



RANGE RIDER

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Winter

Time to order native trees and shrubs



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The Gunnison Conservation District is entering their third year of partnership with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) nursery in order to provide low-cost native tree and shrub seedlings.

The plants come from the CSFS nursery in Fort Collins. There a skilled staff of state employees grow out trees like aspen, blue spruce and Douglas Fir, along with shrubs like mountain mahogany and serviceberry, and select native grass species. In addition, there are also some seedling native flowering plants such as penstemon, coneflower, blanket flower, columbine, bergamot, and black-eyed Susan.

In recent years, the nursery has helped Gunnison Valley land managers fight back against invasive species and ecosystem degradation by growing sagebrush collected in the Gunnison Valley. These local varieties tend to grow better in the Gunnison Valley's unique climate and soils. They help to preserve our valley's unique genetics, too.

The District will begin accepting seedling orders in November. Information about what plants are available and how to order will be posted to the Gunnison Conservation District website in early November (<https://www.gunnisonconservationdistrict.info/>). Although you may place orders later, it's best to get your order in early as there is limited inventory for many species and they can sell out quickly.

The goal of the seedling program is to provide trees for conservation. As a public service, the District will offer plants for sale at the lowest possible price. We look forward to helping Gunnison Valley residents beautify their landscapes with seeds and now seedlings, too!

Updates to the GCD Staff and Board

The Gunnison Conservation District recently hired a new District Manager, Caroline Czenkusch. You may already know Caroline from her working in the front office at Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Former District Manager Hannah Schaefer Tibbett departed the Gunnison Conservation District in mid-October to work for Coldharbour Institute.

Czenkusch joins District Conservation Technician Aleshia Rummel. Rummel has been with the Gunnison Conservation District for three years now, and looks forward to working with local producers on a variety of projects.

Local rancher Hannah Cranor recently also joined the Gunnison Conservation District's Board of Supervisors. Cranor has been active with the Gunnison County Stockgrowers Association, and often has a column in the Gunnison Times about ranching.

Meet Hannah Cranor

Hi, my name is Hannah Cranor. For those of you that don't know me, I am a third-generation cattle rancher – born and raised in Gunnison. Following my graduation from high school, I attended the University of Wyoming in Laramie where I majored in Agricultural Business with an emphasis in Farm and Ranch Management. Following my graduation for UW, I returned to Gunnison to help my parents on our cattle ranch north of town.

I am passionate about promoting agriculture and bridging the gap between producer and consumer. I currently serve as the Vice-President of the Gunnison County Stockgrowers' Association, as well as an at-large member on the Gunnison County Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee.

I have completed my Beef Quality Assurance certificate, my Masters of Beef Advocacy certificate, and the Animal Ag Allies training with the Animal Ag Alliance. I also will receive my Certificate of Digital Marketing in March of this year from the University of Denver.

I am the owner and operator of a herd of registered Charolais cows, from which I sell bulls and replacement heifers. I currently work full time at the Gunnison County Fairgrounds, and I also specialize in digital marketing on the side. In my free time, I enjoy riding my horses, snowmobiling with my better half, Lane, and hanging out with our three dogs.

I look forward to serving on the Gunnison Conservation District Board, and I look forward to working with our partners in the community!

Meet Caroline Czenkusch

Caroline was born in Gunnison and raised in western Colorado. Elementary years were spent in the San Luis Valley, Junior High in Montrose and High School in Kremmling. She graduated from WSC (now WCU) in 2003 with a BA in Wildlife Biology/Ecology. She has been a Customer Service Representative at Colorado Parks and Wildlife here in Gunnison for the past three years and dispatches for the Crested Butte Ski Patrol.

She lives in the country with her dog Lukas Nelson Czenkusch and her cat Zeke Von Czenkusch. An avid gardener, most of her spare time is spent in her gardens. Or often found out in the woods, up in the mountains or out in the desert appreciating flowers, bugs, birds and wildlife.



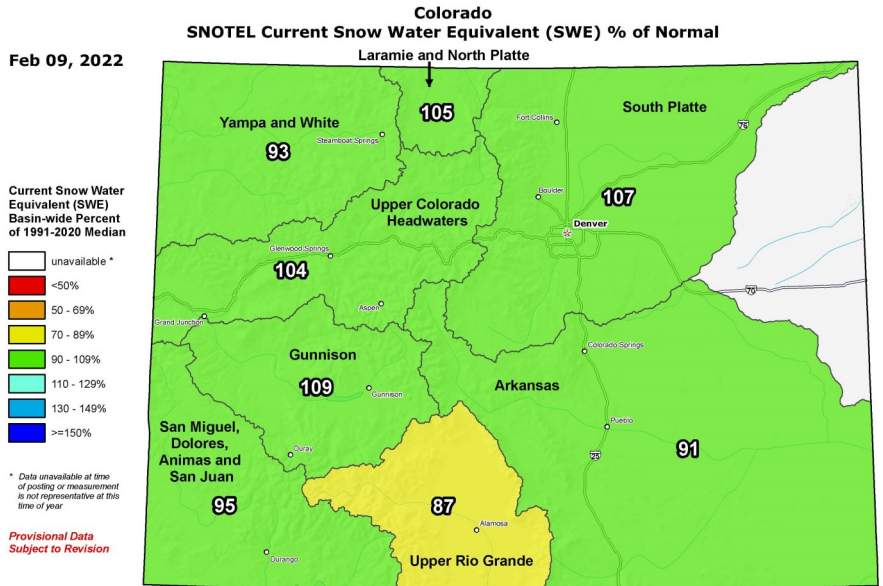
Snow Update

The map of Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) in each basin in Colorado can be found updated daily at https://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/ftpref/data/water/wcs/gis/maps/co_swepctnormal_update.pdf. As of January 25, the Gunnison Basin has declined to 124% of median for the SWE. The SWE graph for the Gunnison Basin can be found at

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/WCIS/AWS_PLOTS/basinCharts/POR/WTEQ/assocHUC6/140200_Gunnison.on.html. There is a new interactive map feature at

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/wcc/home/quicklinks/dataCharts/> if you click on the link for Snow Water Equivalent, where you can view

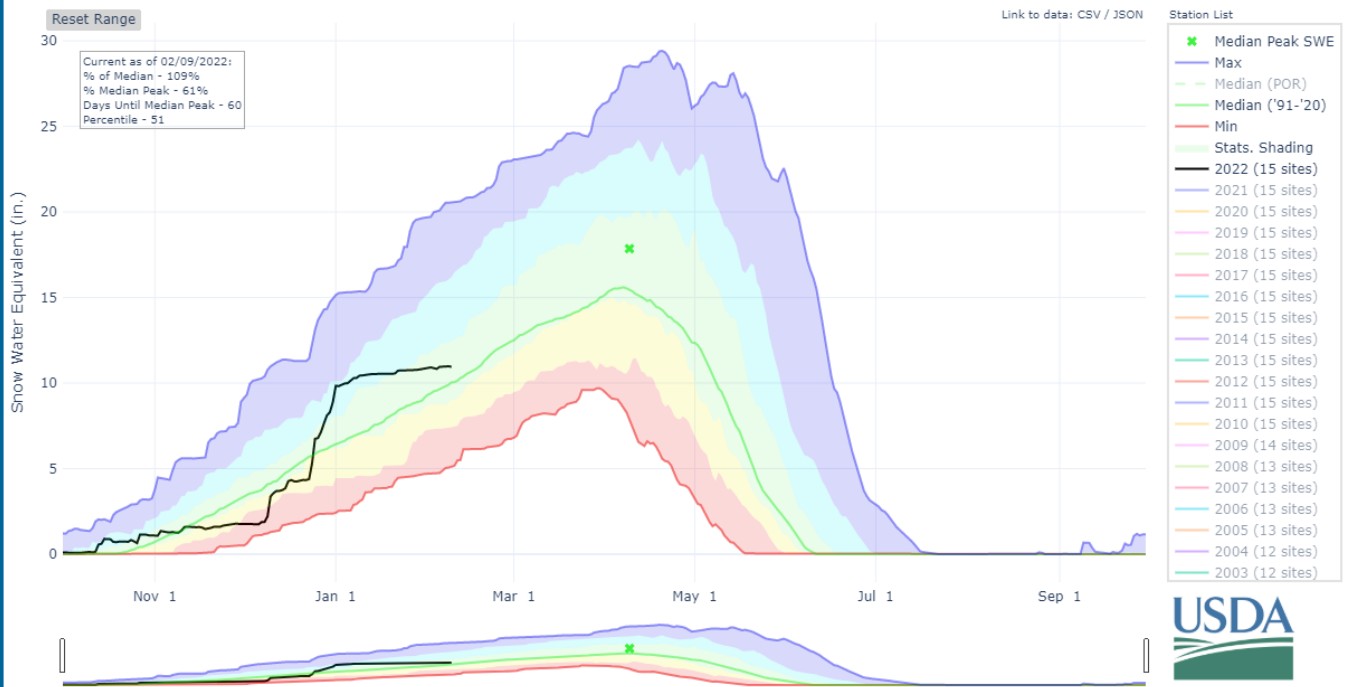
SWEs for basins or individual station sites. If you open the interactive map, you can select several map modes, including "Station Conditions", "Basin Conditions", or both. In the "Station Conditions" map mode, you can see that north of US Highway 50 within the Gunnison Basin, most of the stations are above 100% of the median SWE for the year, including Schofield Pass at 152% of median. The sites south of US Highway 50 in the Gunnison Basin are not faring as well and are all below 100% of median, including Cochetopa Pass at only 54% of median. Data is taken from February 9, 2022.



The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 0000).

Prepared by:
USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/wcc/home/>

SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT IN GUNNISON

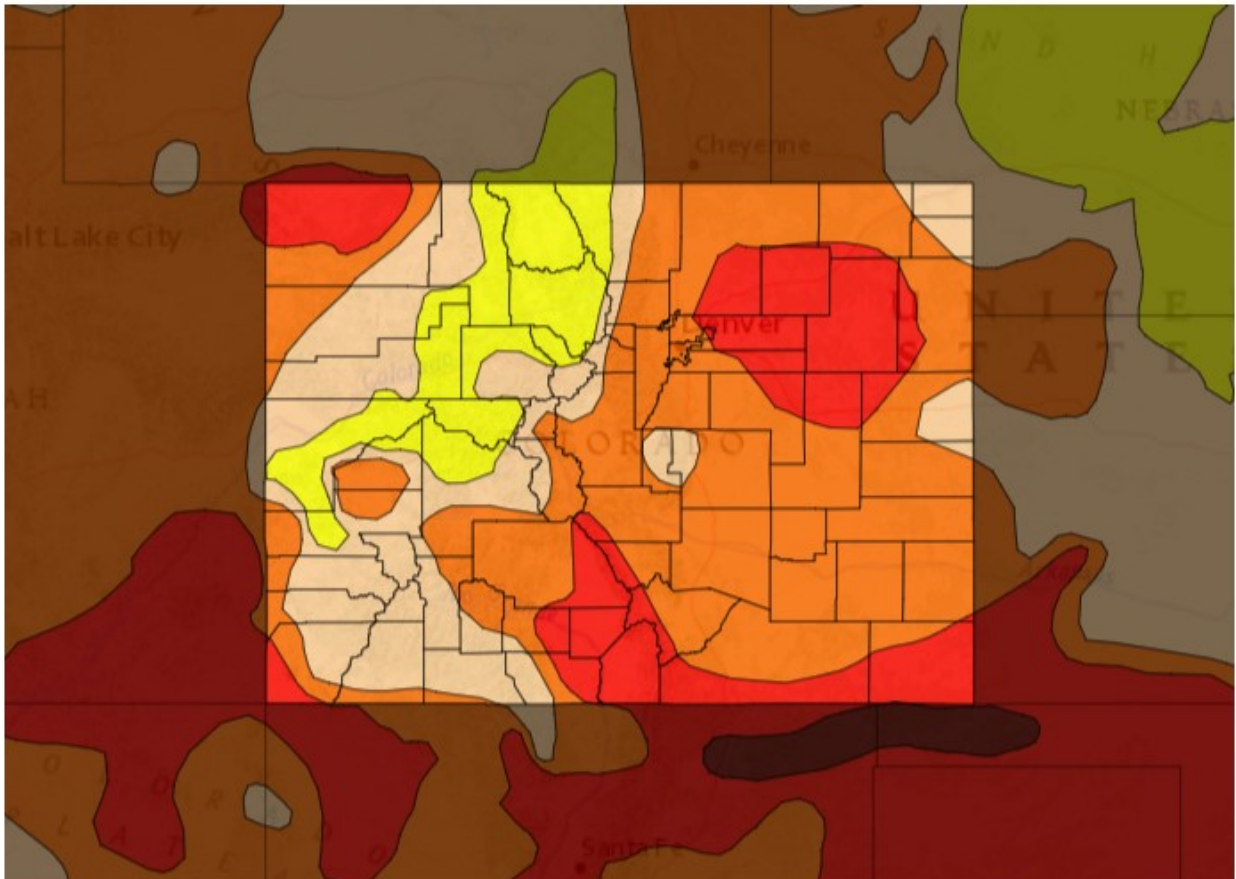


USDA Drought Monitor

The USDA Drought Monitor can be found weekly at <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/> and a Colorado map can be found at <https://www.drought.gov/states/colorado>. The U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) is updated each Thursday to show location and intensity of drought across the country. This map shows drought conditions across Colorado using a five-category system, from Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions to Exceptional Drought (D4). The USDM is a joint effort of the National Drought Mitigation Center, USDA, and NOAA.

Southern portions of Gunnison County are in D2 (Severe Drought) which indicates farmers reduce planting and producers sell cattle. The fire season is extended, and snowpack, surface water levels, and river flow is low. After the December snow we received, the northern portion of Gunnison County is in D0 (Abnormally Dry) which indicates that hay production is decreased and rangeland is dry. The rest of Gunnison County is in D1 (Moderate Drought). This indicates rangeland growth is stunted and very little hay is available. Dryland crops suffer and wildfires increase.

Current U.S. Drought Monitor Conditions for Colorado: Current



Basemap Sources: National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA,

U.S. Drought Monitor for CO

INCREMENT P



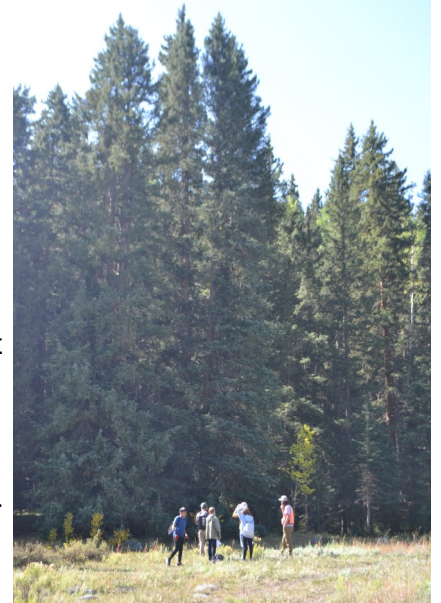
Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA
Updates Weekly - 02/01/22

Drought.gov

Mill Creek Youth Summit

Sunny skies, crisp air, and leaves starting to turn gold provided a great setting for the eager students and passionate partners for the 2021 Mill Creek Youth Summit. About 90 Gunnison Middle School students ran up Mill Creek Road to spend Friday, Sept. 17 with staff from nearly all Gunnison Valley land management agencies, as well as a hardworking bunch of Western Colorado University Recreation and Outdoor Education students. In 2020 the Youth Summit was hosted on the Gunnison Middle School campus given COVID-19 precautions, and everyone was excited to be back at Mill Creek in 2021.

The Gunnison Conservation District is grateful to our friends at the following agencies who participated: Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Gunnison Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service Gunnison Ranger District, Colorado State Forest Service, the National Resources Conservation Service. Our thanks also goes out to Western Colorado University staff and students. Most of all, thank you to Gunnison Middle School students and staff for their enthusiasm and leadership.

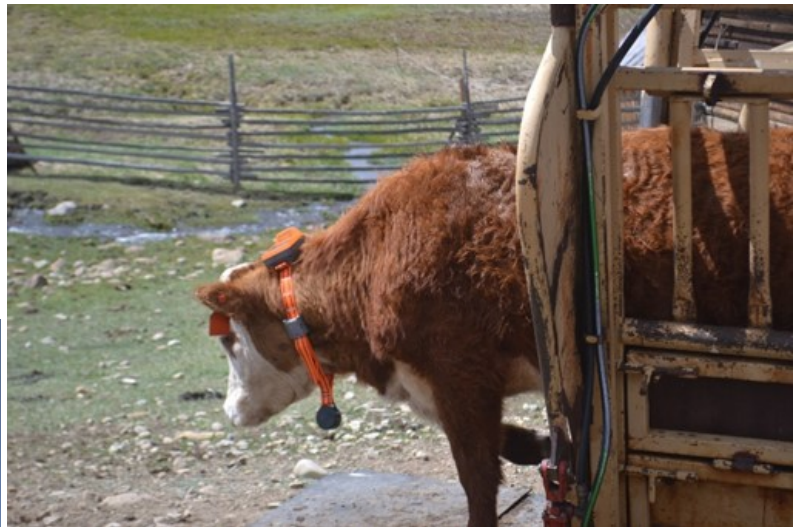


Virtual Fence Project Update

Virtual fencing systems allow cattle to be confined or moved to different areas without using physical fencing. A rancher can enter paddock boundaries into an online interface, from their computer or smart device. The fence coordinates get sent to a base station. The base station then sends the coordinates and boundary information to neckbands on the cattle, which are enabled with GPS technology. When a cow approaches the virtual boundary they will hear an audible tone. If they continue moving forward, they will receive an electrical stimulus, which quickly teaches cattle to turn around when they hear the audible tone and avoid crossing the virtual boundary.

As this technology becomes widely commercially available, it will be hugely beneficial for producers and land managers alike. It can reduce time a producer spends fixing and maintaining barb wire fence, building fence, or moving electric fence. Virtual fencing could be used to protect sensitive areas like riparian corridors, infrastructure, streambanks, or wet meadows for portions of the year when they are most sensitive to disturbance. This system can also be used to move cattle from one paddock to another within an allotment or large fenced area, which can more evenly distribute grazing pressure across the landscape while improving vegetation productivity. In addition, the GPS capabilities of the neckbands allow ranchers to monitor the locations of their cattle remotely, and can help them understand grazing utilization on different parts of their properties and allotments.

In 2021, the Gunnison Conservation District worked with a local ranch to host a trial for a virtual fencing system in association with Gallagher (formerly Agersens). We were able to test the equipment at two different sites over several months in the summer, and are looking forward to continuing working with Gallagher on this project.



Cheatgrass herbicide cost share eligibility

2022 Cheatgrass Treatment Program

Purpose of the program:

The Gunnison Conservation District has used grant funds from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) to purchase the herbicide Panoramic 2SL (generic Plateau), which will be given away for free to eligible landowners and land managers in the Gunnison Conservation District administrative boundaries on a first come first serve basis. Panoramic 2SL is a preemergent herbicide that will treat cheatgrass and other grasses and weeds (refer to herbicide label). Cheatgrass has been spreading throughout the Gunnison Basin, degrading wildlife habitat and cattle forage. The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are actively treating cheatgrass on public lands, and Gunnison County is actively treating cheatgrass in right-of-ways. The Gunnison Conservation District is providing Panoramic 2SL to private landowners as an incentive to treat cheatgrass on private land. This will help reduce the spread of cheatgrass and improve wildlife habitat and cattle forage throughout the Gunnison Basin.

To be eligible for the program:

1. You must be a landowner or land manager with property that falls within the boundaries of the Gunnison Conservation District, and you must provide proof of ownership or proof that you manage the land.
Your land must be used for agricultural production.
2. You **must** have cheatgrass (or other noxious weeds) that can and will be treated with the herbicide Panoramic 2SL on your land/the land you manage. Other noxious weeds can be treated with Panoramic 2SL (see label for recommendations).
3. You must own or manage at least 2.5 acres of land.
4. If you own or manage 2.5 acres, you are eligible for 1 quart of Panoramic 2SL. If you own or manage 11 acres, you are eligible for 1 gallon of Panoramic 2SL. If you own or manage 27.5 acres, you are eligible for 2.5 gallons of Panoramic 2SL. You may receive up to 3 gallons of Panoramic, at the District's discretion, depending on your acreage and the extent of the cheatgrass infestation on your land. You must be able to demonstrate the extent of your infestation if requesting multiple gallons of Panoramic 2SL.
5. You must provide the Gunnison Conservation District with photographs of the cheatgrass (and/or other noxious weeds) before treatment and optionally after treatment. If a post-treatment picture is provided, photographs may be shared with HPP. You must also provide the acreage of your property, as well as the acres treated and the date treated for reporting purposes.
 - Photographs of the "before" condition are a mandatory requirement to receive the free Panoramic 2SL.
 - Photographs after treatment are optional and should be received by December 31 and can be emailed or dropped off at the office (216 North Colorado Street).
 - If you cannot provide photos, a District employee will visit the site with the landowner and/or land manager to confirm the presence of noxious weeds.

Mapping the treatment location in EDDMapS West is encouraged.
6. The landowner and/or land manager is responsible for the correct application of Panoramic 2SL. Participants **MUST** follow all warnings and application instructions on the herbicide label.

Participants must discuss equipment calibration with the Gunnison County Weed Management Program to ensure effective application.



CHEATGRASS

Seeding Success



In 2019 Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) worked with a private landowner on a forest stand improvement project. There was a temporary road used for hauling operations in August 2019. That autumn, CSFS and the Gunnison Conservation District worked together to design a seed mix to restore the site after logging operations were complete. The CSFS sent a project update in August 2021 the site after recontouring the road and reseeding.

If you have any interest in forest assessments and improvement projects, contact the CSFS. Mike Tarantino, forester, can be reached at 970-641-6852 or mike.tarantino@colostate.edu, or Dylan Eimer, forester, can be reached at dylan.eimer@colostate.edu.



Photos are courtesy of Sam Pankratz.

Upper left: Before, August 2019

Bottom right: After recontouring and reseeding, August 2021

Gunnison Conservation District Board:

Jan Coury, President
Bill Ketterhagen, Vice President
Rufus Wilderson, Secretary/Treasurer
John Rozman
Dan Zadra
Brooke Vasquez
Hannah Cranor

Gunnison Conservation District Staff:

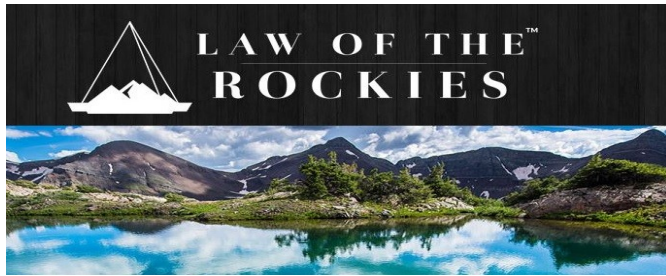
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