



Promoting the wise use of all natural resources

Douglas Creek Board:

Pres: Bill Hume
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 Supv: Ron Reich

White River Board:

Pres: Marc Etchart
 V. Pres: Chris Collins
 Sec./Treas: Bill Lake
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 Supv: Janelle Urista

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Douglas Creek Conservation District Election Results:

The Douglas Creek Conservation District (DCCD) would like to thank all the landowners who participated in the May 5th mill levy election. The DCCD Board expresses their appreciation for voters who took time to consider the ballot question and are pleased with the 53% voter turnout which speaks volumes about rural landowners' engagement in the election process. Following a recount of votes on Monday, May 11, 2020, the final result is 62 votes in favor and 64 votes opposed to the increase in the mill levy for the District.

While the District Board is disappointed in the outcome, we respect the wishes of the majority of voters. DCCD Board President, Bill Hume, says; "The Board will reevaluate future options and do our best to continue protecting the Rio Blanco County's economy through promoting agriculture best management practices, the wise use of natural resources, and multiple use of public lands."

DCCD will continue to work closely with the White River Conservation Districts (WRCD) and Rio Blanco County. The two Districts share staff and expenses to be as effective and efficient as possible with DCCD paying ten percent of the shared expenses due to the minimal mill levy income of \$6,000.



2019 Douglas Creek CD Annual Meeting

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With the WRCD and County's support, the District will continue to:

- 1) implement the *Rio Blanco Land and Natural Resourced Plan and Policies* which was developed through a local public process and is used to guide public land use planning for multiple use of the public lands;
- 2) facilitate the Integrated Water Management Planning (IWMP) process as directed by the local community;
- 3) facilitate Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP) for grazing permittees to implement brush management, water distribution, fencing, etc.;
- 4) support landowners in working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement conservation practices;
- 5) engage in water management discussions supporting water right holders;
- 6) provide natural resource information and education.

The DCCD Board is grateful for the cooperation and support from the WRCD and Rio Blanco County. Without it, there would be little representation from the west end of the County in the multitude of activities the Districts are currently involved in and leading.

The Board thanks the landowners for their support and understand these are unprecedented times. We encourage landowners to engage in the above-mentioned District activities and to contact board members or the office with any questions or suggestions.

Office Hours & COVID-19 Restrictions

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Meeker USDA office is open by appointment only. Please know the Conservation Districts and NRCS offices are open and available for service to the landowners, but out of respect for you and our staff, please call before entering the offices. 970-878-5628

Thank you for your patience!

Conservation District's Project Involvements

White River Water Management Planning Process:



Information gathered from interviews was used to develop a starting point for supplementary input to be gathered through public input sessions held throughout the County.

The Districts are working with a 16-member Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to determine the interest of the Rio Blanco Community in developing an Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP). We have gathered input from approximately 75 individuals from within the County through interviews, public meetings, and website input forms. We anticipate having a draft Scope of Work (SOW) out for the public to review again in June. The Districts and the PAC want this to be a grass roots effort so please look for another newsletter in the near future that will provide much greater detail and will request greater input from Rio Blanco residents.

Please visit www.whiterivercd.com and click on the White River Planning Advisory Committee tab to review the report; find updated project information, meeting information and notes.

White River Algae Study: The Districts are excited to be in the third and final year of the White River Algae Study and looking forward to the final analysis and report in 2021. We are happy to report the Districts were successful in securing state and federal funding for all the work to be done in 2020. Therefore, no local funding was needed this year. This was made possible by all the support and local funding provided over the past two years.

The initial Scope of Work (SOW) is on schedule. Two additional tasks have been added to the 2020 SOW which will reinforce the final analysis:

1. Supplement the 2020 Algae samples (collected July-August) with taxonomic identifications.
2. Supplement streamflow measurements in the North and South Forks during peak runoff.

Additionally, we are working with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to finalize analysis of their data collections and reporting on their findings to be published and included in the final United States Geological Survey (USGS) analysis and report.

Edge of Field Study: The Districts are in conversations with the Colorado State University (CSU) Ag. Water Quality program to potentially conduct these studies in Rio Blanco County. They work with ag producers across Colorado on a voluntary basis to install monitoring stations next to rivers and streams where ground water and surface water runoff can be tested for total nitrogen and total phosphorous.



Algae covered rock from the White River at Sleepy Cat (photo credit: CPW)

Please visit www.whiterivercd.com and click on the White River Algae Study tab for more information.

Rangeland Restoration & Monitoring Projects:

The Districts continue a financial assistance agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) which provides the opportunity to work with landowners/permittees and agencies to improve rangeland health within Rio Blanco County.

◇ **Range Monitoring & Weed Spraying:** This ongoing project focuses on the development and implementation of a comprehensive range monitoring program, primarily within the Piceance East Douglas Herd Management Area (PEDHMA).

⇒ This data collection will help determine what species are using the forage at what time of the year. Additionally, we are conducting mapping and spraying of noxious weeds within the PEDHMA. Over 200,000 acres are included in the project.

◇ **Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP):** A CRMP combines efforts and resources from the Districts, private landowners, BLM and partners (State and Federal Agencies and Non Government Organizations) who are interested in achieving common goals to improve the land and water resources.



Water distribution is a common project within a CRMP. Rubber tire tanks are available for sale through the Districts.

⇒ Once the projects are identified in a final CRMP, the federal land management agencies will begin the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process so the projects can be “shovel ready” when funding becomes available.

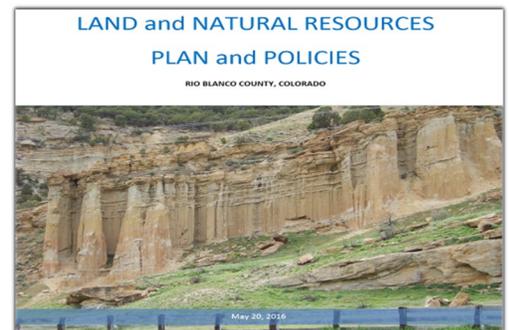
⇒ Partners commit to seek funding opportunities

⇒ ***If you are a BLM or Forest Service permittee and interested in signing up for this program, please contact the District office.***

The Land and Natural Resources Plan and Policies Working for Rio Blanco County Citizens:

The Districts continue to utilize the Land and Natural Resources Plan and Policies (Plan) to provide input on federal land management agencies’ planning processes. District staff participate in BLM National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) meetings on a weekly basis. In 2020, written comments have been submitted quoting policies from the Plan on the following issues:

- National BLM **Grazing Regulations**
- U.S. Forest Service Yellow Jacket **Timber Harvest Project**
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**
- Northwest Colorado Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for **Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation**
- Multiple letters and requests for **removal of excess horses** from Rio Blanco County



Please contact the office for copies of these comments or with any questions.

Districts’ Website & Info to be found:

If you have not already visited the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts’ website at www.whiterivercd.com we hope you will in the near future.

There is a wealth of information on various resource issues available as well as the Rio Blanco County Land and Natural Resource Plan and Policy book that is used in providing comments on federal land management agencies’ planning efforts.

Within the website, you will find pages dedicated to the White River Algae Study and White River Planning Advisory Committee as well as CO water law, tree sales, tire sales, drill rental, rangeland health, forest health, water quality and quantity, conservation education, etc.

Partner Updates

Notice to Water Users from the Division of Water Resources

By: Shanna Lewis

At the Division of Water Resources, we continually work to balance our available staff and your needs. While we acknowledge the importance of the Deputy Water Commissioner in the White River basin, we will not be filling the position at this time. This means there will only be one water commissioner for the entire basin, Shanna Lewis. Shanna is requesting the help of water users and strongly encourages them to maintain and submit their water use records to her. The information needed includes:

- Dates ditches/pumps were turned on and off
- It is also helpful to include dates and measurements of when water volume was turned up or down
⇒ Example - when you change from a small flow for livestock to a larger flow for irrigation
- IF your structure is a ditch or pump equipped with a measuring device, such as a parshall flume, please include the flow measurement with the date
⇒ Flow measurements can be reported in cubic feet per second (cfs), staff gage readings, or both
- IF your structure is a pump equipped with a flow meter, please provide the instantaneous flow reading when it is turned on and the totalizing volumetric reading. Please also provide the volumetric reading when it is turned off.
- IF your ditch or pump is not equipped with a measuring device, please provide an estimate in cubic feet per second (cfs) of the amount of water diverted. Please do not provide the amount of your water right, in that this will not be accepted as a record.
- Please specify the use of the water (irrigation, livestock, etc.)

Water users can submit this information to Shanna at any time with a final deadline being **November 15, 2020**. You can text, call, email, or mail this information to her. Thank you in advance for your help! Please don't hesitate to contact Shanna with any questions you might have.

Shanna Lewis, Lead Water Commissioner, Water District 43

PO Box 1388

Meeker, CO 81641

Phone: 970-439-8008

Email: shanna.lewis@state.co.us

If the State does not have record of your water usage, your water right could be in jeopardy.

For more information and to find a form to document your water usage, visit the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts' web site at www.WhiteRiverCD.com and click on the "Water" tab

New Resource Conservationist:

NRCS is pleased to introduce Nakayla Lestina as the Resource Conservationist in the Meeker field office. She has been on the job for about 7 months and has had the opportunity to introduce herself personally to a few of you.

Nakayla is originally from Dove Creek, CO down in the Southwest corner of the state. Growing up, she spent much of her time outdoors enjoying nature with her family on camping, hiking, fishing, and skiing trips. The love for the outdoors has remained a large part of her life as she went off to college at Colorado State University (CSU) receiving a B.S. Rangeland Ecology degree. As she attended CSU, she worked with NRCS during the summer in multiple field offices across the state.

After graduating, she worked in Sterling for 2½ years as the Rangeland Management Specialist. She welcomed the opportunity to return to the Western Slope after spending 7½ years on the Front Range and Eastern Plains and has enjoyed her time here thus far.



New District Conservation Technician:

The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts are excited to welcome Kendra Young as the Conservation District Technician (DCT). The DCT position is a grant funded partnership position between the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Conservation Districts. Kendra will be assisting the District with education and outreach and providing land owner assistance through NRCS Programs. She was born and raised on a cattle ranch on the south side of Douglas Pass as a little girl, then lived in central Utah raising sheep and meat goats. She raised and competed with show goats along with selling show animals to others. She was active in FFA, 4-H, Utah Wool Growers, Youth Community Council, and even high school pep band and band council. Kendra served as an officer in many of these programs and competed at the state 4-H and national FFA levels.



Kendra holds a Bachelor of Science in wildlife biology with a minor in “normal” biology from the University of Montana as well as an Associate of Science degree with an emphasis in range and natural resources from Snow College in Utah. She was involved with numerous volunteer and club activities including working with the Fish and Game department, ag club, natural resources club, the Wildlife Society, even the criminology club and graduating from the Student Law Enforcement Academy.

Kendra started her work career with seasonal jobs as a range technician with the Bureau of Land Management and had the opportunity to work with wildlife, fire, oil and gas, archeology, paleontology, hydrology, recreation, agriculture, and soils. Most recently, Kendra worked as an agriculture science research technician-animal section under the USDA’s Agriculture Research Service at the US Sheep Experiment Station in eastern Idaho.

Kendra says, “I am very excited to be back in Colorado and especially Meeker working with the NRCS, the Conservation Districts, and especially the landowners. Having been on both sides of this spectrum, I understand both the private and governmental obligations to run a successful operation. I can hardly wait to see what the future brings!”

NRCS Update By: Kendall Smith

Since March 23rd the Meeker, CO NRCS field office has been working under the Level-2 Emergency Response Protocol. This requires our office doors to remain locked and have a reduced office presence. We are still working to implement current projects and develop new ones. Our NRCS financial assistance funding opportunities have been allocated to similar values as the previous fiscal year. Fiscal year 2020 application deadlines have passed for EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), CSP-Renewals (Conservation Stewardship Program), CSP-Classic, ACEP-WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement), and first and second sign-up deadline for ACEP-ALE (Agriculture Land Easement). For fiscal year 2020 we had 8 applicants for EQIP, 8 for CSP-Renewal, and 2 for ACEP-ALE. We are currently working to address 20 active technical requests that may later turn into financial assistance projects. For landowners/managers interested in future conservation activities, please contact NRCS to begin the planning process. Plans will then be tied to eligible financial assistance programs for implementation the next year.

Furthermore, our snowpack is quickly diminishing. Here are the current figures here locally.

- Ripple Creek- depth 32”, water equivalent 16”, 95% of avg.
- Bison Lake- depth 33”, water equivalent 14.7”, 66% of avg.
- Burro Mountain- depth 0”, water equivalent 0”, 0% of avg.

Please continue to call 970-878-5628 ex.3 for interest in working with NRCS and the local conservation districts to plan and implement projects to address your resource concerns.

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



District Board Meetings:

Douglas Creek Conservation District

First Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm
2252 E. Main St, Rangely, CO 81648

White River Conservation District

Third Monday of the month at 6:00pm
351 7th Street, Meeker, CO 81641



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@WhiteRiverConservation

NO-TILL SEED DRILL RENTAL PROGRAM

The Districts have a Truax FLXII 812 Grass Drill available for rent at \$7.50/acre. Call the Districts' office for more information and to be added to the wait list.

RUBBER TIRE TANKS FOR SALE

The District sells recycled large equipment tires to be used as livestock and wildlife water troughs. These troughs are approved by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service for use in cost share projects.

8' and 12' diameter tires with the tops already cut out and ready for installation.

Please call the District Office for more information and availability.

970-878-9838

RANGELAND MONITORING WORKSHOP

Date:	Tues. July 7, 2020
Time:	8:30a – 3:30p
Location:	TBD

The Districts and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are partnering to provide you a great opportunity to learn/review common rangeland monitoring techniques and plant identification.

This will be extremely helpful as the BLM implements a more flexible grazing rotation program, allowing permittees to implement best management practices (BMP) and improve range health.

Watch for more info in the Rio Blanco Herald Times!

