



# RANGE RIDER

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Fall

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## Signal Peak Cheatgrass Treatment

The Gunnison Conservation District received grant funding from the Colorado Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service’s Disaster Mitigation Funds for treating cheatgrass on non-federal lands in the Signal Peak area. The Disaster Mitigation Funds are meant for projects that attempt to reduce the impacts or likelihood of occurrence for natural disasters, such as drought or wildfire.

Because cheatgrass is a winter annual, it germinates earlier in spring than many of our native plants and can absorb early spring soil moisture before it is available to our native bunchgrasses. In addition, cheatgrass provides a fine fuel source for wildfires, and can promote a more frequent fire interval. After fires, it tends to reestablish well whereas native plants often do not, which can contribute to more of an annual invasive grass monoculture rather than our diverse and productive sagebrush steppe ecosystem.

Landowner permissions have been secured and treatment will occur on State Land Board, Western Colorado University, and City of Gunnison land around the Signal Peak trailhead areas. There may be additional funding available for private landowners with land adjacent to or nearby this area! Please reach out immediately to Aleshia Rummel at 970-707-3044 or [aleshia.rummel@co.nacdnet.net](mailto:aleshia.rummel@co.nacdnet.net) if you have any interest in having cheatgrass treated at your land for free.

Image (right) from Planet Labs/Bayer ES of a annual invasive grassland (cheatgrass) on the right side of the fence, and an intact shrubland on the left side of the fence after cheatgrass was treated with Rejuvra.



## *GCD Helps City of Gunnison Secure CPW's Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Grant*

The Gunnison Conservation District (GCD) worked with partners from the Gunnison Basin Sage-Grouse Strategic Committee (including City of Gunnison, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Gunnison County, and Western Colorado University) to submit a grant to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Program. Recently, it was announced that the primary applicant (the City of Gunnison) was awarded \$69,000 to purchase bearproof dumpsters and bearproof residential trash cans, as well as fund a WCU student. The WCU student would primarily be involved with education, monitoring, and working with landowners to reduce conflict.

One of the objectives in the GCD's Long Range Plan is to work towards improving wildlife issues in the District boundaries, and this grant application is an example of the GCD working towards reducing human-wildlife conflict. Bears have been regularly visiting households in the City of Gunnison this fall, but another benefit to securing trash in the City of Gunnison is to reduce food subsidies that are available to ravens and crows in the City of Gunnison. Likely, these food subsidies have contributed to increasing corvid populations in Gunnison, and ravens and crows have been linked to declines in sage-grouse recruitment because corvids will prey on eggs and chicks.

Program details are evolving, but the geographic focus will primarily be the western portion of the City of Gunnison. Although this grant will have a limited geographic scope, the GCD encourages all landowners to be sure your trash is secured by:

- Placing trash only in your trash can prior to pickup, or storing your partially filled trashcan in a secured location such as a garage
- Making sure your trashcan is not overfilled
- Cleaning your garbage can regularly, preferably with ammonia, to deter bears
- Considering the use of a bearproof trash container (approved by your waste disposal service)

Additionally, to reduce conflicts with bears and ravens, landowners should also clean all outdoor cooking areas after use, do not stock pet or livestock feed (other than hay) outside, and take down all bird feeders when there is any indication of bears being present in the area.

Please do your part to reduce conflict with bears and corvids!



## ***Mill Creek Youth Summit Cancelled***

The Gunnison Conservation District (GCD) is disappointed to report that the 2023 Mill Creek Youth Summit was cancelled this year. The Lowline Fire closures impacted the area that we normally host the event, and a suitable alternative was not found and approved by federal land management agencies in time for the event. The Gunnison Community School thought it was best to cancel rather than host the event on the school grounds. We are already looking forward to next year's event and continued partnerships with station leaders!

## ***Stock Tank Ladders Available***

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies has stock tank ladders available for free to private landowners! If you need an escape ramp for a stock tank ladder, please contact Marcella Tarantino at [marcella.tarantino@usda.gov](mailto:marcella.tarantino@usda.gov) or 970-707-3049.

## ***Cheatgrass Treatment Workshop***

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, and Shavano Conservation District will be holding a Cheatgrass Treatment Workshop. This workshop will be similar to the one in Gunnison from April 2023. The event is at the Ouray County 4H Events Center and Fairgrounds (22739 US-550, Ridgway, Colorado 81432) on November 7, 2023 from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm. Dinner will be provided and the cost is free to attend, but the workshop does require an RSVP. Please RSVP to Marcella Tarantino at [marcella.tarantino@usda.gov](mailto:marcella.tarantino@usda.gov) or 970-707-3049, or fill out an online form at <https://forms.gle/XADVcHXbqRczbJQr8>.

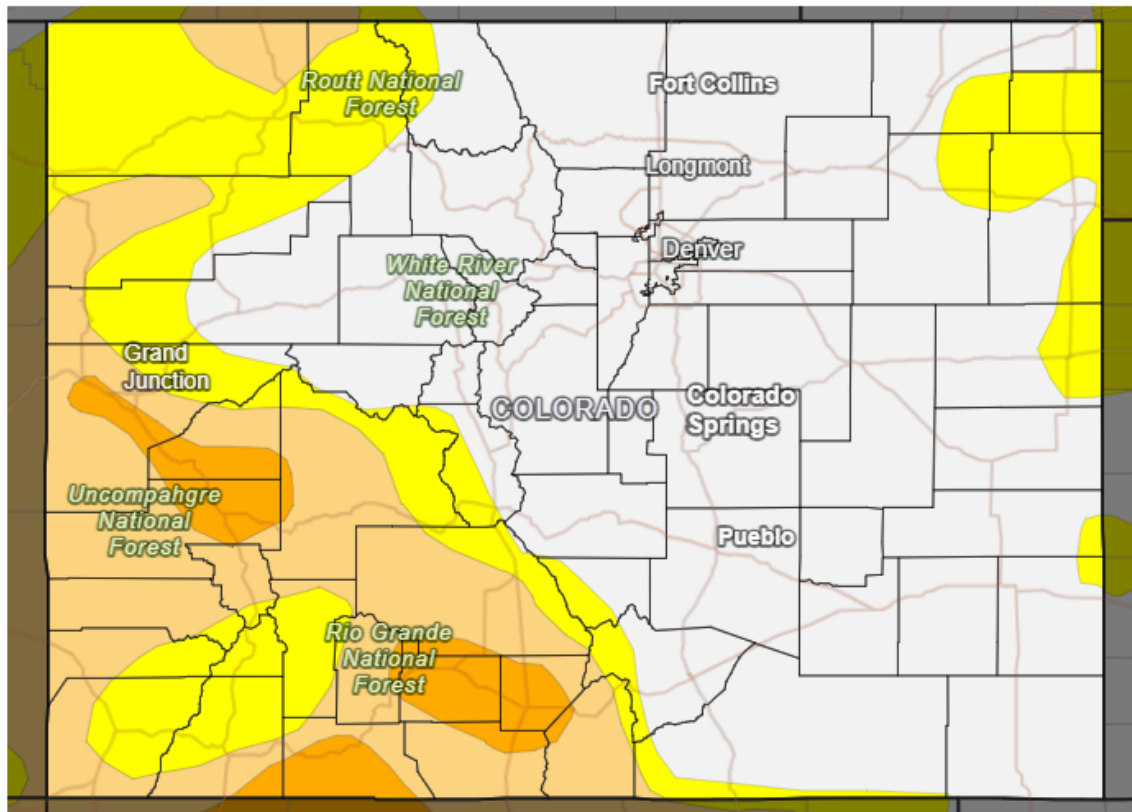


# USDA Drought Monitor

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, 34.5% of Gunnison County is considered abnormally dry (data from October 24, 2023) in the northeastern parts of the County. The western portion of the County (2.5%) is in severe drought conditions, and most of the remainder of the County (62.3%) is in moderate drought conditions.

## U.S. Drought Monitor: Colorado



### Drought & Dryness Categories

Drought & Dryness Categories	% of CO
D0 – Abnormally Dry	19.9%
D1 – Moderate Drought	17.8%
D2 – Severe Drought	4.4%
D3 – Extreme Drought	0.0%
D4 – Exceptional Drought	0.0%
Total Area in Drought (D1–D4)	22.2%

Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA  
 Data Valid: 10/24/23

## *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.



**CHEATGRASS**

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Dan Zadra, Vice President  
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**For more information visit:**

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or visit us on [Facebook](#)

