

Colorado State Forest Service

Durango District 2009 Annual Report



The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) mission is to provide for the stewardship of forest resources and to reduce related risks to life, property and the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Durango District of the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is one of 17 districts located throughout Colorado. We are an agency within the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University (CSU).

Greetings from the CSFS Durango District!

Please take a moment to look over our 2009 annual report. This report provides you with brief highlights of our district's activities and programs over the past year, as well as some information about who we are and what we do.

We welcome you to visit our office, located on the Fort Lewis College campus here in Durango. Our office hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Right: Durango District Staff (from left to right): Kent Grant, district forester; Tim Reader, state utilization & marketing forester; Lindsay Gartner (with Orin, future forester), assistant district forester; Dan Wand, assistant district forester; David Dilling, forest inventory & analysis forester; Linda Jones, administrative assistant.

Contact Us!

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Meet Our Staff!



ARRA Funds Awarded Locally for Forestry-Related Projects

Through funding provided by the U.S. Forest Service, the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) has awarded almost 11 million dollars in grant funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Out of 52 proposals received, 15 businesses and organizations received funding to create and/or retain jobs in either the wood products manufacturing and hazardous fuels business sectors or community wildfire protection planning and implementation. Three of these projects are being managed out of the Durango District office. For further information on ARRA, see the website at: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/recovery.html>.

Colorado Forest Restoration Institute Holds Mixed Conifer Workshop in Pagosa Springs

The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI), in partnership with the San Juan Public Lands Center and Fort Lewis College, hosted a two-day collaborative learning workshop on mixed conifer forests of Colorado in Pagosa Springs on Oct. 21 and 22.

The first day of the workshop consisted of an indoor session of presentations and discussions about mixed conifer forest, current and past research conducted in the mixed conifer forest type, stakeholders' views about the forest, and discussion of current and future collaboration on management of the forests. The second day was a field visit to research sites in the San Juan National Forest where forest management has taken place. Land managers and researchers then discussed interpretations of how this management has and will affect the forests.

Participants included U.S. Forest Service employees, CSFS employees, Colorado State University faculty and staff, Fort Lewis College faculty and staff, local NGOs, local industry representatives, local business owners, private landowners and many others. More information on the workshop can be found at: <http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/cfri-conferences/>.

Community Forestry Update

The local communities of Cortez, Durango and Mancos have been active in community forestry this past year. All three maintained their Tree City USA status, held celebrations for Arbor Day and much more.

Cortez:

With the help of three other CSFS foresters, the Durango District inventoried all of Cortez's street and park trees this past fall. Nearly 2,500 trees were tallied with information collected on species, diameter, condition and management need. Using the International Society of Arborists valuation formula, the value of Cortez's trees was calculated at \$1.75 million. This is quite an asset for the city, considering trees provide environmental and economic benefits, as well as aesthetic ones. Cortez has been an official Tree City USA for 17 years; revising its Community Forestry plan shows its commitment to the long-term care of Cortez's urban forest.

Durango:

Durango celebrated its 30th year as a Tree City USA on April 30th at the Durango Recreation Center. Local schoolchildren presented songs and poems about trees, a grove of trees was planted by the community.

Mancos:

Mancos also maintained its Tree City USA status for the 18th year. The CSFS presented a pruning workshop to town employees in March; the town put on its own pruning workshop for residents in the fall, which helped it earn an Arbor Day Foundation Growth Award. This award is meant "to recognize environmental improvement and encourage higher levels of tree care throughout America."

Insect and Disease Update

There are currently several insect and disease issues active in southwest Colorado worth noting and watching for:

Sudden aspen decline (SAD) is still a significant issue in the southwest corner of the state. It is especially visible between Mancos and Dolores on both federal and private lands. There appears to be three factors that contribute to the decline: location (low elevation and south- or west-facing slopes), drought conditions from 2000-2005, and secondary insects or diseases that move into the weakened trees. Stands are classified as being killed specifically by SAD if the regeneration is poor. It is unknown how long this phenomenon will last.

Spruce beetles are gaining momentum in higher elevation forests, especially on national forest lands. An endemic population of beetles is common in downed trees; however, as populations increase the beetles start attacking live trees. They go after the large trees greater than 18 inches in diameter first, but will attack smaller trees. An obvious sign of infestation is boring dust at the beetle's entrance hole, in the bark of the trunk or at the base of the tree. Pitch masses may be visible around the entrance site as well. The best defense against spruce beetle is to maintain a healthy stand of trees that can resist infestation, but there are aggregation and anti-aggregation pheromones that can attract or repel the beetles. If you are seeing spruce trees die on your property, more information is available at our office.

Ordering Seedling Trees

Orders were accepted for high-quality, reasonably priced seedling trees and shrubs for conservation plantings. Conservation plantings are those used for windbreaks, hedgerows, living snow fences, dust and visual screens, wildlife habitat enhancement, soil stabilization, reforestation projects or Christmas tree plantations.

The CSFS Nursery in Fort Collins grows the seedlings and distributes them through several cooperating conservation districts in southwest Colorado. To

participate in this annual program, you must own two or more acres of land and agree not to use the seedlings for landscaping purposes or to resell them as living plants.

Seedlings are available as either bare-root or potted planting stock, and include a wide variety of native and introduced coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs. Available species include ponderosa pine, Colorado blue spruce, piñon pine, aspen, green ash, chokecherry, sumac and serviceberry. New this year were extra-large potted trees meant for replacing trees that have died in years past. Supplies are limited and species available are Rocky Mountain juniper, ponderosa pine and Austrian pine.

Every year seedling order forms are available at our district office or from your local conservation district (CD). Order forms should be returned to the CD. Orders are always due the first week in April, with seedling delivery and distribution at designated times later in April.

Conservation District Contact Information:

Dove Creek CD: (970) 677-2248 ext. 3

Dolores CD (Cortez): (970) 565-9045 ext. 101

Mancos CD: (970) 533-7317

La Plata CD: (970) 259-3289 ext. 3

San Juan CD (Pagosa Springs): (970) 731-3615

Durango District Staff Talks to Archuleta Sixth-Graders About Forestry

On May 12, Archuleta County schools held their 23rd Annual Conservation Day for sixth-graders. This is a day where students go on a field trip to learn about various conservation topics from professionals in the local community. Topics include forest management, wildlife management, soil resources, water resources, range identification and local archaeology. Dan Wand and Dave Dilling from the Durango District gave a presentation to over a hundred students this year, which included information on forest management, tree planting and wildland firefighting. Professionals

from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) gave presentations on topics of their expertise. Sponsors and contributors of the Conservation Day include the San Juan Conservation District, NRCS, USFS, San Juan Resource Conservation & Development, A-1 Septic and the Rafter “T” Ranch.



Durango Assistant District Forester Dan Wand talks to Archuleta County students about being a forester.

Tree Day at Pine River Community Learning Center

On April 30 the Pine River Community Learning Center in Ignacio held an educational day about trees for local elementary students. Tree topics included identification, importance to the community, planting and trivia. The CSFS Durango District assisted by giving demonstrations on tree planting. Seedling trees were provided by the Community Learning Center and the Southern Ute Tribe for each child to take home and plant.

‘Trifecta’ in Tree Farm Awards for Southwest Colorado

Three local tree farmers won awards this past year on the local, state and national levels. Ron Chacey was recognized as the San Juan Tree Farmer of the Year, beating out all other applicants in the San Juan area. Florence Kroulik was recognized as the State Tree Farmer of Year, making her the top Tree Farmer in the state of Colorado for 2009. Ken & Lois Carpenter

were recognized as the Western Regional Tree Farmers of the Year, making them notable as having one of the top four Tree Farms in the nation. Congratulations to these individuals for their commitment to tree farming!



Florence Kroulik (holding wooden plaque) and her family receive the Colorado State Tree Farmer of the Year Award.



Ron Chacey (center) receives the San Juan Region Tree Farmer of the Year Award.



Ken & Lois Carpenter receive the Western Region Tree Farmer of the Year Award in Washington D.C.

CSFS Wildland Fire Engines Detailed to Durango District

Two CSFS wildland fire engines stationed in the Fort Collins area were detailed to the Durango District last August when fire danger in our part of the state was at its highest. One Type 4 and one Type 6 engine and their crews, comprised of CSFS personnel and CSU interns, saw action on several fires while here, including a small fire in the Forest Lakes subdivision north of Bayfield. When not fighting fire, the crews did fuels reduction work on a shaded fuel break at the Grassy Mountain state land section above the Forest Lakes subdivision. Upper Pine River Fire Protection District graciously provided quarters for the crew at its Station 4 along County Road 501. It was a good experience for all, and plans are now being made to bring these engines back for a return visit this summer.



A CSFS Type 4 wildland fire engine assists the Upper Pine River Fire Protection District suppressing a small fire in the Forest Lakes Subdivision last August.

Narraguinsep Fire

In August of last year, southwest Colorado experienced the largest wildfire in the state for 2009. The Narraguinsep Fire was started by lightning near Narraguinsep Canyon, above the Bradfield Bridge in Montezuma County. Despite a rapid response by fire suppression forces, it quickly escaped initial attack and the local Durango Interagency Type 3 Incident Management Team was called in to manage the fire.

On the afternoon of the second day, Aug. 8, strong winds lined up perfectly with the direction of the canyon and the fire grew by nearly 4,000 acres when it raced eight miles up the canyon. Since it was unsafe to put firefighters into the canyon, the fire was attacked

where it attempted to spread onto the top of the mesa top. This strategy worked well, and although the fire burned many miles up the canyon, firefighters were successful at limiting its expansion outside of the canyon.

When all was said and done, the fire had burned nearly 7,300 acres of national forest land administered by the Dolores San Juan Public Lands Office. At the time the fire began, the Bradfield Fire was burning nearby. This fire had also been started by lightning, but was being allowed to burn for resource benefits and suppression action was only taken when fire behavior or movement was undesirable.

The Narraguinsep Fire is a good example of how quickly a wildfire can grow when burning conditions are ideal. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries to firefighters, and no structures were lost.



The Narraguinsep Fire's smoke column on Aug. 8 from Forest Road 521 on the "Glade."



Durango Interagency Type 3 Team on the Narraguinsep Fire, August 2009: (top row, left to right) Doug Ramsey, Kelly Palmer, Cary Newman, Ron Klatt, Scott McDermid, Brad Morrison, Craig Goodell, Rich "Goose" Gustafson, Pam Wilson, Eric La Price, (bottom row, left to right) Loren Wickstrom, Larry Sinclair, Kent Grant, Allen Clay, Carolyn Long, Linda Jones. Not pictured: Van Chanay, Mark Tucker, Todd Gardiner, Don Baker, Bob Lawrence, Joanne Young.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan Framework Developed

Last year, the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado, FLC Office of Community Services, San Juan Public Lands, and CSFS Durango District collaborated on creating a community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) framework, for use in southwest Colorado. The framework is a tool for fostering the development of more subdivision/small community-scale CWPPs.

CWPPs continue to receive strong emphasis as a means communities can use to plan for and protect themselves from the ravages of wildfire. Because so many developments in our area are located within fire-adapted ecosystems, it is naïve to think that fire can be excluded from environments naturally inclined to periodic burning. Once landowners acknowledge that fires will occur, there is much that can be done to be ready for when they do.

Implementing recommendations made and agreed to in CWPPs can minimize the potential for loss of life, property, infrastructure and environmental resources to a wildfire, while helping to ensure the area will still be a desirable place to live afterwards. The framework is currently being tested by several of the Firewise Council's Neighborhood Ambassadors, who have taken it upon themselves to coordinate the development of CWPPs for their subdivisions. An important element of the framework is involving community members in the process, along with those with expertise on fire and fuels. The CSFS hopes that over time the framework will lead to the development of many CWPPs, which if implemented will make southwest Colorado a safer place to live and work.

Fuels Reduction Work at Dalla Mountain Park Continues

The City of Durango was again awarded a Colorado Community Forest Restoration and Watershed Protection Grant (HB-1130 Grant), for continuing the fuels reduction work begun in 2008 along the main access trail into Dalla Mountain Park from the Junction Creek Road. This state grant program utilizes

some of Colorado's severance tax receipts for forest and watershed protection activities. The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) treated approximately 10 acres last summer and will be doing some additional acres with this funding in early 2010.

In September, the Legislative Council's Water Resources Review Committee toured Dalla Mountain Park to look at the work done there by the SCC in 2008. There were many good discussions on fuels reduction and how it is helping to protect the Junction Creek watershed (and ultimately the Animas River watershed). There was also talk about the importance of Colorado's declining forest industry in helping to do fuels reduction and forest improvement work.

In late 2009, the City of Durango applied for and was awarded a third Community Forest Restoration grant for continuing fuels work at Dalla Mountain Park in 2010.



Southwest Conservation Corps sawyer at City of Durango's Dalla Mountain Park.

Mancos Fire Protection District Receives Type 6 Wildland Fire Engine

CSFS delivered a shiny “new” 1985 Chevrolet Type 6 diesel wildland fire engine to the Mancos Fire Protection District last May 13th. This engine is a recent addition to the CSFS Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program fleet. Our Fire Equipment Shop converts older military trucks obtained from the federal government through the FEPP program into wildland fire engines that are distributed under agreement to rural fire departments and county sheriff offices throughout the state. The new engine replaces an older Kaiser Jeep Type 6 engine Mancos FPD was turning back into CSFS.



Mancos FPD's new CSFS Type 6 FEPP wildland engine being delivered in Mancos on May 13, 2009.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans Update

Deer Valley Estates and Durango West 1 subdivisions completed Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) in 2009. The Deer Valley Estates Plan was prepared by Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador Les Kole and the DW1 CWPP was prepared by private forestry consultant Bruce Short of Short Forestry LLC. A number of other CWPPs are currently in progress and more should be completed in 2010.

(Right) Shawna Crocker (at podium) addresses participants of the 2009 Fire Ecology Workshop for educators as Lu Boren (standing at right) looks on. The workshop was held at Fort Lewis College in Durango June 8th -12th.



Property owners discussing the Durango West 1 CWPP with forestry consultant Bruce Short, Short Forestry LLC (standing at right), and Craig Goodell, San Juan Public Lands Fire Mitigation and Education Specialist (seated), at a public meeting held for subdivision residents on May 17, 2009.

2009 Fire Ecology Workshop for Educators

Fort Lewis College in Durango was the site of the 2009 Fire Ecology Workshop for Educators that was held June 8th-12th. St. Columba school teacher Lu Boren coordinated the workshop with assistance from Gabi Morey, Education Outreach Director for the San Juan Mountains Association, and Shawna Crocker, Environmental Education/PLT Coordinator with the CSFS Outreach Division. Nearly 30 people from Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona participated. Many thanks go to Lu, Gabi, Shawna, and the various resource professionals who donated time to help make the workshop a success.





Dalla Mountain Park, Durango, Colorado



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Proudly Serving Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma & San Juan Counties