



Colorado State Forest Service

La Junta District 2008 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 La Junta 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.

2008 Highlights from the La Junta District

Eastern Colorado Community Forestry Conference Huge Success

The annual Eastern Colorado Community Forestry Conference was held on Thursday, February 28, 2008 at the Cheyenne County Fairgrounds Community Building in Cheyenne Wells, Colorado. More than 80 attendees participated in the conference, including presenters, tree board members, interested citizens, and community and agency representatives from eastern Colorado and western Kansas. The conference titled, Parks on the Prairie-Growing Healthy Trees in Eastern Colorado, included presentations on selecting, planting, pruning and ensuring the long-term survival of trees planted in the harsh environment of eastern Colorado. Information also was presented on tree insect and disease issue awareness. The Colorado State Forest Service, Cheyenne County Extension staff, La Junta District personnel and a retired CSFS

community forester presented the information, which included a hands-on pruning session in the field. Sponsors of the workshop included the Colorado Tree Coalition, the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado State University Extension and the Cheyenne Wells Improvement Committee. A special thank you goes to Ellette Eiring, Vickie Nestor and Carol Waugh of the Cheyenne Wells Improvement Committee for doing such a great job with the organization and implementation of the conference. Look for the 2010 conference to be held in Springfield.



The Eastern Colorado Community Forestry Conference.



Discussions of proper tree care at the conference.

Proudly Serving Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero & Prowers Counties

Holly Begins Reforestation at Gateway Park

On April 6, 2008, the Town of Holly started its effort to replant trees at Gateway Park. The newly-formed Holly Tree Board, the town and the Colorado State Forest Service spearheaded the reforestation project. More than 30 volunteers helped with replanting that involved planting six large trees, three bur oak and three honey locust trees. Three additional American elm hybrids, which are Dutch elm disease resistant, will be planted later in the spring. Mayor Bruce Roup officially proclaimed April 6 as Arbor Day in Holly during the reading of the Arbor Day Proclamation.

Our appreciation goes to all of the people who helped with this project. More than 25 4-H youth and leaders from across southeastern Colorado assisted along with southeastern Colorado CSU Extension agents from Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties. Colorado State Forest Service foresters provided tree planting leadership for volunteers. The Holly Tree Board and the town devoted many hours to the effort; they assisted with planting trees, and also planned and prepared the planting site several days before trees were planted. The town's public works crew dug the planting holes with their backhoe and provided a truckload of wood chips. Local businesses from Holly donated water and snacks for the volunteers.

The tree planting project for the entire park will be a long-term effort with plantings taking place in phases over the next several years.

Earlier in 2008, Holly had officially adopted a tree ordinance and formed the Holly Tree Board with assistance and guidance from the Colorado State Forest Service. By doing so, the town can develop a community forestry program for the community. Susan Lucius, of Holly, is the new Holly Tree Board Chairperson. Other members include Kent and Elaine Anderson, Bill French, Larry Lucius, Sheri Morman, Sandy Nordyke, Cheryl Roup, and Karla Kay Webb.

The Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) — a nonprofit organization with a mission to lead statewide efforts that preserve, renew and enhance community forests also has been instrumental in helping Holly in this

effort by providing \$2,000 in 2008 to help pay for planting new trees at the town's Gateway Park. CTC will provide an additional \$2,000 in 2009. Money given to Holly comes through a program called Reforest Colorado, which is a CTC-supported program that helps assist communities that have suffered from natural disasters.

The CTC website states:

“Following a disaster, rebuilding the lives and the homes of the people affected is, and should remain, our highest priority. But soon people within these areas want to rebuild something else – their community. Be it a neighborhood, a subdivision, a town or a city they want it restored. And more times than not, trees play an important part in the restoring and healing process.”

For more information, to make a donation to the Reforest Colorado fund or to become a CTC member, visit the website at www.coloradotrees.org. The community of Holly would like to thank the CTC for their generous assistance.



Mayor of Holly, Bruce Roup, reads the Arbor Day Proclamation as Holly Tree Board members Cheryl Roup, and Susan and Larry Lucius listen.



More than 30 volunteers donated their time on Sunday afternoon, April 6, to help replant trees at Gateway Park in Holly. Pictured here are the many 4-H youth from across southeastern Colorado who volunteered.

Ordway Fire Draws Support

The La Junta District assisted Crowley County by collecting initial attack Engine/Crew documentation for the Ordway Fire on April 15-17, 2008.

The Ordway Fire expense did not meet the minimum threshold for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Fire Suppression Grant application. That minimum threshold needed for assistance was approximately \$267,000.

The Crowley County Commissioners met on November 26, 2008, and closed out the FEMA grant process for this fire.

The Crowley County Commissioners extend their sincere appreciation to the firefighters for their overwhelming willingness to assist the citizens in Crowley County during the Ordway Fire.

The in-kind contribution received from the 31 fire departments that responded to the initial attack was nearly \$100,000. Such dedication is a commendable and humbling effort.

The professionalism and “whenever-needed” emergency response from each of you is what makes living in southeastern and southern Colorado very special. The 31 volunteer fire departments (VFD), fire protection districts (FPD), fire departments (FD), rural fire protection districts (RFPD) and other emergency services that participated in the Ordway Fire are:

Baca County

- Springfield VFD

Bent County

- Las Animas/Bent Counties FPD
- Hasty/McClave Volunteer Fire & Ambulance

Cheyenne County

- Cheyenne County FPD #1 at Cheyenne Wells
- West Cheyenne County FPD at Kit Carson

Crowley County

- Crowley FD
- Olney Springs VFD
- Ordway/Crowley Counties FD
- Sugar City VFD

El Paso County

- Edison FPD (Yoder)
- Tri-County FPD (Rush)

Huerfano County

- Huerfano County FPD

Kiowa County

- Haswell VFD

- Kiowa County Road & Bridge
- Kiowa County Search & Rescue

Las Animas County

- Hoehne FPD
- Trinidad FD

Lincoln County

- Karval FPD
- Limon FPD

Otero County

- Fowler RFPD
- La Junta RFPD
- Manzanola RFPD
- Rocky Ford RFPD

Prowers County

- Lamar City FD
- Prowers Rural Fire Department

Pueblo County

- Boone VFD
- Pueblo Chemical Depot, Department of Defense
- Pueblo City FD
- Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management
- Pueblo Rural FD
- Pueblo West FD



Firefighters gather at the Olney Springs Firefighter Memorial Service after the Ordway Fire.

Walsh Receives New Fire Engine

In 2008, the Town of Walsh received a new 2-1/2 ton, 878 gallon, 6X6 fire engine, which was contributed by the Colorado State Forest Service Fire Equipment Shop and its mechanics, Jay Davis, Matt O'Leary, Paul Rodriquez, Charlie Rossi and Nate Taggatz. The CSFS Fire Equipment Shop, led by Sergio Lopes, builds approximately eight new Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) engines each year, which are then assigned to local fire departments throughout the state.

Upon arrival with the engine, Jay Davis, CSFS equipment mechanic, gave Walsh Fire Department firefighters a briefing and instructions in the use and minor maintenance of the new Type 4 fire truck.

Walsh Fire Department Chief Lance James said, "We're excited to receive the new equipment and particularly excited by the water tank design, which allows for lower weight distribution of the vehicle. This newer design is safer than the older design for firefighters. There is also additional room on the flatbed for equipment."

An equipment agreement between the state of Colorado, the Colorado State Forest Service and the Town of Walsh was effective on October 1, 1990. It was signed by the mayor, the county sheriff and the county commissioners and allows for placement of fire equipment for the benefit of emergency use within Baca County.

The Walsh engine is one of 140 engines maintained in Colorado and authorized by law under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. This Act provides a mechanism for federally-owned equipment to be locally used for emergency and fire-related protection.

This win-win agreement provides for the loan of fire equipment for fire duties within the town and county, an annual maintenance inspection, and repairs from normal wear and tear. The town pays a \$200/year inspection fee.

In reciprocation, Walsh officials agree to only use the equipment for fire protection or other emergency situations when life or property are threatened; maintain the equipment in operating condition with

a minimum of tools and hose on the engine; provide adequate year-round equipment housing; pay for all operating costs and minor maintenance; maintain liability insurance; and submit national fire reports.

If available, the engine also may be dispatched for emergency mutual aid or initial attack responses outside its normal jurisdiction.

The number of fires reported by the Walsh Volunteer Fire Department currently is at 43 runs.

Other fire agreement engines in southeastern Colorado are located at Campo, Eads, Hasty-McClave, Kim, Sugar City and Wiley.

The Walsh Fire Department, volunteer firefighters and the community greatly appreciate the new equipment. Stop by and see the fleet!



Mayor Clarence Jones and firefighter Pam James stand in front of the new Walsh fire engine.

Fires in California – How to Get Wildland Stated

To become a Firefighter II with a “Red Card,” also called an Interagency Incident Qualification Card, the following requirements for firefighters with volunteer fire departments are:

- Attend and pass a combined 36-hour course: National Wildfire Coordinating Group Basic Firefighter course (S-130), Introduction to Fire Behavior (S-190) and Human Factors on the Fireline (L-180). Complete a one-time course: Basic Incident Command (I-100)
- Pass an Arduous Pack Test on your home unit that entails completing a three-mile fast walk in less than 45 minutes while carrying a 45-lb pack
- Send the course certificate of completion and a letter from your fire chief to your local CSFS office, stating pack test date and test time. Firefighter information will be entered into the Incident Qualification System for red-carding and placed into the Resource Ordering Status System (ROSS)
- Recertify annually with a six-hour refresher course and a physical pack test

To go on paid assignment as a Firefighter II, you will need to:

- Have wildland personal protective clothing and equipment (clothing, line gear, fire shelter, boots, etc)
- Tie-in with a crew or engine (be on their call-out list). CSFS Engine 6131 is available for this support
- Be available for a two-week period, plus travel days (16 maximum)
- Provide upfront dollars for travel to and from the incident

Statusing a Volunteer Fire Department engine for an assignment requires completing a Cooperative Resource Rate Form (CRRF), and staffing the engine with a National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCWG) qualified crew (i.e. a red-carded Engine Boss and two firefighters II or I). The engine must be stated as ‘Available’ through the ROSS system.

Contact our district office if you or your department is interested in a national wildland fire assignment.

Firewise and You — Suggested Reading Material

- *Living With Fire: A Guide for the Homeowner – and assignment sheet*
- *Eastern Colorado Wildfire Safety Tips – Are You Fire-wise?*
- *Are you Plains FireWise? Notebook – Are you at risk?; Access; Water Supply; Defensible Space; Trees, Shrubs (& Grasses); Construction Design & Materials; Interior Safety; and What to do When*

These publications and others can be found on the Colorado State Forest Service website at: www.csfs.colostate.edu/pages/wf-publications.html.

Workshop Investigates the Natural History of Piñon-Juniper in Southeastern Colorado

In May 2008, a workshop held in the La Junta and Kim area focused on piñon-juniper forest management in southeastern Colorado. Workshop partners included Colorado State University (CSU) Extension, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Society of American Foresters and the CSFS. The Bader Ranch graciously hosted the field tour. Presenters included Dr. Bill Romme with CSU, Ryan Boggs of The Nature Conservancy, Seth Gallagher, of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and Tim Reader of the CSFS. Approximately 30 people participated in the workshop that covered the natural history of piñon-juniper forests, current knowledge and gaps, a panel discussion on piñon-juniper management techniques for southeastern Colorado, prescribed fire use as a management tool, wildlife considerations in piñon-juniper forests, and options for utilization. The field tour also was conducted on private lands and showcased different management practices. According to Dr. Romme, the majority of the field tour site was identified as savanna-type piñon-juniper forest, with some pockets of older, climax forest. Many participants were surprised and fascinated to learn of the canyon country in southeastern Colorado. For

more information on piñon-juniper forests, please visit the Colorado State Forest Service website at www.csfs.colostate.edu and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute website at www.cfri.colostate.edu.



The workshop attendees tour through piñon-juniper forests.

2008 Insect and Disease (I&D) Assessment Report on the CSFS La Junta District

Counties include: Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers (Additional observations, Eastern Las Animas County)

Remember, the first defense against insect and disease attacks is proper tree care. This means selecting the right trees for your area, deep watering trees throughout the year on a regular basis, and practicing proper pruning and planting techniques. For more information on these topics, visit our website at www.csfs.colostate.edu, or visit www.treesaregood.com.

Major Native Forest Insect and Disease Issues

Piñon-Juniper

Assessed by over a dozen site visits within Otero and eastern Las Animas counties as well as “windshield” observations throughout the year.

The health of piñon-juniper forests has remained stable for the last five years. During the past two years, piñon pines continue to regenerate in more open areas and also within thicker stands of juniper. One-seed junipers continue to increase and encroach onto rangeland. This year, no insect or disease issues were noted on these forests. A few Rocky Mountain junipers (RMJ) are located within this forest type, but typically are found adjacent to riparian areas or along canyon slopes. Insect and disease (I&D) issues in RMJ were not observed.

Riparian Forests

Assessed by several dozen site visits throughout the district as well as “windshield” observations throughout the year.

There are still many patches of dead and dying plains cottonwoods, but regeneration continues to be observed in some areas that are not greatly impacted by tamarisk. No abnormal insect or disease issues were observed in our river/perennial stream/dry arroyo riparian areas this year. Of course, one of the greatest threats to the native trees in southeastern Colorado’s riparian areas and riparian forests is the continual encroachment of tamarisk and other invasive weeds such as Russian knapweed and Canada thistle.

Major Causal Agents of Insect and Disease Issues

Browning Pine/Blue Spruce Needles

By far, this is the most common insect and disease inquiry our district receives on an annual basis. This year, samples were sent to the CSU lab for diagnosis because we suspected possible needle cast issues. With the exception of one pine scale diagnosis, sample results came back as abiotic (non-living, physical factors, such as weather). The clay-shale alkaline soils, and often alkaline water, are suspected in many cases along with too frequent and too shallow watering regimes. In a few cases; however, overwatering is suspected, especially when trees are placed in a low spot that does not drain well. Competition from grass sod also is sighted as a factor in many instances.

Locust Borer

Locust borer is a common insect of black locust tree species in southeastern Colorado. Trees such as

purple robe and Idaho locust are very susceptible to locust borer, as are the black locust sold from our CSFS nursery. A handful of confirmed locust borer occurrences were noted in Otero and Prowers counties. In our area, honey locust varieties are recommended instead of black locust varieties.

Fireblight

In 2008, fireblight was abnormally common in Otero County with symptoms mostly seen on pear and crabapple tree varieties. An unusually cool spring and early summer temperatures may have played a factor in this disease.

I&D on Elm Species

Trunk attacks by elm bark beetles continue to be noted throughout the district. High populations of European elm scale also continue to be observed. Many English elms are in severe decline in La Junta due to massive elm scale infestations, especially on sites where supplemental water is insufficient. The elm leaf beetle population sharply declined this year with the exception of north La Junta, where populations were high in August.

Black Walnut Decline

Black walnut trees in Olney Springs (Crowley County) were investigated for symptoms of dieback. Secondary flat-headed and/or round-headed wood borers of unknown species were found, but the initial cause of dieback was not determined. Within one block, approximately four black walnut trees were observed to be in decline. One tree also was infected with a witches' broom as well as bunch disease of walnut caused by phytoplasma. At one residence, the owner applied a systemic insecticide to the soil, as well as an insecticide to the foliage in the early spring. This seems to have greatly reduced the dieback; however, has not completely stopped the dieback. Black walnut trees in Rocky Ford at Library Park were also investigated. The good news was that the walnut twig beetle and its associated fungus (*Fusarium solani*) that kills the trees, were NOT found. These trees will continue to be monitored.

Chlorosis Symptoms

Chlorosis, yellowing of leaves, is very common in our area, especially in the more clay-shale, poorly drained

soils. Ornamental pears and maple varieties tend to show this more than other species. This is one of the more common inquires that the La Junta District receives from people throughout Southeast Colorado (SE CO).

Cottonless Cottonwood Dieback

Cottonless cottonwood commonly exhibit stress in SE CO. The primary cause is attributed to poor sites located in clay-shale, poorly drained soils. The secondary insects that follow typically are a handful of borers: the carpenter worm, cottonwood borer and cottonwood crown borer. The La Junta District receives many questions about this problem from all people throughout SE CO.

Lilac Ash Borer/Ash Bark Beetles

Lilac ash borer and ash bark beetle were again observed to a great extent throughout the district this year. All ages of ash trees (predominately green ash), from 1-inch diameter to fully mature, are constantly attacked by these bark beetles/borers. We no longer recommend planting ash trees in SE CO. If clients insist on planting these trees we recommend that they spray them every year for the life of the trees. Spraying trees is one of the more common inquires that the La Junta District receives from clients.

Misapplication of 2,4-D

A handful of site visits and samples brought into the office were indicative of misapplied 2,4-D. Lawn service companies were hired to apply broadleaf weed killer to their lawns four to five times during the season. Often times, these companies applied the chemical at temperatures over 85 degrees. Symptoms that showed were chlorosis of leaves and curling/cupping of leaves at the leaf margins. Suckers at the base of some trees were outright killed as well.

Grasshoppers

Grasshoppers occurred in massive numbers throughout the district in June. They ate whatever crossed their path, including tree leaves. Many trees were completely stripped; however, the occurrence was early enough that the trees were able to recover and leafed out a second time.

List of Minor Causal Agents

Piñon Pine Scale

Piñon pine scale was found on landscape piñon samples from Baca County near the Town of Pritchett.

Piñon Ips

A hopefully isolated infestation of piñon ips was found in two landscape piñon pine trees at a residence west of Rocky Ford south of Hwy 202. The trees have been at this location for more than ten years and were water-stressed due to severe competition with buffalo grass sod. Possibly, piñon firewood stored at a residence may have been the ips source.

Improper Planting

Many trees with secondary insect problems are planted too deep and/or have been planted with the burlap, twine and wire baskets left on the root ball.

Improper Watering

Many trees with secondary insect problems lack deep watering on a regular basis.

Insect Monitoring

In 2008, Ingrid Aguayo, entomologist for the CSFS, and her team, placed emerald ash borer traps and gypsy moth traps throughout the La Junta District. Our district also conducted an annual Dutch elm disease survey in the towns of La Junta and Ordway; positive trees for the disease were not found.



Littleton Student is Colorado's 2008 National Arbor Day Poster Contest Winner

Sydney Lackey was the 2008 Colorado state winner of the National Arbor Day Poster Contest. She is the daughter of Richard and Paige Lackey, and fifth-grade student of teachers Devon Reinert and Jill Day at Laura Ingalls-Wilder Elementary School in Littleton. Representatives from the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) recognized Lackey for her winning poster at a surprise announcement during an Arbor Day/Earth Day school assembly on Tuesday, April 22.

The state contest is part of an annual program sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation and coordinated by the Colorado Tree Coalition. The theme of the 2008 contest was Trees are Terrific... inside and out! The National Arbor Day Foundation announced the national poster contest winner on April 25 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Chosen from more than 1,700 posters created by fifth-graders throughout Colorado, Lackey's poster depicts looking out a window at a little girl sitting under the shade of a yard tree.

Lackey's poster, accompanied by the other 53 posters forwarded by Colorado teachers for the competition, was on display at the Colorado Capitol from April 28 - May 9, 2008. The posters also were then on display at the Bear Creek Nature Center in Colorado Springs through April 24th.

During a recognition ceremony at the State Capitol on April 28, Lackey presented a framed print of her poster to Littleton Rep. Joe Rice and Colorado Sen. Steve Ward. Following the presentation of the posters, Rep. Rice recognized Lackey and her family before the General Assembly.

Dignitaries; Ralph Campbell, CTC board member and community forestry division supervisor of the Colorado State Forest Service; Donna Davis, CTC state poster contest coordinator; and family, teacher and friends attended the ceremony and accompanied Lackey on a tour of the Capitol.

In addition, as the teacher of the winning student, Reinert received educational prizes from Toyota, the National Arbor Day Foundation and the Colorado Tree Coalition. Winning students and teachers of all 54 schools also received books, tree cards and bookmarks from the Colorado Tree Coalition and National Arbor Day Foundation.

To view Lackey's winning poster, visit the Colorado Tree Coalition website at www.coloradotrees.org.



The Lackey Family with Senator Steve Ward and Representative Joe Rice at the Colorado State Capital.

Communities (number of schools) that participated in the 2008 National Arbor Day Poster Contest:

Aurora, Bethune, Brighton (2), Burlington, Campo, Castle Rock, Colorado Springs, Crested Butte, Denver (17), Evans, Fraser, Fruita, Granby, Hayden, Henderson, Highlands Ranch, Kremmling (2), Lamar (3), Littleton (2), Loma, Loveland, Mead, Moffat, Parachute, Platteville, Pueblo, Rocky Ford, Salida, Swink, Thornton, Walden, Windsor.

A special thank you to all who helped with this educational event:

Debbie Alpe, Wendy Ball, Neal Bamesberger, Kyle Bartolo, Ralph Campbell, Jan Carroll, Jen Chase,

Max Cordova, Shawna Crocker, Don & Torrey Davis, Kristin Drye, Jane Felter, David Flaige, Pearl Gittman, Brian Green, Scott Grimes, Jan Hackett, Phil & Marcia Hoefler, Theresa Holst, Jennifer Hrobar, Jeff Jahnke, Charlene Kellogg, Paige Lewis, Todd Marts & Allison Plute, Edna Pelzmann, Kathy Rediske, Gaylene Rossiter, Doug Schoch, Karen Scopel, Michelle Scribner, Linda Senior, Judy Serby, Caroline Smith, Michael Swanson, Ali Sweeney, Kyle Sylvester, Katherine Timm, Vince Urbina, Wanda & Alex Valencia, Shelly Van Landingham, Becky Wegner, Tom Wells, Teradette Wilson, Keith Wood, and all the poster contest judges throughout the years.

Also, thank you to all the teachers, principals and fifth-graders who support and are inspired by our TREES. And, a special thank you to the 2008 winning teachers and parents — Jill Day, Devon Reinert, and Richard and Paige Lackey.

In Closing...

We would like to thank our many customers and cooperators. It is a pleasure to serve and work with you. If you have questions or need assistance with forestry-related issues, please contact us.

Donna Davis – District Forester
Shelly Van Landingham – Assistant District Forester
Teradette Wilson – Administrative Assistant

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