or perhaps a university connection, to study and teach the silvicultural and economic needs of specific locales.

important for success in how communities build their economy while participating in the care of nearby public forested lands. Subjects include: organization, planning, collaboration, partnership development, technical assistance, training, funding/financing, information dissemination, innovation in product and market development, innovation and cost-effectiveness in new technology, restoration science, and facilitation. A description of each subject is available by calling Richard at (970) 247-7066.

Evaluations may continue through 2001 and will include several more projects receiving FCSFP funding support. A complete report of findings for the 1999-funded projects is expected sometime during spring 2001.

Project nears 8,000 acres towards restoration goals

In a briefing last fall on progress and future strategies for the Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership in southwest Colorado, Montezuma County Federal Lands Program coordinator Mike Preston, who is also Associate Director of the Office of Community Services, reported significant gains in ecological restoration in the area's pine forests.

Foremost among them is the news that since restoration began in 1995 "7,870 acres are in some stage of treatment to restore ecological health, reduce bug die off and wildfire risk." In nearly half, small trees were thinned, big trees were saved, and prescribed fire and ecological monitoring took place. About 4,186 acres were described as "modified commercial thinning" areas where the big tree component is lacking, but where thinning would promote uneven-aged stand structure and allow future restoration and/or commercial options.

The report said that because of the positive results of economic research on the original pilot project of 548 acres, timber sale bids have increased. The commercial potential for restoration-associated logging is giving local loggers incentive to send in bids, which was not occurring before the pilot partnership project began five years ago.

The report says that watershed level NEPA analysis is a needed next step that could allow three things: 1) treatments of up to 3,000 acres annually; 2) watershed-level monitoring; 3) more small-diameter business opportunities.

More Forest Service staffing and funding would be needed to complete the first round of treatments in 10 years, and more understanding of sustainable ecological and economic strategies would result, the report said.

For more details, contact Mike Preston at (970) 565-8525.

Acres Treated or Prepared for Bid

Acres In SJNF Suitable Base (1983 Forest Plan)– 133,500

Acres Analyzed: Ponderosa Pine Restoration and Modified Commercial Thinning– 49,461 (37% of pine zone suitable base acres analyzed to-date).

Acres of modified commercial thin or restoration prescription complete or in process– 7,870 (16% analyzed in restoration or modified commercial thin).

Acres of commercial thinning prescription complete or in the pipeline– 4,186 (53% of treatments are modified commercial thin prescription).

Acres of restoration prescription complete or in the pipeline– 3,684 (47% of treatments are restoration prescription).

Restoration Acres Thinned, Burned, Monitored– 548 (Pilot restoration plots bought by Montezuma County, harvested by local businesses. Controlled burns on all but 70 acres).

Restoration Acres Under Sale Contract– 1,948 (Sold through the competitive bidding process involving multiple bidders).

Restoration Acres w/ Signed NEPA Document– 1,188 (Future goal: watershed level NEPA analysis).

OCS and Ute Mt. Utes are co-planning trail improvements at UMU Tribal Park

The Office of Community Services and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe are discussing trail planning for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park, a 125,000-acre attraction along the Mancos River south of Mesa Verde National Park.

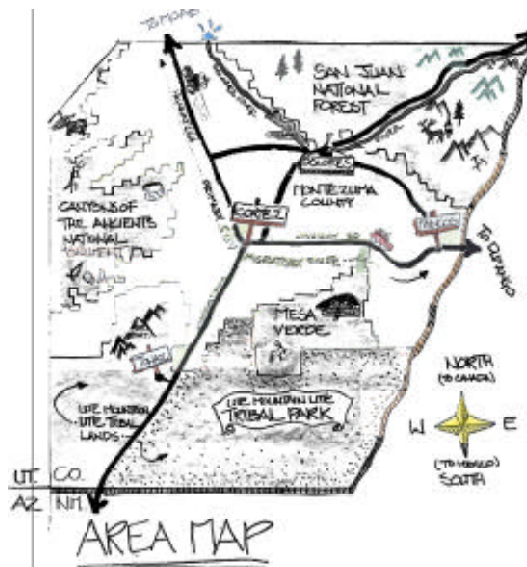
The tribal park's many Ancestral Puebloan ruins and cliff dwellings rival those of Mesa Verde. Many, which also include historic Ute wall paintings and petroglyphs, are relatively intact and draw visitors seeking a low-key alternative to Mesa Verde's setting.

Parking, camping, and sanitation limitations are threatening some sites, while erosion and damage to native vegetation along trails to

some remote sites are also occurring.

To help park officials cope with visitor demand, while continuing to offer satisfying experiences, OCS, utilizing funding from the San Juan National Forest, will inventory current trails and existing conditions to begin developing a long-term trail plan to help prioritize improvements and maintenance schedules based on visitor use and trail conditions.

The information will be used to develop an action plan which will allow the tribe to receive assistance from the USDA Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance program.



A humble start promises hope for a forest coop trying to help its village

At first look, the new greenhouse in Vallecitos, New Mexico doesn't seem like much. But Sandra Samora and her sister Cindy Seely are optimistic about it and the new wood-drying kiln built by Sandra's husband, Joe, and neighbor Manuel Gurule. These two sisters hope the greenhouse will help to stimulate new economic activity and a little hope in their impoverished village.

Sandra and Cindy, along with Joe and Manuel, run Madera Forest Products Association, a woodworker cooperative begun in 1988. The two sisters took over in 1997 when Madera began to falter and members began moving away or took jobs elsewhere. This was when national forest and timber policy, along with environmental lawsuits, had stopped logging in the Carson National Forest surrounding Vallecitos.

Already a few curious people have asked about the greenhouse. A couple of young women asked about possible jobs, but Sandra and Cindy admit, it is an uphill battle.

Standing in Vallecitos you feel transported further away in time than the 15 miles from US Highway 285 between Santa Fe and Alamosa, Colorado would seem to take you.

Its 55 residents, down from 98 two years ago, are scarcely seen. A few decades ago, there were perhaps 700 in the vicinity. There is no internet, no gas station, no town government, not even a grocery store. The old Catholic and Methodist churches are both boarded up, except for "occasional burials," as one resident put it.

The mercantile building is abandoned. Its gutted insides and shattered windows stand less in remembrance of bygone times than as a beaten figure upon which local youth vent frustration and anger with stones— a whipping post, little of which remains even to vandalize.

Several adobe buildings near the mercantile are being reclaimed by the soil out of which they were created. The village looks more like a historical architecture dump than an actual town once cared for by proud residents.

In contrast, Madera's recently built greenhouse and solar kiln stand sprightly amidst the decomposing buildings. Built



A GREENHOUSE BUILT OF SMALL-DIAMETER TIMBER by members of Madera Forest Products Association, along with a kiln also built of small-diameter timber, may help Vallecitos, New Mexico, which has suffered economic and social losses from the decline of timber harvesting.

from small-diameter timber, both represent a very humble beginning to rebuild the community.

Money for the greenhouse and kiln came from the Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership, administered through the New Mexico State Forester's office in Santa Fe. Congress gave more than \$1 million to FCSFP in 1999 through the USDA Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance program. The FCSFP started a grant program in an effort to help build more sustainable relationships between forests and communities dependent upon them.

Since 1999, a steering committee has given about 19 grants to projects implementing some aspect of community-led forest restoration. Projects include demonstration restoration harvests on national forest land, development of new products out of small-diameter timber harvested from overgrown ponderosa pine stands, and market development.

Most of the projects, spread across the Four Corners states, are partnerships among public land agencies, community leaders, businesses, university researchers, and various assistance providers, such as the USDA's Resource, Conservation, and Development offices and county economic development offices.

In Vallecitos, Gurule and the Samoras have have been joined by Bayfield, Colorado architect Jay Lynch and Telluride gardener Chris Holsten to build the greenhouse, kiln, and

"Madera is starting small, but . . . they are not alone in their resolve to address the change their community is experiencing."

other products. They plan to show that structures built of small-diameter round wood harvested through restoration methods are reliable, marketable products.

Lynch is networking with contractors and developers in Colorado to sell them high-quality, top-dollar products built of small-diameter timber by Vallecitos workers. He, Gurule, and Samora are teaching workers how to build trusses and deck railings popular with custom log-home builders.

Holsten is working with Sandra and Cindy to create an greenhouse that will be effective in the 7,500-foot altitude.

The kiln will dry in as little as a month up to 1,000 board feet of rough sawn lumber cut at La Compañía, the mill run by Gurule, who cofounded it, as well as Madera.

The mill is idle now because there are no markets for the kind of products that it can provide, he said. It is idle now also because of bitter, drawn out battles that many say extend as far back in history as the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Ever since then, access to the land has been increasingly denied to those who once subsisted on its resources. People such as Manuel Gurule's forefathers.

This decade, litigation over grazing, logging, and endangered species habitat has forced the issue of appropriate use

and management of the Carson National Forest to the point of halting most logging activity.

Madera is starting small, but in the context of similar community and ecosystem restoration projects in the Four Corners, they are not alone in their resolve to address the change their community is experiencing.

"We want to bring life back into this community. This is for (the people). There's so much history here," said Cindy.

If their efforts prove successful, Sandra Samora believes some residents will want to buy their own greenhouses to grow fresh vegetables. Manuel Gurule says they can use the building to warm their homes more efficiently, too. And local workers will have local jobs constructing greenhouses.

Just a week and a half after they sowed seed, green sprouts were beginning to brighten the small building's three 4 x 20-foot planting beds. Seeing the sprouts in the midst of winter surprised Cindy Seely, who even in her joy, half expected them to shrivel against the atmosphere of decay in her village. More space would be needed to transplant the already crowded sprouts, she said. People need the fresh vegetables, she said. They will buy them.

— **Tim Richard**

Bayfield, Colo. group builds community while reinvigorating its Mill Street

Bayfield, Colorado is a small, growing community established about 1895 after being a stage stop named *Los Pinos*. It grew out of land once owned by William Bay, thus its name. The town still has as its heart a traditional neighborhood with a strong sense of community one hundred years later. One can practically hear the old flour mill churning, and the stage coach coming to a stop, amidst the surrounding pastures irrigated by the Pine River, and sheep being trailed to the high country.

Today, citizens strive to sustain the values and ways of life that many fear are being lost by saving their main street which draws them together into a vital civic life.

Last spring, the Office of Community Services was asked to assist a group of citizens wanting to revitalize and enhance the historic district anchored along Mill Street, where the old business district was located until the 1960s when it was bypassed by US Highway 160.

Beginning last summer, the Mill Street Revitalization Group has met monthly with Sam Burns and James

Dietrich of OCS, and with Jon Schler from the University of Colorado, to form their vision into an action plan.

The group established a vision of the Mill Street historic district as being socially active, oriented towards pedestrians, re-energized commercially by a coffee shop, bookstore, artisan shops, professional offices, and connected to trails, the Pine River, and nearby parks and open space. They saw opportunities for utilizing several old school buildings for a community and senior center, a museum, child day care, and performing arts.

Topics addressed include clarifying and enhancing the entryways to the historic district, developing trails and parks, assessing senior housing needs near downtown, attracting artisan and crafts businesses, and designing new uses for the Bayfield Middle School, should it become available for community use.

Because Mill Street remains the heart of Bayfield, it is the essential focal point of the action planning being by conducted by the revitalization group.

— **Sam Burns**

“ . . . the town still has as its heart a traditional neighborhood with a strong sense of community.”

Calendar

The 24th Annual Ethnobotany Conference

March 7-10, 2001
Fort Lewis College
Durango, Colorado

Entitled, "Unheard Voices:"
American Indian sojourns in land
stewardship.
Great opportunity for students.

For more information:

Michael Rendon
Environmental Center
(970) 247-7676
www.fortlewis.edu/cub/ec

Building Sustainable Communities: A Watershed Approach

March 21-23, 2001
North Adams, Massachusetts

Conference to bring together influential
domestic and international stakeholders to
identify and share actions
that communities can take to ensure sustain-
able and equitable use of
watershed resources.

For more information:

Mervin Stevens
603-756-3534
info@berkshireinstitute.net

Applications for Practitioners of Ponderosa Pine Ecosystem Restoration

April 25-28, 2001
Norther Arizona University

Conference will bring together land manag-
ers, researchers, planners, NGOs, and
community members to discuss coordination
of ecological restoration.

For more information:

Susan G. Stafford
stafford@cnr.colostate.edu
Ecological Restoration Institute (POB 15018,
Flagstaff, Arizona, 86011 520-523-7182)

COMMUNITY-PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVES

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***A village works
to renew itself
SEE PAGE 6***

