



Promoting the Wise Use
of all Natural Resources



Douglas Creek Board

- President : Bill Hume
- V. President : Rosaly Coombs
- Sec./Treasurer : Scott Robertson
- Supervisor : Ron Reich
- Supervisor : Jason Plummer

White River Board

- President : Marc Etchart
- V. President : Chris Collins
- Sec./Treasurer : Bill Lake
- Supervisor : Neil Brennan

Staff Contacts

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Inside this issue:

DC Annual Mtg	1
Job Announcement	1
Annual Plan of Work Activities	2-4
Water Project Funding	5
NRCS Update	5
Board meeting Information	6
Sales and Rental Information	6



You're Invited!

Douglas Creek Conservation District Annual Meeting
February 12, 2022

CNCC Weiss Room
500 Kennedy Dr.
Rangely, CO 81648

5:30 p.m. Social Hour | 6:00 p.m. Dinner

Topics:

- Wolf Creek Reservoir Update
- Piceance East Douglas Herd Management Area Rangeland Monitoring Project Results
- Douglas Creek Conservation District Activity Update
- Partner Updates

Please RSVP by February 4th, 2022
whiterivercd@gmail.com or 970-878-9838

Job Announcement

District Conservation Technician

The Conservation Districts are seeking a self-motivated, results oriented individual for the District Conservation Technician position located in Meeker, CO. The District Conservation Technician (DCT) is a 32 – 40 hour per week, grant funded position. Preference will be given to Rio Blanco County residents.

This person will aid in conservation planning, working with landowners, groups, and units of government to apply and maintain a variety of conservation practices with an

emphasis on water management and rangeland health. This person will assist the Conservation Districts and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in facilitating the development and implementation of resource management system plans by facilitating communications, coordination, and providing technical assistance.

See www.whiterivercd.com for job description, requirements, and more information. Contact Exec. Director, Callie Hendrickson, at 970-878-9838 with any questions. Position is open until filled.

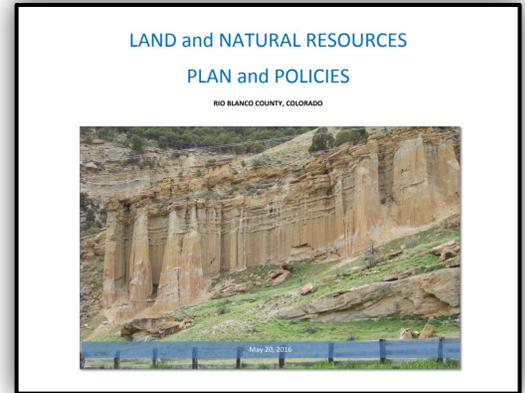
Please submit your resume and cover letter to callie.districts@gmail.com by 5:00 p.m. February 18, 2021

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK ACTIVITIES

#1 RBC Land and Natural Resource Plan and Policies (LUP):

The Rio Blanco County (RBC) Land and Natural Resource Plan and Policies (LUP) was developed in 2016 with extensive public input. It contains background and policy statements regarding multiple uses of public lands. The Districts utilize the LUP when working with governmental agencies to influence their decisions regarding the use of natural resources.

- ◆ The District and County are in the process of updating the LUP. It will be out for public comment in March. Notice will be provided in the newspaper, email, and on the District's website.
- ◆ District staff have engaged in the Greater Sage Grouse Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) discussions and will be a cooperating agency throughout this process. The District staff have joined several calls with BLM to ensure a strong local voice.
- ◆ Staff continue to participate in weekly BLM National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) meetings.
- ◆ Staff participate in monthly National Association of Conservation Districts Federal Lands Resource Committee meetings.
- ◆ Douglas Creek CD board member, Scott Robertson, serves on the BLM Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). Callie Hendrickson has submitted an application for a second term on the RAC and is waiting to hear confirmation.
- ◆ District staff work closely with the multiple organizations such as Colorado Farm Bureau (CFB), Club 20, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD), and the Colorado Cattlemen's Assoc. (CCA) on natural resource and policy issues. Policies in the LUP are used to provide input on policy issues and positions.
- ◆ Many of the priorities and activities written in this newsletter are the result of the LUP and/or utilize LUP policies to guide the activity.



#2 Rangeland Health:

- Through a financial assistance agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Districts have two ongoing projects to improve Rangeland Health.
 1. **Intense Range Monitoring:** Intense rangeland monitoring continues to be conducted on roughly 153,000 acres of primarily BLM lands in the Piceance East-Douglas Herd Management Area (PEDHMA) to determine the forage use by species. Troy Osborn of Osborn Industries (Districts' contractor) is conducting this monitoring and has set up new sites in the West Douglas area to monitor the rangeland recovery now that most of the horses have been removed. Troy presented at the White River CD's Annual Meeting on January 13th regarding his findings this year. By using three different data collection methods (clipping, Landscape Appearance Method (LAM), and camera points) they are able to collect powerful data which the BLM can use in their decision making processes. Troy presented graphs that show the number of horses and cattle that were documented by camera, other graphs depict the percent documented forage utilization and the BLM's acceptable utilization. Multiple locations have 100% utilization as of this fall in areas with heavy horse use. He also showed graphs of overall precipitation which has gradually increased and the amount of forage available continues to decline. This will likely continue in the future without removal of excess horses. This work is expected to continue in 2022 and beyond pending BLM funding agreement.
 2. **Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP):** The District has several completed CRMPs with public land permittees that are providing for conservation work across landownership. The Districts have applied for grant funding and are working with partners to implement identified vegetation treatment and water improvement projects.
- Staff met with the BLM State Director, Jamie Connell, and requested BLM conduct the Piceance gather in 2022 and assured her that they would have District support in doing so. This support would include the details of the District range monitoring program in the HMA. The PEDHMA is on the national BLM gather schedule for September 2022. BLM plans to gather approximately 1,000 head of excess horses.

For more information on Rangeland Health, please see the [Rangeland Health page](http://www.whiterivercd.com) on the Districts' website at www.whiterivercd.com.

#3 Water:

1) White River Integrated Water Initiative (WR Initiative):

It has been a very productive year for the WR Initiative. The Riparian Health and Diversion Assessments are completed, and the Diversion Reports are in the hands of the water rights holders. A HUGE thank you to the Assessment Teams: Chris Collins, Walt Proctor, Ian Wilson, Forrest Nelson, Kari Brennan, Phil Brink, Bailey Franklin, David Graf, Mario Sullivan, Kendra Young, Matt Casto, Mary Taylor, Linda Masters, and John Leary. These individuals dedicated much of their summer and fall to conduct these assessments. Their expertise and dedication have allowed the WR Initiative to have high quality and practical information to present to the water rights holders and landowners.

The final stage of Phase II is under way. All the information learned in Phase II will be used in conjunction with the finalized Mission Statement and Goals to establish priorities for Phase III. The major topics covered in the Goals and Mission Statement are: Protecting water rights; protecting water quality and quantity through best management practices for forest health, riparian health, rangeland health, and favorable streamflow conditions; infrastructure improvement; and long-term storage. Once the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) prioritizes the next tasks to be included in the Phase III Scope of Work, the plan will be made available for public comments. The feedback from the public will be taken into consideration by the PAC for the final decision on the Phase III Scope of Work.



After the PAC recommends their priorities for the Phase III Scope of Work, the plan will be made available for public comments, advice, and suggestions. The feedback from the Public Input Meetings will be taken into consideration by the PAC for the final decision on the Phase III Scope of Work.

For more information on the WR Initiative, please see the [WR Initiative page](http://www.whiterivercd.com) on the Districts' website at www.whiterivercd.com.

2) White River Algae Study & Technical Advisory Group (TAG):

- The TAG has met approximately ten times over the last five years to identify the Scope of Work (SOW) for this project and to hear updates from USGS on the progress of the study.
- From the beginning of this process, it has been important to the local communities, Districts, and TAG that the reports created by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) were ground-truthed to ensure the data and analysis reflects the reality on the ground.
 - In December 2021, the TAG met with USGS and reviewed the *Characterization of Streamflow and Nutrient Occurrence in The Upper White River Basin, Colorado, 1980-2020* report which describes historical streamflow and water quality characteristics. This meeting allowed the TAG to ask questions and ground truth the report. The *Investigation of Factors Controlling Benthic Algae in The Upper White River Watershed, Colorado, 2018-21* report was delivered to the TAG during the week of December 20th.
 - The TAG will meet several times in January/February 2022 to consider the data and analysis along with local knowledge to ground truth the report
 - The final USGS Algae Study reports are expected to be ran through all USGS quality control processes and be completed by June 2022.



For more information on the Study, please see the [Algae Study page](http://www.whiterivercd.com) on the Districts' website at www.whiterivercd.com.

- ## 3) Yampa-White-Green Basin Round Table (BRT): WRCD Board member, Chris Collins, was elected to serve as a member at-large on the BRT during the November meeting. District Executive Director, Callie Hendrickson, continues to serve on the BRT as the House-Senate appointee. For more information, please visit www.yampawhitegreen.com.

#4 Wildlife:

- **Wolf Introduction:** The Districts are committed to working closely with members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to help inform the Wolf Management Plan.
 - ◆ Staff attended the Stakeholder's Advisory Group (SAG) meeting in Glenwood Springs in October and provided public testimony. Staff has worked to keep constituents engaged in the issue and encouraged them to provide written comments to the SAG and CPW Wildlife Commission members.
 - ◆ The District board members and staff frequently communicate with SAG members to stay engaged in the process.
 - ◆ The Districts submitted a wolf introduction plan resolution to the Colorado Assn. of Conservation Districts (CACD) that provided specific talking points to help ensure the wolf plan will do the least damage to our rural communities as possible. The resolution passed and is now policy of CACD.

IN OTHER NEWS...

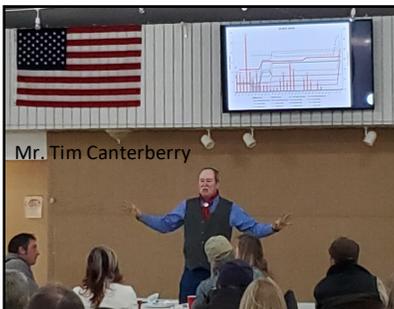
- ◆ Board members attended the CO Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) committee meetings (virtually) to ensure our communities' natural resource interests are represented. Both Districts had a voting member participate in the business meeting where all the policies are finalized.
- ◆ *** Marc Etchart received the Supervisor of the Year Award from the CO State Association of Conservation Districts!***



WRCD Annual Meeting Review:

The White River Conservation District held their annual meeting on January 13th where about 65 landowners and attendees heard results from Osborn Industries on the Rangeland Monitoring project in the Piceance East Douglas Herd Management Area (PEDHMA), a presentation from Mr. Tim Canterbury about the importance of range monitoring, and updates from the NRCS and District.

Osborn Industries presented a brief overview of Rangeland Monitoring in the PEDHMA. See page 2 of this newsletter for more detail. A final report will be completed this spring 2022.



Tim Canterbury shared his unnerving experience he had in a lawsuit involving Western Watersheds, a group who oppose public lands grazing. He shared how his methods and reasoning for rangeland monitoring on his operation defeated Western Watersheds. He strongly encouraged landowners to do the same on theirs, not only for the benefit of the land and their operation, but also protecting their interests from anti-grazing groups like Western Watersheds. He offered to assist any landowner who would like to learn more or get assistance on how to set up a range monitoring program on your own operation. Please contact the Districts' office for more information.

The District shared updates on our ongoing projects (as written in this newsletter). Nakayla Lestina, NRCS District Conservationist shared dates for upcoming program deadlines (see page 5).



From the Division 6 Division of Water Resources Office:

Effective December 28, 2021, the Division 6 Steamboat Office has moved from its longtime office space at 505 Anglers Drive to 925 Weiss Drive. We will be co-located with the United States Forest Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Our new office is under construction so, for the time being, all employees are working remotely. We welcome meeting you by appointment, so please feel free to contact us. Once our new space is open for business, office hours will be Tuesday and Thursday between 10:00 and 3:00 or by appointment. We look forward to welcoming you there! For more information visit www.dwr.colorado.gov

Funding for Stock Watering Maintenance and Improvements Available!

The Districts are offering a stipend to landowners/permittees within the Conservation Districts to maintain and/or improve livestock watering facilities (including ponds), during this extended drought period. Landowners/permittees are eligible to apply for up to four projects.

Applications for this funding are a short two-page document. Completed applications will be approved on a first come, first served, basis pending funding availability that has been secured through grants. The respective district board will review and make the final decisions on application approval at monthly board meetings.

To apply for this funding assistance, please contact the Districts' office at 970-878-9838. Applications are due by April 1, 2022.



Update From Nakayla Lestina, District conservationist

Program/Conservation Planning Updates:

- February 25 – ACEP Round 2 Application & Eligibility Deadline
- March 18 – EQIP & CSP Assessment and Ranking Deadline
- March 30 – EQIP & CSP Preapprovals Complete
- May 6 – EQIP & CSP QAR Submitted
- June 17 – EQIP & CSP Obligation Deadline
- June 30 – ACEP Round 1 & 2 Obligation Deadline
- June thru September – Contract implementation and new plan developments

For individuals who are interested in new projects, please contact the Meeker NRCS office at 970-878-5628 and we can add you to our technical request list. We are operating on a first come, first serve basis and as we work through our request list, we will reach out to you to schedule a field visit to further discuss your resource concerns and goals to develop a conservation plan. Developing a conservation plan prior to submitting program applications, allows for us to ensure that we are fully addressing your concerns and have looked at all alternatives potentially available to you.

Staffing:

We currently have vacant positions and in the process of advertising.

Local Work Group Meetings:

Information for Local Work Group meetings/surveys will assist the local conservation districts and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in determining program and outreach focus for FY2023. Please click on the link below or visit the Districts' website to participate in the survey.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=5zZb7e4BvE6GfuA8-g1GI5DXybtngfRGsbl03QNLaf9UOENHNEhFU1NWNzU1WUE4TExOTzNQUEhGTC4u>

Douglas Creek and White River
 Conservation Districts
 351 7th Street
 PO Box 837
 Meeker, CO 81641



<p><u>Office Hours and COVID-19 Restrictions</u></p> <p>The Conservation Districts and the NRCS Office are available for service to the landowners by appointment. Please call 970-693-3012 (NRCS) or 970-878-9838 (District) before coming to the offices. Thank you for your patience.</p>	<p>The Districts offer numerous conservation-related products for sale and rent including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock water tire tanks • Seedling Trees • No-till drill • Broadcast- seeder • PAM • Weed Sprayer • Pipe Fusion Machine
<p>District Board Meetings *Check the websites for any changes to meeting dates</p> <p>Douglas Creek Conservation District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Tuesday of the Month at 6:00 p.m. • 2253 E. Main Street, Rangely, CO 81648 <p>White River Conservation District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Thursday of the Month at 1:00 p.m. December—February and 5:00 p.m. March—November • 351 7th St., Meeker, CO 81641 	<p>If you are interested in purchasing or renting, please contact the Office or visit the Sales & Rentals tab of the Districts' web-site.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>District Contact Information</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">970-878-9838</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WhiteRiverCD@gmail.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.DouglasCreekCD.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.WhiteRiverCD.com</p>