



Watershed Watch

A publication of the *Coalition for the Upper South Platte*

A Healthy Watershed ~ Now and in the Future

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 11, Number 2, Winter 2010

✿ The Environment as an Economic Engine ✿

By Helen Dyer

When it comes to the *New Energy Economy*, CUSP is a leader! In fact, CUSP sets the local standard for environmentally based green-collar jobs and employment opportunities in our region. With a staff of 23 employees and interns, we are one of the larger employers in Park County, and we create jobs for other employers through the myriad contracts we issue each year. For example, so far in 2010 we have provided over a half-million dollars in contracts to area foresters, consultants, and excavators.

Strategic Approaches

In 2008 the CUSP Board of Directors approved their updated Strategic Plan. A new priority in the plan was **Energy**, focusing on sustainable alternatives and technologies and advancing community awareness, engagement and education. CUSP staff embraced the directive and set about developing plans that address both internal procedures and community outreach.

Internally, CUSP staff performed an energy audit. We knew there were opportunities to reduce energy use at our office building! We've installed TyVec, and new energy efficient siding using locally harvested board and batten wood. The house had an open porch along the front. We enclosed it, which protects the front of the building from the elements, and creates a passive-solar dead-air-space entry to reduce heat loss during the winter. We also switched to *Energy*

Star rated appliances and compact florescent lighting throughout the facility. These changes have resulted in about a 12% reduction in our electric consumption.

We also developed policies for employees to help reduce energy use. Ranging from the minor, such as turning off all power bars at night to reduce phantom loads, to important steps, such as allowing employees the ability to work at least part of the time from home to reduce their commuting miles, we think our steps have a positive impact on our carbon footprint! We even installed a compost tumbler, so all food waste from the office goes back on the land as a beneficial resource.

Facilitating Change

CUSP has always focused on voluntary actions by citizens, businesses, and government agencies. We look for the win-win opportunities. Based in part on our success with this strategy, CUSP was named the lead agency for the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) *Teller County Community Energy Coordinator* (CEC) grant.

The CEC grant is a year-long initiative, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment act. One of the major outcomes will be the development of a *Teller County Sustainability Plan*. We've established strong partnerships helping to ramp up energy efficiency throughout the region.

Learning Together

Education and outreach is one of the major components of our **Energy**

program. We have already started with a symposium, ***The Environment as an Economic Engine: Going Green to Green your Bottom Line***, targeting business owners, facilities operators and local government representatives. Held on October 11th, in cooperation with several partners, (GEO, Teller County, the City of Woodland Park, The Woodland Park Harvest Center, and the Rampart Library District) the event drew a good crowd. The evening began with a reception that featured locally grown and produced food and beverages followed by an impressive slate of presenters who covered a range of subjects related to the economic benefits of energy efficiency and the potential of biomass energy projects for impacting businesses' bottom line.

Our **Energy** committee is working on other outreach events for the coming year, so watch for more information at www.tellerenergy.com. If you would like to work on the committee, and help develop the *Sustainability Plan* please call or email us!



CUSP headquarters in Lake George, CO

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A MOMENT WITH WAYNE SNIDER



Wayne Snider, Fowler Town Administrator and architect of the town's *Community Powered!* initiative, was the keynote speaker at *The Environment as an Economic Engine* symposium held in Woodland Park on October 11th. Snider's resolve helped to transform Fowler, located on the plains of southeast Colorado in Otero County (not the first place people would think of as a mecca of innovation powered by sun, wind and biomass fuels) into a shining example to all of Colorado – and beyond. Fowler has made a commitment to renewable and alternative energy.

The Town of Fowler has demonstrated that renewable and alternative energy is not an indulgence only for wealthy, elite communities, but rather a very feasible, common sense solution for communities all over America that are willing to step forward, take the initiative and harness the power of their natural resources for the benefit of everyone. Helen Deyer, CUSP Development Director, took a moment to speak with him.

Helen Dyer (HD): How did Fowler get you involved and why did they chose a "green alternative"?

Wayne Snider (WS): I was contacted by one of the trustees to become their Town Administrator and after interviewing and understanding their wants/needs, I was hired to lead their community. The "green initiative" was a natural evolution due to the rising cost of utilities and the declining economy. Why continue on the present path when alternate technology is here and proves that we can be successful.

HD: How supportive has the community been and who are the greatest community advocates?

WS: The community has been very supportive. It was slow in the beginning, but we now have more individuals involved than we can handle. Working with the school district and primarily the elementary children was a real key to our success. The students take what they learn home to their families and this is a great way to raise awareness. Currently the 4th and 5th grade students are monitoring real time data from 7 solar sites. The monitoring has been integrated into their math curriculum and they are involved on a daily basis.

HD: How do you respond to community skeptics or critics about the direction Fowler has chosen with renewable and alternative energy?

WS: With the numbers. Showing the savings to the community is always best: people "brighten up" when they see the numbers. One of our greatest initial skeptics has even added solar to his home and shop.

HD: What lessons can Fowler offer/teach other communities in Colorado?

WS: Develop a team. Develop a Plan. Implement the Plan. Though it sounds obvious, implementation is actually the most important step and historically the step least taken in efforts like this. We had a multi-county team review ten years worth of related studies and plans – more than \$2.5 million worth, some were redundant and none of them were implemented. Just think of the good that money could have done. That's why I stress, Implement the plan.

For more information about the exciting work being done in Fowler, go to <http://www.fowlercolorado.com/>

In Appreciation

We extend a warm THANK YOU to our members, grantors and program supporters for helping CUSP make 2010 another successful year. Your financial support enables CUSP to continue its many programs to protect the Upper South Platte Watershed.

Park County - Colorado State Forest Service - Hillsdale Fund Inc - Colorado Water Conservation Board - Douglas County Government - National Forest Foundation - Vail Resorts - Denver Water - Teller County - Paul & Lorri McDaniel - Governor's Energy Office - Colorado State University - Carol Ekarius/Ken Woodard - City of Aurora - Majestic HOA - Marc Murphy - Leon & Mary Krain - South Platte Enhancement Board - John & Kathy Gordon - Park County BOCC - Stanley & Keli Weilert - Jefferson Conservation District - Centennial Water & Sanitation District - Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District - Jefferson County BOCC - James Foster - UMC Missouri Annual Conference - Paul & Ginny Ruths - City of Woodland Park - Perry Park East HOA - Manny & Dottie Peretz - Pikes Peak Community Foundation - Trout Unlimited Cutthroat Chapter - Pikes Peak Resorts - Allen Family Real Estate - Lutheran Valley Ranch Estates - Ridgewood POA - Al Gandy - Art & Rachel Wannlund - Cat & Coyote Holding Company - Connor Baker - Ruth Johnson-Mullis - Brandon Mix - Teller Park Conservation District - Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District - Woodrock HOA - Inman Family Trust - Lee & Marilee Van Arsdale - Gary L Brown - Dusty Burton - Knox Eagle Scout BSA Troop 79 - Dave & Karen Praner - Melissa Bleakney - Gary Bieske - Rodney & Margaret Hindley - Don & Lois Mileham - Jesse Moreland - Dan Regan - Joe & Marti Campbell - City of Woodland Park OEDD - Colorado Mountain Estates - Gold Hill Square North - Tom & Susan Kongs - Rising Sun 4WD Club of Colorado - Schwab Charitable Fund - Swayback Ranch Fishing Club - Tweeds - Navajo Mountain Mesa - Echo Valley Recreation - Keith Chatfield - Flying Cloud HOA - RH & MC Friesen - Schumacher Acctg & Tax - Turkey Rock Ranches - Dan Drucker - Nicholas Simpson - Boy Scouts of America - Cathy Pobega - Boulos Ayad - Wm R Fuller - James & Faye Plucker - Sage Port Homeowners - Robert Yardumian - Colorado Water Congress - Jack & Jineen McWherter - Indian Creek POA - Sacred Heart Ministries - Tom & Linda Camblin - Rip & Jean Blaisdell - Steve Allard - Greg & Rhonda Aplet - Austin Gardens & Landscaping - Misi Ballard - Boxwood Gulch Ranch - Jeannie & Wm Brooks - Laura Canby - Edward Caswell - Helen Dyer - Matt Matwijec - Michael McClain - Sue Mitchell - Robert & Lora Olmstead - Katherine Rhodus - Steven Sypher - Anthony Zuchowski/Sue Battig - J Jamison - Lisa Dale - Constance & Donald Sparks - Robert Fritchel - Josephine Plant - Chuck & Mary Todd - ES Embroidery - Michelle Bowles - Bob Bynes - Alexander & Faith Carter - Gary Crane - Mary Dawson - Tims & Cathy Edwards - Mark & Dottie Essary - Joseph Kopinski - Bragg Eagle Scouts - Lake George Community Assoc - Sherman & Sally LeMaster - Stephen Quist/Sara Mayben - Taylor & Nancy Owens - Diane Palmer - Lisa Patton - Quaker Ridge Camp - John Rakowski - Theresa Schrock - Thieu Ngoc Bui - Jamie Turner - Wm & Carolyn Woodard - Phil Pyles - Chris Fuller - Thomas Kalter - Jim Winzenburg - Xcel Energy Foundation - Daniel Avant - Robert & Patricia Bragg - David Brown - Doug Farquhar - Farquhar Eagle Scouts - Vickie Greene - Alfred & Jo Ann Gundersen - Eileen Levin - Wayne & Caitlin McAllister - Bradley Ziemer - Ralph Thomas - Hope & Toshio Alger - Warren Johnson, Ronald Baker - Leland Feitz - Stephen Taylor - Scott Findlay - Chuck Hallam - John Norman - Ann Stratton - Clint Kounk - Steve Rowe - Gerald Stidman - Joanne Thies - Robb Utter - Kevin Verdun - Chip Taylor - Jim Van Dyke - Mary Brown - Brown Bear Property - John Carnahan - Nick Corollo - Gene Cole - Susan Cox - Gordon Dustin - Jeffery Emery - Larry Fosburgh - Ken Friedrich - William Goure - Jeff Grosse - Jim Halloran - M Hallstrand - Maury Hammond - Ellie Hurley - Carol Kennedy - Sheryl Lewis - Chris Lutz - JP Monat - Doug Page - Kris Pearson - Alex Pina - Curt Putnam - David Ruthstrom - Marc Stookey - Scott Stunkard - Tim Talbot - Earl Thomas - Mike & Candace Thompson - Dick Unzelman - Michael Van Demar - Ed Warren - Tracy Whitehead - Bill Wilkening - Jim William - Charles Wilson - Steve Woelfle

CUSP by the Numbers

In the 2010 work season we have accomplished so much and owe much of our success to the 2311 volunteers who lent a hand. Below please find the details of our accomplishments.



Volunteer time:
 ♦ 16742.8 volunteer hours

Forest Health Implementation:
 ♦ 3038.5 acres treated for all projects.
 ♦ 18,890 hours of slash accumulation time.
 ♦ created 1457 burn piles.
 ♦ cut over 268 cords of firewood to be provided to those in need through Help the Needy.
 ♦ slash/mulch fuels reduction treated 469.44 acres on 150 sites.
 ♦ owners & volunteers spent 1313.3 vol. hours plus 8742 hours of slash accumulation time.
 ♦ TC slash site took 1617 loads from 549.85 acres on 557 separate sites, and patrons spent 7525 hours accumulating slash.

Trails and Rivers:
 ♦ 189,250 linear feet of trail & river work

- ♦ Maintained and constructed 12.6 miles of trail.
- ♦ 10.5 miles of river bank stabilization, willow planting (3470), and cleanup.
- ♦ 8000 trees planted.
- ♦ Debris removal 2797 logs/snags from river corridor.

Environmental Education Watershed

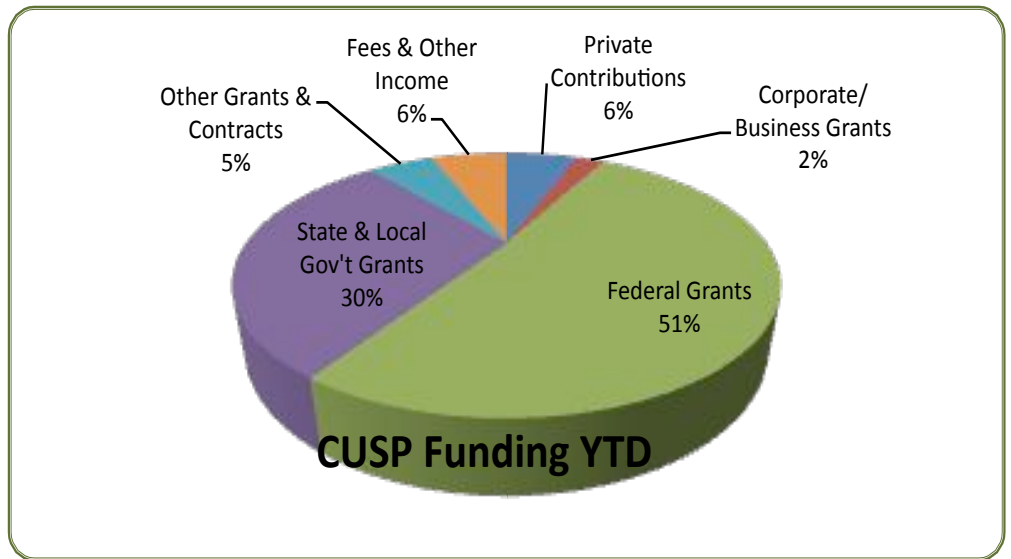
- Research:**
- ♦ 650.95 tech assist hours from partners & professionals.
 - ♦ 882 students & teachers.
 - ♦ 910.8 education day hours.
 - ♦ Forest Ecology monitoring on the USFS 230 acre Long John Cut, North of Woodland Park, with Woodland Park High School Environmental Science classes.
 - ♦ Six College/ Graduate level internships.
 - ♦ Two high school Internships.
 - ♦ Biochar ponderosa pine growth rate research study.

Planning:

- ♦ 10 Community Wildfire Protection Plans in planning or complete, Including the Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative CWPP.
- ♦ 14 wildfire implementation assessments covering over 1627 acres.
- ♦ Completed the field data collection phase of the Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Teller County.
- ♦ Starting the Teller County Long Range Sustainability Plan.
- ♦ Watershed Mine Assessment.
- ♦ Biomass economic feasibility study.

Restoration and Plantings:

- ♦ planted 4570 trees & shrubs on 31.2 acres
- ♦ built or repaired 1454 feet of fence
- ♦ rake/seed/mulch, erosion control, logging & thinning, noxious weed control on public and private lands



JOIN CUSP TODAY!

Make your tax deductible donation to: CUSP, PO Box 726, Lake George, CO 80827

OR to donate securely with your credit card, visit our website at www.uppertsouthplatte.org and click on the DONATE tab OR contact Chris at the CUSP office @ 719-748-0033

Your contribution helps insure successful continued efforts of our staff, our dedicated volunteers, and our partners. Our unique position allows us to work on federal, state, and private properties - essential because natural resource impacts knows no boundaries; the challenges are shared by all.

Rare Earth Minerals and Sustainable Mining for our Green Energy Future

The modern day environmental movement is built upon new clean-technologies that are intended to reduce our energy usage and consumption of non-renewable natural resources. Clean-technology ranges from every day items such as compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) to wind turbines, solar panels, and hybrid cars. All of these items have one thing in common; they are built with mined commodities. For example, some key components of wind generators are neodymium magnets and molybdenum. Solar panels are made up of cadmium, tellurium, germanium, selenium, silicon, and copper. Although some of these commodities sound familiar you might be wondering what neodymium is? Neodymium is one of 17 elements in the periodic table classified as rare earth elements (REE). Many REE's are actually not rare and occur in higher concentrations in earth's crust than copper or zinc. REE's are used in a number of every day items such as cell phones, the magnets in DVD drives, liquid-crystal displays in computers and television screens, fiber optics, and catalytic converters. REE's are also becoming the key components in almost all clean-technologies. The Toyota Prius could be considered a rolling REE with components of the vehicle built using neodymium, lanthanum, europium, yttrium, and cerium. So how do REE's relate to the environment as an economic driver? It is as simple as supply and demand, and as the demand for clean-technologies continues to rise so does the demand for REE's. In the mid 1980's the US dominated the global production of REE's, primarily from the Mountain Pass Mine, CA. Domestic production of REE's has tapered off significantly and currently China comprises 95% of the global production of REE's. Recently, Chinese exports have been cut-off to Japan and greatly reduced to the US and Europe. As the US attempts to reduce dependence on foreign oil by investing in clean-technologies we have become dependent on imports of REE's the key component of these clean-technologies. The domestic development of clean-technologies will continue to stimulate the US economy and will rely on a domestic source of REE's. Currently, Mountain Pass is producing about 2,000 metric tons of rare earths a year. The Wet Mountains and the Powderhorn district in southern Colorado have proven REE deposits and Park County hosts a variety of deposits that contain REE and other metal commodities used in clean-technologies, although they haven't been extensively explored or developed. In addition to providing necessary materials for clean-technology, recovery of these mineral resources could stimulate the local economy by providing both mining and environmental employment associated with US regulations and best management practices. Responsible mining of domestic deposits therefore reduces the dependence on imports, which are often mined without environmental regulation, and stimulates the local economy while continuing to move the US forward as a leader in clean-technologies.

Learn more:

Bradsher, Keith. "China Still Bans Rare Earths to Japan, Industry Says." *The New York Times*. 10 Nov. 2010. Web. 10 Nov. 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/11/business/global/11rare.html?ref=rare_earth>.

Haxel, Gordon B., James B. Hedrick, and Greta J. Orris. "Supporting Sound Management of Our Mineral Resources: Rare Earth Elements – Critical Resources for High Technology." *USGS Fact Sheet 087-02* (2002): 1-4. 2002. Web. 10 Nov. 2010. <<http://geopubs.wr.usgs.gov/fact-sheet/fs087-02/>>.

Howell, Katie. "Global Scramble Looms for Vital 'Clean Energy' Minerals." *The New York Times*. 12 Apr. 2010. Web. 10 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/04/12/12greenwire-global-scramble-looms-for-vital-clean-energy-m-53232.html?pagewanted=1>>.

Molycorp Minerals - The Rare Earths Company. Web. 11 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.molycorp.com/>>.

Bob Taylor Memorial Ice Fishing Contest

ANTERO RESERVOIR

January 15, 2011

REGISTRATION

Pre-registration fees: \$20.00 entry fee per person
Day of Event fees: \$30.00 per person

We will only accept **cash** for day of event registrations

REGISTER ONLINE

at www.antero-icefishing-contest.com with PayPal or credit card

REGISTER BY MAIL

CUSP, PO Box 726, Lake George, CO 80827
Contact the CUSP office (719-748-0033)

PRIZES

Three cash prize for the largest trout
BY WEIGHT
First Prize: **\$500**
Second Prize: **\$250**
Third Prize: **\$100**

KID'S PRIZES

This is a family-friendly event. Youth 15 or younger are eligible to win some very special kid-only prizes in addition to qualifying to win all major prizes!

PRIZE DRAWING

Everyone entered in the Ice Fishing Contest is eligible to win great prizes! Last year happy anglers left with fishing gear, guided fishing tours, clothing and gifts.



❖ WINTER-TIME ELK HERDS OF THE WATERSHED ❖

How do you prepare for winter? Do you gather firewood to stay warm and cozy in your home, or pull out your ski equipment? Or, do you flee south for warmer weather? Like humans, not all animal species deal with winter conditions in the same way. Some go into hibernation, or a deep sleep, until spring. Other creatures, such as birds, migrate south to warmer climates in order to find available food during the winter months. This means that fewer animal species are out and about in the winter. But, one animal that stays out in the open during the winter is the elk. Though they do migrate some, elk don't need to travel far to find adequate winter survival conditions. For elk, weather severity and food availability are the two big factors affecting where they will congregate in the winter.



During the summer months our elk herds are widely dispersed, but typically in the winter they gather into fairly large groups. Their exact location can change, but there are places they tend to come back to year after year.

There are several different elk herds that spend the year in and around the watershed. During the winter many of them return to the same locations annually. The Kenosha herd is one such group. They generally spend their winters in the James Mark Jones State Wildlife Area in South Park. This

DID YOU KNOW?

Up to half an elk's winter diet may be composed of bark and twigs from trees and shrubs. They especially like the bark of aspen trees. If you see an aspen tree with black scars on the trunk, it once fed a hungry elk.



area is winter home to 1,000 to 1,200 elk. The Buffalo Peaks herd consists of around 200 to 300 animals. They move to the 63 Ranch State Wildlife Area, also in South Park during the winter, or they go south into the forest in Chaffee County.

Elk are also regularly found in the winter around Tarryall Reservoir, and around Guanella Pass and Hall Valley. For the past two years, a group of about 200 elk has been living in the Hayman Burn area. As the grasses and forbs are reestablishing themselves in this area, there is plenty of food for the ungulates. The elk move in and out of cover in the burn area depending on the weather conditions.

Some elk travel farther than others to get to their over-wintering spots. The Upper South Platte Watershed receives annual visits from elk that spend their non-winter months around Breckenridge and the Mount Evans Wilderness. We know this because some elk wear radio telemetry collars that allow researchers with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to track their movements. In the past these Breckenridge elk traveled north in the winter, but the constant traffic on Interstate 70 seems to be interrupting their historic movement patterns.

So if you decide to brave the elements and are interested in getting a glimpse of elk in the winter, remember that you don't have to travel far!

By Sarah Lykens,
2009 CUSP OSM/
VISTA Volunteer



Coalition for the Upper South Platte Internships

Experience, Excellence, Enrichment

CUSP's Academic Internship Program offers students the chance to apply the academic knowledge and analytical skills they have gained in school in a professional natural-resource setting, while helping to protect the valuable Upper South Platte Watershed. CUSP may be located in Lake George, Colorado, but we offer numerous watershed-wide academic internships, meaning students from all over Colorado, and beyond, can participate in a program that's designed around service learning and on-the-ground problem solving. We offer:

- Academic internships grounded in program learning outcomes and individualized student learning objectives.
- Service learning initiatives for faculty interested in integrating a service-related internship component into their course(s).
- Individualized partnerships with University departments and programs interested in integrating internships with departmental requirements and/or program missions.
- Top notch talent for corporate and community organizations who share the CUSP vision for academic internships and are committed to fostering a culture of learning.

The Academic Internship Program is shaped by CUSP's vision for - **A HEALTHY WATERSHED NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.** We help graduate and undergraduate students become stewards of the natural world and develop leadership skills by offering opportunities that integrate academic theory and 'real-world' practice, and provide a vehicle for exploring the relationship between theory and practice. Interns gain professional skills needed to succeed in today's work world, particularly for students interested in working in the environmental or public sectors. CUSP internships are about more than just work experience: they are about academic, personal and professional growth. Call Jonathan to learn more and discuss your internship! Internship opportunities abound and can be sculpted to meet your specific natural resource studies. 719-748-0033

Current Internship Research

Woody Biomass Energy in Colorado:

Long-term Sustainability and Implications for Wildfire Fuel Treatments

Adam Greenwade, MPA Candidate, University of Colorado Denver.

Rising coal costs and ambitious statewide renewable portfolio standards suggest that woody biomass may have an increased role in meeting Colorado's future energy demands. This study employs a range of supply and demand projections to show that demand for wood fuel from the woody biomass energy market in Colorado is unlikely to outpace the sustainable supply from even a small portion of forested land within the state. Growing utilization of woody biomass for energy production poses little threat to Colorado's forests in the form of fuel demand.

Internships in GIS

Carrie Adair - GIS Intern

Andrew McKay -GIS Intern

Pikes Peak Community College

Both Carrie and Andrew work to consolidate and spatially define CUSP projects and initiatives. Their work is essential as we can now, in words and in maps, display our plans and our accomplishments. Carrie has received her certificate in GIS and is working towards an Associates of Science from Pikes Peak. Andrew will graduate with a GIS Certificate in the Spring of 2011.

Mine Assessment

Lauren Barrows

Environmental Science, BS Candidate, University of Denver

Lauren played an important role helping as we collected water samples from over 45 watershed mines. Lauren, a DU Chancellor's Scholarship recipient, comes to CUSP through the Office of Surface Mining's Vista program. With the important information Lauren helped to collect CUSP will now be better prepared to assess where work needs to be done to protect our water resources.

Colorado Ranch Heritage and Renewal Project

Justin Henderson

Masters of Urban & Regional Planning Candidate at the University of Colorado Denver

Anne Shaver

Masters of Architecture Candidate at the University of Colorado at Denver

Both Justin and Anne have agreed to, under the supervision of Kat Vlahos, analyze a historic ranch property for potential sustainable development as a Land Research and Outreach Facility. Ekaterini "Kat" Vlahos is the director of the Center of Preservation Research. Kat is a licensed architect and an Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Colorado. This partnership is expected to continue into the future with additional internship opportunities available.

Watershed Heros

"Those who go above and beyond in their efforts to protect the Upper South Platte Watershed"



Volunteer Heros

Everyone at CUSP wants to sincerely thank each of our volunteers. Volunteers are truly the heart and soul of our organization. Your efforts to protect and improve our watershed are invaluable. In the 2010 work season nearly 2,400 volunteers and 17,000 hours of volunteer time went into planting thousands of trees and willows, as well as installing a variety of erosion control measures that reduce sedimentation in critical drainages. Our volunteers built hundreds of burn piles to improve forest health and gathered fuel wood for those in need. Additionally, volunteer groups worked hard at maintaining challenging trails, removing invasive weed species and completing river clean-up projects along valuable fishing areas.

Each volunteer group brings something unique to the watershed and much joy to the field crew. Bev, from Missouri United Methodist Church Annual Conference puts together miracles in numbers. Trout Unlimited, Cutthroat Chapter, can gather up a group in a heartbeat. UMC Dallas clearly gets the Spirit Award. The work accomplished this season would not be possible without Girl and Boy Scout Troops, Eagle Scouts, the Mackintosh Academy, Windy Peaks Outdoor Lab, the United Methodist Church groups, Vail Resorts, Comcast, Sprint, the OHSU Navy Medical Unit, the Rising Sun 4x4 Club and our incredibly dedicated individual volunteers.

Your commitment made an important difference in the ecological health of the forest and the watershed that supplies water for a majority of Coloradans. People like you have made my first season with CUSP an absolute pleasure. Your kindness and generosity is an inspiration to us all.

Lisa Patton, Volunteer Coordinator

Jim Klug

The Cutthroat Chapter of Trout Unlimited has been an invaluable supporter of CUSP since our beginning. Jim Klug, the Director of Conservation, Preservation and Restoration for the Cutthroat Chapter of Trout Unlimited is our winter Watershed Hero. Jim has energetically taken on his new position and brought together Trout Unlimited groups for a variety of projects in the Upper South Platte Watershed. This season Jim and his chapter planted over 2300 willows to stabilize a naturalized streambed, tackled many acres of noxious weeds, and hosted river cleanup projects throughout the watershed. Jim is someone CUSP knows we can count on to gather a group of fun and dedicated volunteers.

Mr. Klug joined Trout Unlimited several years ago after relocating to Colorado from northern California to be closer to family. Jim is a retired program manager from the military semiconductor field; he worked on "top secret stuff." He now is a trail specialist in the backcountry of Highlands Ranch with a commitment to preserve open space. He traded in his passion for fishing steelhead and sturgeon for fly fishing the great rivers of Colorado. He hopes his three granddaughters will be inspired by his love of the outdoors to become avid anglers as well. Family is why Jim is, "committed to putting together a program to help local watersheds and fisheries – to keep them in a condition where my children and grandchildren can enjoy the waters and use of the land."

The Cutthroat Chapter is a very active group, having completed over 1200 hours of volunteer work this year alone. Jim feels that as more members of chapter become involved in volunteer projects, "they will find it meaningful, rewarding and a fun way to meet great people." Thanks Jim and the Cutthroat Chapter of TU – You are CUSP Watershed Heros!



C U S P W I L D F I R E S U P P R E S S I O N T E A M



With generous support provided by The Hillsdale Foundation, the Florissant Fire Protection District and the Mountain Communities Fire Protection District, the CUSP Wildfire Suppression Team is moving forward toward the goal of building a highly skilled and professional Wildland Fire Suppression Team to aid land management agencies and fire districts in the event of wildfire incidents.

In 2009 CUSP first entered the fire-suppression realm by partnering with Florissant Fire Protection District. We have been working on this for sometime and are truly excited to be able to provide skilled and certified Wildland Fire Fighters to assist in protecting our watershed and neighboring communities.

Today we have eight red-carded members of the Suppression Team. We hope we don't get called out, but if a fire starts we are ready to move quickly! The team's operations have

grown significantly over the year with a very positive response from local agencies.

In 2010 CUSP spent over 459 employee hours on training, initial attack, pile burning, and prescribed fires. Thankfully, 2010 was a light fire year for our local forests, with only a few small-acreage burns occurring in our watershed. On September 12th, the Gravel Pit fire, which had the potential of being a major burn, started near Evergreen Station between Florissant and Cripple Creek. CUSP responded with the Florissant Fire Protection District, the Four Mile Fire District, and Teller County Emergency services. Conditions were ripe for the fire to get big, but a committed initial attack stopped it in its tracks.

In 2011 we will purchase a wildland brush truck, with initial attack capabilities, but we will need additional funding to equip this truck and make it a reality!

If you are interested in learning more about how you can work with the CUSP Wildfire

Suppression Team, or in making a donation to help equip this very important team, please don't hesitate to send our Operation's Director, Jonathan, a note at jonathan@uppersouthplatte.org.

The CUSP Wildfire Suppression Team has continued to grow, but we need your help. Consider purchasing a CUSP fire team t-shirt to help us purchase equipment, train our team members, grow professionally, and continue protecting the Upper South Platte Watershed. For more information contact Jonathan@uppersouthplatte.org



Back of t-shirt



The Key

By Marti Campbell, CWPP Facilitator

Are you lucky enough to own property in forest-covered mountains? These mountains provide timber, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, mineral sources and are home to our water supply. A disturbance such as a wildfire changes these activities but may actually be a benefit to the mountains as well. The forests of Colorado are overcrowded by stands of evergreens that are even-aged and getting older, without regeneration of younger trees. Meadows are disappearing, wildlife habitats are shrinking, and insect and disease infestations are increasing. In spite of our love for the forest; they are becoming unhealthy! By resisting efforts to thin, or manage the forest, we – the ones who care so much - are only adding to the problem.

Since the fire season of 2002, many of us have focused our efforts on wildfire prevention – especially when those fires occur near communities. But, it isn't that simple. Eliminating fire will not fix the problems we are facing. It will only make them worse. Forest thinning, stand replacement, regeneration, habitat regeneration and meadows would have occurred naturally had the area been thinned by wildfire. Often we do not do our part.

The key to having a healthy forest for future generations lies in our ability to mimic nature, to become committed forest stewards. It is truly like tending to a garden! If we choose not to allow wildland fires to burn, then we must find and fund other ways to create openings and maintain a variety of meadows;

return nutrients to the soil to encourage forest regeneration; recreate wildlife habitats; remove the old, dead and down forest fuels; and separate forest stands to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire across the landscape. A formidable task? OH, Yes! Impossible? NO!

In response the Healthy Forest Initiative (2003), Federal land managers across the country have been working to do just that. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of acres treated here in the Central Rockies. Land managers have used a variety of methods, including prescribed fire, pile burning and broadcast burns following treatment, because fire is very cost effective. In addition, a growing number of forest residents in the Wildland Urban Interface, (WUI - where forest fuels meet forest homes) are taking responsibility for stewardship of their own private forest, their safety, and the health of forests near their communities. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) are being written and implemented across the State, with over 164 completed to date.

What can you do? Is your community forested? Has your neighborhood written a CWPP? One part of a CWPP is to evaluate the forest health of your local area. What type of trees are growing here? Are they truly healthy, or stunted, stressed and just getting by? What should be the "natural" population of trees per acre? Is there disease or insect infestation? Do forest conditions pose a threat to the neighborhood? The community, not the government or any outside entity, needs to make these decisions. Additionally, the community

decides what should be done to improve the forest health, community safety and reduce the risk of wildfire damage.

There is a lot of science available today concerning forest health. One of the primary sources is CUSP and your local Colorado State Forest Service forester. We know the science and the local conditions and have access to project funding from a variety of sources for CWPP communities. Does writing a CWPP seem ominous? Both CUSP and the CSFS foresters can help with the actual creation of a plan that fits your community and only your community.

How does this work relate to the environment as an economic engine? Consider the 2002 Hayman fire - According to the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition the costs for the Hayman fire topped \$207 million. Suppression costs accounted for only 20 percent of the total. Working to create healthy forests will save us all green - both for the forests and for our wallets! Give us a call, and we will start right away.

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What would a Green Global Recovery look like and how can we all work to reach the economic and environmental goals of a green economy?

Everyday I look at the news and find little to be excited about. Jobs fall off the map, stocks ride a roller coaster, families reluctantly brace for foreclosures and bankruptcies. With this dismal outlook it is easy to understand why so many of our neighbors voice their concerns about our government (both local and national). However, anger and rhetoric do little to stimulate the economy and nothing to kick-start the on-the-ground change we need to free us from the quick sand that is our disheveled economy. Like many of you, I'm concerned and frustrated with the current state of affairs and would like to see a positive change in the right direction. However, I believe it's essential that our economic recovery not come at high cost to our natural environment.

I recently read a policy analysis written by Trevor Houser, Shashank Mohan and Robert Heilmayr for the World Resources Institute, that resonated with me. They propose several interesting ideas that may afford some *green* solutions to our lack-of-green (\$) issue. The report, *A Green Global Recovery? Assessing US Economic Stimulus and the Prospects for International Coordination** evaluates ways "to meet energy and climate policy goals as part of an economic recovery effort." The authors "assess a range of policy options currently under consideration" and "discuss the prospects of coordinating US actions with those of other major economies for broader effect."

In this brief review I'll introduce some of the ideas put forth by the authors and provide my personal take on them.

The authors note, "On average, for every billion dollars invested, our green recovery scenarios create 31,100 jobs and save the economy \$450 million per year in energy costs".

They also say that the ideas they propose are in no way exhaustive, and may not have widely-felt immediate impact, but they do say that "investments in energy efficiency will reduce costs immediately, as cheaper gas and power bills enable households to keep more of their income and the government to offset new debt obligations with lower energy expenditures".

The scenarios, drawn from "conversations with policy makers, non

governmental organizations, industry groups and academics" cover twelve concepts. For this review I've selected four:

1. Household weatherization: "Install insulation, new windows, and better light bulbs in residential dwellings."
2. Federal Building Efficiency: "Retrofit federal buildings to reduce overall energy demand."
3. Green Schools: "Provide funding to ensure that new school construction and renovations... are high efficiency."
4. Mass Transit Investment: "Fund "shovel ready" mass transit projects."

Household energy use accounts for about 11% of our national energy use. A home that is efficiently heated and cooled will save the homeowner money and can significantly reduce our overall energy demand. Weatherization not only frees up money for homeowners, but also helps support our local economy by keeping contractors busy and building supply yards financially solvent. At the CUSP office a rather small outlay in window coverings and building updates has significantly reduced our own energy bill. Tax credit programs, rebates, and other incentives, such as those currently available from the Governor's Energy Office (see rechargecolorado.com), will help homeowners to help themselves and the economy. In fact, the authors estimate that if 3-million households invested an average \$1,640 on such improvements, 25,100 jobs could be created and owners would save over \$207 million dollars per year. To me this is a no brainer. Insulate your home, invest in it's efficiency and save you and your family money!

Federal buildings, often old behemoths, "account for 4.6% of total commercial energy use". Retrofitting these relics would reduce energy consumption by over 83-trillion BTUs, saving over \$386.7 million a year, and creating another 25,300 jobs. Green schools, once again, are related to the tenet that an efficient structure is cheaper to heat and cool. The authors reviewed 30 school construction or retrofitting projects and found that schools could increase energy efficiency by 33.4% with an just a 1.65% increase in construction cost. This scenario creates 25,200 jobs and saves over \$609 million

dollars a year. In this day when schools continually have to cut teachers and services these savings could make a huge impact in, not only the quality of our children's education, but in our school district's bottom line.

I don't know about you, but for me a drive to Denver on I-25 feels like a high-speed demolition derby, filled with anger, white knuckle scares and far more cars than I am comfortable with. The mass transit scenario presented affords the U.S a savings of \$23.6 million a year and creates 34,500 jobs. Mass transit may not be the most realistic in our neck of the woods, but it should be considered as a viable alternative when in close proximity to urban areas (think of light rail all the way from the Springs to Denver!) Each mile we drive contributes significant amounts of pollution, relies on foreign imports, and whittles away at the few dollars that remain in our wallets.

The authors describe many other opportunities, and I think it's important that we consider such options as we work at rebuilding our country's economy. By building a green economy, the authors assert that we can have our cake and eat it too; we can protect the natural environment while creating jobs and saving some "green."

This article, the first of more to come, is intended to provide you with some fodder for future discussions, and of course, debate. I don't know the answers, nor do I think anyone else does for sure, but I do know answers come not from sitting idly by, but by considering the options and taking action.

Opinion piece by Jonathan Bruno

This article does not represent the opinion of CUSP, but of the individual writing it. The Opinion Section, a new addition to the Watershed Watch, is intended only to provide information and to stimulate a dialog. If you have comments or questions regarding the information provided in this article please direct them to Letters to the Watershed at CUSP@uppersouthplatte.org, and if you'd like share an opinion piece in a future edition, please contact jonathan@uppersouthplatte.org.

*Houser, Trevor., Mohan Shashank., Heilmayr, Robert. (2009). A green global recovery" assessing us economic stimulus and the prospects for international coordination. World Resource Institute, (PB09-3)



Water is the most essential element on Earth. It is also the most vulnerable resource. What goes into the air and what happens on the land comes out of our faucets. Therefore, to ensure the quality of life of the planet, we must start with the quality and health of our water. Our watershed is our past, our present and our future. Because we all depend on it, CUSP protects it. Starting in 2011, CUSP will begin a new giving campaign honoring the annual celebration of Earth Day. Over the next few months we will provide opportunities for supporting CUSP as we all work together to make a difference in our watershed and for our planet. Together we can make everyday Earth Day. A DONATION TO CUSP HELPS TO PROTECT YOUR WORLD AND YOUR WATER!

Inside this edition

Pg 1: Environment as an Economic Engine

Pg 2: A Moment with Wayne Snider

Pg 3: Many Thanks

Pg 4: CUSP by the numbers

Pg 5: Rare Earth Minerals

Bob Taylor Memorial Ice Fishing Contest

Pg 6: Winter Elk

Pg 7: Internships

Pg 8: Volunteer Heros

Pg 9: CUSP wildfire Team

Pg: 10 CWPPs and you!

Pg 11: Green Global Recovery

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