



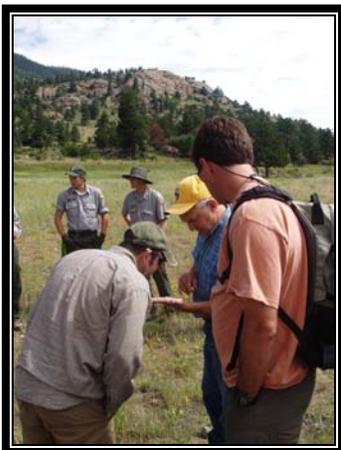
High Altitude News

Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center
5538 RBC #4
Meeker, Colorado

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Training in the Rockies

On July 28, 2010, Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center (UCEPC) staff, along with Pat Davey, NRCS Revegetation Technical Advisor to the National Park Service, provided a native seed collection training in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Attendees participating in the training included Rocky Mountain National Park Ecological Restoration Crew Members, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, Boulder County Open Space and Colorado State Parks employees. The morning began in the classroom at Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) headquarters, covering the basics of seed collection, techniques, equipment, documentation, shipping and storage. A trip to the north entrance of the park provided a pristine meadow for the group to try some hands on collecting. The afternoon was spent at Lumpy Ridge where assessing potential collection locations and seed maturity were discussed. The training was concluded with individuals participating in leadership development roles.



Steve Parr and attendees examining seed.



Steve Parr, UCEPC manager, discussing the different types of seed maturity in plants.

Measuring Light Interception of Rangeland Plants

To enhance environmental benefits on grazing lands a model called the Rangeland Hydrology and Erosion Model (RHEM) is being developed as a tool to measure impacts and benefits of grazing land practices. A model known as Agricultural Land Management Alternative with Numerical Assessment Criteria (ALMANAC) is an important component of RHEM. Plant communities represented by functional plant groups and their biophysical outputs are the major drivers of the ALMANAC model. The biophysical component requires attribute data over the many ecological zones found throughout the United States, at the Ecological Site Descriptions. PMCs located in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Washington, Idaho,

California, Colorado, and Montana are participating in the ALMANAC study.

Plant growth data from the 2010 summer field season was provided to ARS staff in Temple Texas. To attain the plant data a ceptometer bar was used to capture light readings (IPAR) from five different plant species. The plant species varied according to the data collection site. At UCEPC, Rocky Mountain penstemon, black chokecherry, western wheatgrass, Arizona fescue and Utah sweetvetch were materials measured. Data collection with the ceptometer began with first green-up and continued until plant maturity. During the field season, three clippings from the designated plant materials were taken; once at green-up, one at midseason, and one final clipping at plant maturity. The clippings were then sent to ARS in Temple for nitrogen and phosphorus analysis. The clippings were also measured for their leaf area index.



Terri Blanke taking ceptometer readings in 'Timp' Utah sweetvetch.

Science Camp

In June, an employee of the Eastern Rio Blanco County Metropolitan Recreation & Park District contacted UCEPC with interest in getting help with a children's native garden. The garden would be planted during the 2010 children's science camp. Camp attendees ranged in ages from five to twelve years old.

The garden's theme was to represent the native plants local wildlife and pollinators use to survive. On June 30, 2010, UCEPC staff Terri Blanke and Heather Plumb, delivered a variety of plants to the garden site. Each age group was divided into individual class sessions. In each session, Terri and

Heather explained how important plants were for the ecosystem, local wildlife and pollinators. After class discussions, the kids were taken out to the garden and were taught how to properly plant forbs, shrubs and trees. Each child was given the opportunity to plant two plants of their choice in the garden.



Terri Blanke supervising two boys as they fill their hole with water to plant a tree.



Fourth graders planting in the garden with Heather.

Pollinator Garden

Reds, pinks, yellows, oranges, purples, blues, whites; it has them all. Over the last four and a half years, field technician, Johnnie Barton has created a flower garden for the local pollinators. What was

once a plain parking lot has turned into a perfect sight to see pollinators.

In 2006 when Johnnie began, the area was overgrown with a variety of shrubs, weeds and aspen trees. The first step Johnnie took was to remove the majority of the shrubs, remove the weeds and prune the aspen trees to a manageable state. From there he brought in additional soil, a large dead tree and placed several large rocks around the area. "The dead tree can be used for birds to nest in", said Johnnie.

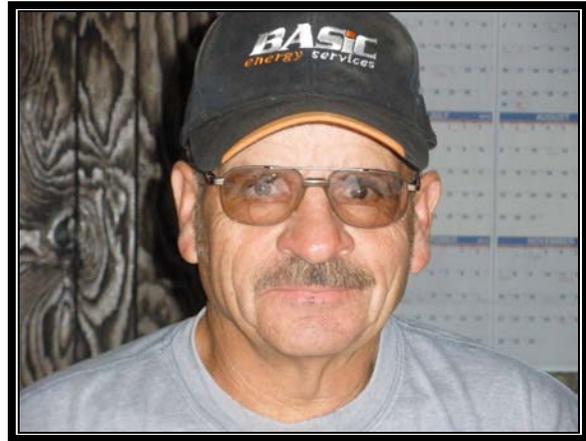
After the large landscape objects were in place, a flower mix was broadcast. Over the years, additional flowers have been planted to enhance the garden's size and plant diversity.



Pollinator garden at UCEPC.

Meet the Board

UCEPC is unique in the fact that it is owned by two Conservation Districts, Douglas Creek and White River. Because the Center is owned by the two districts, UCEPC has a Board of Directors. Each newsletter will introduce a Board Member, one from either Douglas Creek or White River.



William "Bill" Hume

Douglas Creek Conservation District

Occupation: Business Owner

Bill has lived in Rio Blanco County for fifty-eight years, ten of those years he has served on the UCEPC Board. In October 2009, Bill became the Plant Center's Board president for the fiscal year of 2010. Bill is also affiliated with the Elks Club and is Vice Chairman of the Rio Blanco Republican Party.

Colorado PMC Staff Members

Steve Parr, PMC Manager

Marti Walsh, Assistant Manager

Terri Blanke, Plant Technician

Heather Plumb, Plant Scientist-Range Plants

Rodney Dunham, Farm Foreman

Johnnie Barton, Field Technician

***Tours available during business*
hours, closed all Federal Holidays**

**Monday- Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**