



RANGE RIDER

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Summer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Past District Events	2
Snow and Drought Updates	5
Cheatgrass Program	6
Staff	7

NEW INTERIM DISTRICT MANAGER

The Gunnison Conservation District wishes former District Manager Caroline Czenkusch good luck in her new full-time role at Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Caroline did an excellent job streamlining many administrative processes and keeping sales running smoothly.

In July, the GCD welcomed Suzie Bilberry as the interim District Manager (DM). After moving to the Olathe area from the San Luis Valley, Suzie started work for the Delta Conservation District as District Manager in 2015.

Her job duties at the Delta CD include writing and tracking grants for funding through the Colorado State Conservation Board, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, the US Bureau of Reclamation, the Colorado Ag Water Alliance, National Association of Conservation Districts, the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, NRCS, and several other State and Federal agencies. These grants support salinity piping projects, irrigation infrastructure, private landowners, ditch companies, and the Conservation District. Working through the District, she is also the project manager for a dam rehab project in the Eckert area.

Suzie and the Delta Conservation Board believe strongly in supporting conservation districts and look forward to working with the Gunnison Conservation District Board to achieve their goals. Suzie will be working for both the Gunnison and Delta Conservation Districts until a long-term District Manager can be found. Please keep an eye out for any upcoming job announcement and pass it along to anyone who may be interested in applying.

As we transition roles, please note that the GCD will not be ordering new herbicide for the remainder of 2023, but we will be selling what we have on hand (please check our website for herbicide availability). If you need any assistance with seed or herbicide sales, please reach out to the GCD's District Conservation Technician/Wildlife Biologist Aleshia Rummel at Aleshia.rummel@co.nacdnet.net or email the District email at gunnisoncd2006@gmail.com.

Recent Events

Water Wise Pollinator Gardening Workshop

The Gunnison Conservation District (GCD) worked with partners (Bird Conservancy of the Rockies [BCR] and Bureau of Land Management [BLM]) to host a Water Wise Pollinator Gardening Workshop on June 9, 2023 at the newly constructed BLM building in Gunnison. Twenty-six people attended the workshop. This workshop's agenda and topic selection was primarily in response to feedback from a similar workshop hosted in 2022. Steve Armstead (Xerces Society) provided an overview of pollinators and their associations with native plants, and best management practices for supporting pollinator habitat.

Next, Melissa Schreiner of CSU-Extension discussed gardening for beneficial insects and which pollinators are common on the western slope of Colorado. She brought specimens including butterflies, bees, flies, and more for workshop attendees to view. Gay Austin (retired botanist from the Gunnison BLM and U.S. Forest Service) discussed how to propagate common native plants of the Gunnison Basin and why certain species did better in different locations within her garden. Rachel Miller of the BLM reminded workshop attendees of the BLM's seed collection regulations. Aleshia Rummel (GCD DCT), showed principles of creating a visually appealing landscaping and garden design, including layout, color, and resources for finding or creating garden layouts.

Then participants moved outside for a service-learning component, where the BLM Ecologist discussed why certain plant species were going to be planted in different parts of their native plant garden based on conditions, naturally available moisture, soils, and more. Volunteers then planted native plants and we mulched the bed to conserve water and prevent noxious weed infestations.

Each participant was given a goody bag, funded by BCR, the Colorado Native Plant Society Mission Grant, and the Colorado Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service Disaster Mitigation Funds. Bags included gardening gloves, a trowel, a low-moisture pollinator-friendly seed mix specific to the Gunnison Basin, a sticker from the Audubon Society for native plants, and a handful of guides and pamphlets.



Recent Events

Low-Tech Process Based Restoration

The Gunnison Conservation District worked in partnership with many different organizations to implement low-tech process based restoration on a ranch near Powderhorn at the end of July. Several years ago, the landowner reached out to the Natural Resources Conservation Service to improve stream habitat for fish and improve riparian health on Cebolla Creek and Powderhorn Creek. Over the next years, NRCS worked with Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Gunnison Conservation District, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD), as well as several consultants, to design a series of beaver dam analogues (BDAs), and post-assisted log structures (PALS).

These structures mimic natural processes that occur in complex streams with good habitat for aquatic macroinvertebrates and fish. For example, a BDA mimics the process that a beaver uses to slow down water and create small ponds, permeable to water flow. This provides a high water table for riparian vegetation growth, and slower water flows reduce erosion potential of the stream. PALS are sometimes designed in the middle of the stream channel in order to split the flow, and allow a place for sediment to settle out behind some woody debris in the stream. The woody material in the stream provides habitat complexity, as well as some areas of pooling and deposition. Other PALS are designed as a



Brandon Miller (USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program) assists building a structure while a crew in the background uses a hydraulic post pounder to install a second structure. Photo from Eli Smith (HCCA).



Volunteers from HCCA work on a beaver dam analogue. Photo: Eli Smith.

bank-attached PALS, where the structure is anchored to one bank and pushes the water towards the other bank. Again, this structure promotes areas of still water and sediment deposition, some scouring, and it tends to reduce stream width for streams that are overly wide and shallow. All of these structures are considered to be more natural stream restoration techniques that have been proven to be very successful in other states like Utah, although they have limited application here in Colorado.

July 2023 was the implementation of the project, and more partners stepped up to provide additional assistance. The Upper Gunnison

River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD) provided final design input, as well as multiple work crews. The Colorado State Forest Service worked with a private landowner on one of their projects for us to be able to obtain materials for the BDAs and PALS, so a crew went on site there to pick up slash from the forestry project and CSFS joined in with loading trailers. High

County Conservation Advocates (HCCA) set up a two-day volunteer crew that enthusiastically



UGRWCD's Western Colorado Conservation Corps crew helped load slash from a CSFS forestry project into trailers to haul to the site of the stream restoration, which provided woody debris for the low-tech structures.



Volunteers from HCCA work with Brandon Miller (USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife biologist) on a beaver dam analogue.

moved materials and built restoration structures.

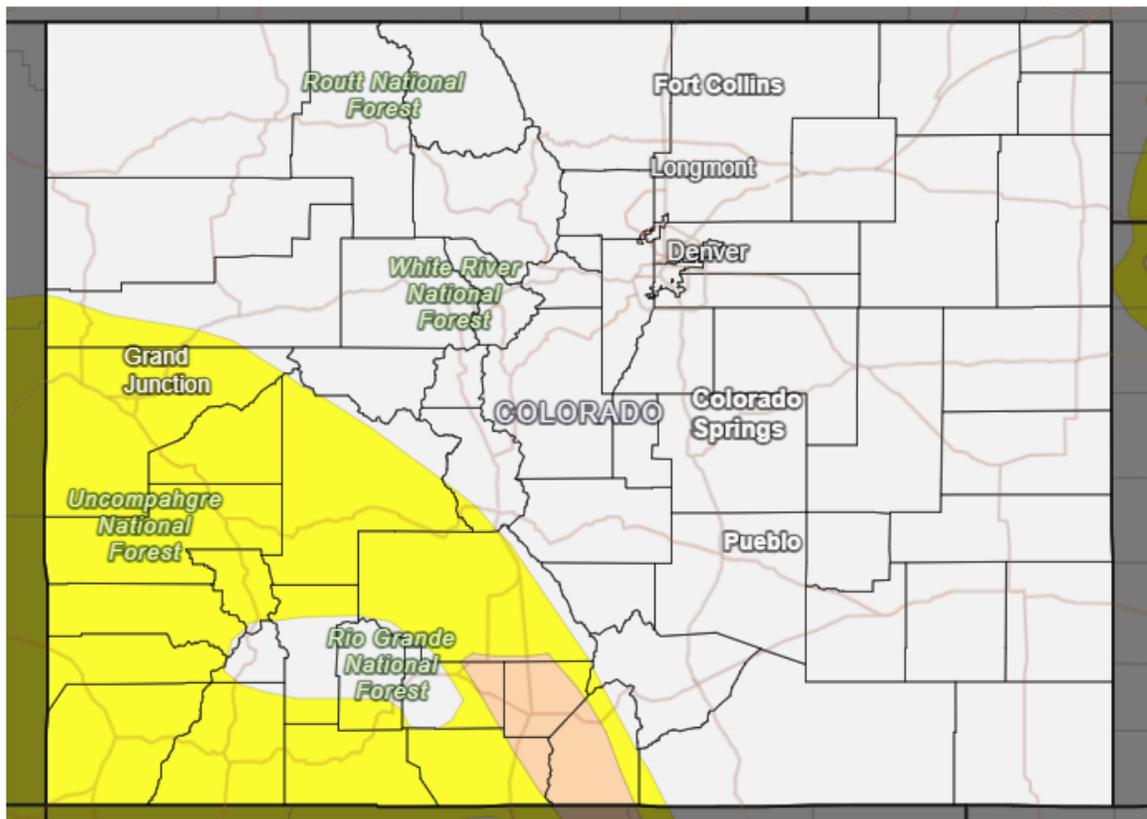
This project is a fantastic example of the wonderful community of natural resources professionals and organizations that work in the Gunnison Basin, and how collaboratively we are able to accomplish so much more. The Gunnison Conservation District whole-heartedly thanks all the partners that were involved with accomplishing this project and looks forward to monitoring the structures over the next year.

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.

Although earlier this summer most of Gunnison County was not in drought conditions, 87% of Gunnison County is considered abnormally dry (data from August 2, 2023) whereas the northern and northeastern portions of Gunnison County are not in drought conditions.

U.S. Drought Monitor: Colorado



Drought & Dryness Categories

	D0 - Abnormally Dry
	D1 - Moderate Drought
	D2 - Severe Drought
	D3 - Extreme Drought
	D4 - Exceptional Drought
	Total Area in Drought (D1-D4)

% of CO

22.6%
1.8%
0.0%
0.0%
0.0%
1.8%

Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA

Data Valid: 07/25/23

Drought.gov

Cheatgrass herbicide cost share eligibility

2023 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, 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.
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.
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.
 - Photographs of the "before" condition are a mandatory requirement to receive the free Panoramic 2SL.
 - If you cannot provide photos of the "before" condition, a District employee can visit the site with the landowner and/or land manager to confirm the presence of cheatgrass.
 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.

NEW OPPORTUNITY IN 2023:

The Gunnison Conservation District has received limited funds from the Colorado Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service Disaster Mitigation Funds for cheatgrass treatment on state and private lands. We have received \$12,000 to pay a certified operator to treat cheatgrass on private landowners' lands **free of cost to the landowner**. Please contact Aleshia.rummel@co.nacdnet.net if you have questions or if you would like to be on the list for this treatment in spring and fall 2023. If we run out of funding, we will work with others to secure additional funding for this program for future cheatgrass treatments on private lands. This is a good opportunity for landowners to treat cheatgrass and restore their rangelands, without having to find the time during busy seasons.



CHEATGRASS

Gunnison Conservation District Board:

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

Gunnison Conservation District Staff:

Aleshia Rummel, Wildlife Biologist
970-707-3044
aleshia.rummel@co.nacdnet.net

Suzie Bilberry, District Manager
970-707-3047
gunnisoncd2006@gmail.com

NRCS Gunnison Field Office Staff:

Dan Olson, Resource Conservationist
970.707-3045
daniel.olson@co.usda.gov

Jamison Jewkes, Resource Team Lead
970-964-3588
jamison.jewkes@usda.gov

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies Staff:

Marcella Tarantino, Senior Wildlife Biologist
970-707-3049
Marcella.Tarantino@usda.gov

For more information visit:

www.gunnisonconservationdistrict.info
or visit us on [Facebook](#)

