



# 2020 Annual Report

## DOUGLAS CREEK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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# Douglas Creek Conservation District

## What is the function of the Conservation District?

To take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the standards and needs of the local land user with conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. The authorities, power and structure are contained in the Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 35, Article 70.

## Mission:

To provide guidance and technical assistance to encourage and promote the wise use of natural resources within the district by private landowners and government land management agencies.

## Board Members

Bill Hume, President

Rosaly Coombs, Vice President

Scott Robertson, Secretary-Treasurer

Ron Reich, Supervisor

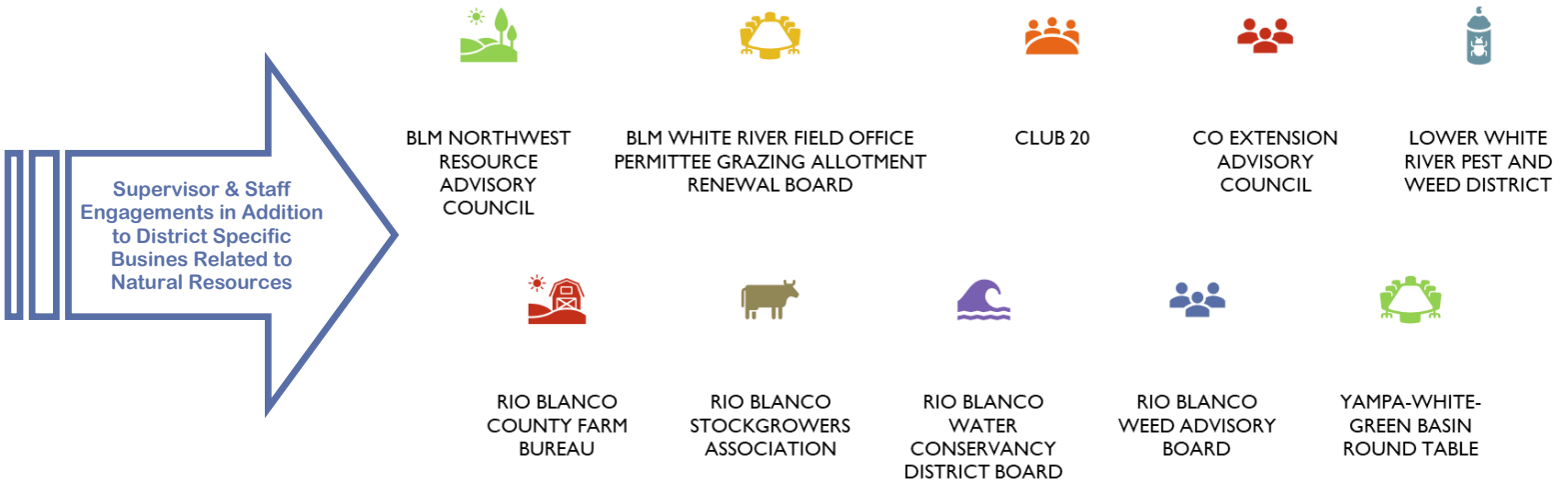
Jason Plummer, Supervisor

## Staff

Callie Hendrickson, Executive Director

Tristan Nielsen, District Manager

Kendra Young, District Conservation Technician



*In 2020, Douglas Creek CD Board members dedicated a total of 348 hours and traveled 2,930 miles working on district-related natural resource issues.*

## Where do your tax dollars go?

A constituent driven Long Range Plan of Work (LRP) which defines a three-year plan and goals for the District.

### Locally led conservation efforts

- White River Algae Study
- White River Integrated Water Initiative (formally known as IWMP)
- Restoration and Monitoring projects (Rangeland, Water, Riparian)
- Noxious Weed Control project
- Information and education on natural resource issues through the local newspaper, website, social media, newsletters, and demonstrations.

**Implementation of the locally led Rio Blanco Land and Natural Resources Plan and Policies** which gives the District the power to have locally led input on federal land management issues. Here are some samples of topics to which letters were submitted quoting policies from the Plan:

- National BLM Grazing Regulations
- Local BLM Grazing Permit Renewals
- U.S. Forest Service Yellow Jacket Timber Harvest Project
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations
- Northwest Colorado Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Greater Sage Grouse Conservation
- Vegetation Treatments
- Removal of excess horses from Rio Blanco County

**Technical Assistance (TA).** TA is offered at no-cost and provides the constituents that we serve with the knowledge and tools they need to conserve, maintain and restore the natural resources (soil, water, rangeland, wildlife) on their lands and improve the health of their operations for the future. The goal is to give customers personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to help them make informed decisions.



# ★ ACCOPMLISHMENTS ★

**Board Member Certification:** All five board members completed the Colorado State Conservation Board's Certification program. It provides valuable information for supervisors as to their duties, responsibilities, roles, etc. as elected public officials of their local Conservation District.



**Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP):** Two CRMPs were completed and three more are in various stages of being drafted. CRMPs combine voluntary efforts and resources from the Districts, private landowners, BLM and other interested partners who are interested in achieving common goals to improve natural resources. The Districts assist in seeking funding opportunities for various projects. Common projects across all CRMPs are brush management and water distribution improvements.

**White River Algae Study :** USGS was able to continue their data collection throughout 2020. Their new data collection of physical, chemical, and biological factors includes:

- 1) High-flow condition measurements
- 2) Channel surveys, grain size analysis, continuous water quality monitoring
- 3) Water-quality sampling
- 4) Algae sampling (chlorophyll a & taxonomy)
- 5) Isotope sampling (nitrogen source analysis)
- 6) Nutrient load/source area analysis.

Overall, USGS has seen increases in phosphorus and to a smaller degree, nitrogen concentrations and loads at mainstem and tributary sites during the last 20 years. Progressively lower algae concentrations have been reported in the river from 2018-20. Trout Unlimited and Colorado Parks and Wildlife have studied water temperature and taxonomy (bug) which will be included in USGS's final report.

The Districts' appreciate the local landowners, local governments, Colorado State Conservation Board, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife for their funds that assist in the progress of this study.

**Restoration & Monitoring Project:** Three years of comprehensive range monitoring on 200,000 acres in the Piceance East Douglas Herd Management Area is providing great scientific data verifying what species are using the forage at what time of the year. Mapping and spraying of noxious weeds help improve the forage and reduce the spread of unwanted species.

**White River Integrated Water Initiative:** Developing from local input and the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), a mission statement and four overall river goals were proposed for current and future generations involved with the White River:

Mission Statement: A community-based initiative to identify action promoting a healthy river that ensures a vibrant agricultural community and maintains healthy fisheries while protecting water rights, quantity, and quality with respect for the local customs, cultures, and property rights.

Goals:

- 1) Protect and preserve existing water rights and other beneficial water uses.
- 2) Protect and enhance water quantity and quality through promoting best management practices for:
  - A. Forest health
  - B. Riparian health
  - C. Rangeland health
  - D. Favorable conditions of streamflow
- 3) Identify opportunities for creation or improvement of infrastructure to support efficient consumptive and non-consumptive uses.
- 4) Support the development and maintenance of efficient and necessary long-term storage solutions that will improve, enhance and ensure irrigation, river health, water quantity, water quality, and native and recreational fisheries.

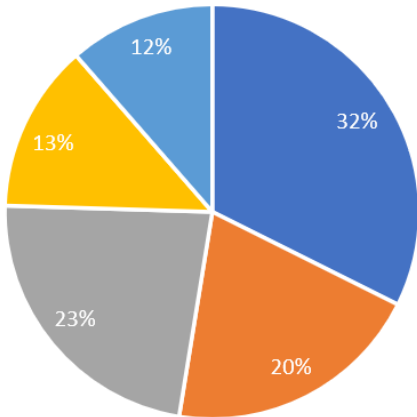
The Districts appreciate the River Network's financial support on phase 1 of this effort and the Yampa-White-Green Basin Round Table's initial approval of the Colorado Water Conservation Board grant application waiting for final approval.

**Excess "Wild" Horses:** The Districts have worked tirelessly with BLM at the local, State, and national levels to encourage the removal of all excess horses from the County. Multiple letters and phone calls are made monthly and we will continue all efforts to support proactive management of horses within the Appropriate Management Level (AML) to protect the health of the range and the horses. There are roughly 1,400 horses in Rio Blanco County where the AML is only 135-235.

**District Conservation Technician (DCT):** Kendra Young was hired in April 2020 as a partnership position between the Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). She provides technical assistance to numerous landowners with livestock water and irrigation pipeline implantation, fire mitigation (post-burn), soil samples, easement surveying, grazing plans, CRMP plans, and NRCS programmatic reviews. Additionally, she assists with providing natural resource information and education outreach. Kendra and Executive Director, Callie, demonstrated the River Trailer at the Rangely fishing Derby earlier in the year.

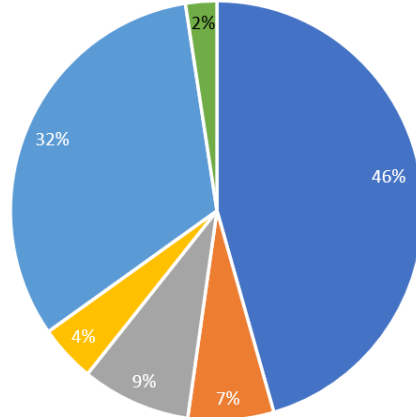
# \$\$ Summary of 2020 Financials \$\$

## Income



- County Contribution
- Property Tax
- State (CSCB) Funding
- Landowner Volunteer Contributions
- Other (interest, mtg contributions)

## Expenses



- Management, Projects, & Admin Expense Reimbursement to White River CD
- Dues
- Insurance
- Information/Education
- Mill Levy Election
- Other (Incl. accounting & meals)

## Partners



Bureau of Land Management	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	Colorado River Conservation District	Elk Creek Ranch	Local Landowners	Meeker Sanitation District	Natural Resource Conservation Service
Rio Blanco County	Rio Blanco County Farm Bureau	Rio Blanco Stockgrowers Association	Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District	River's Edge West	Town of Meeker	Town of Rangely
Trout Unlimited	US Forest Service	US Geological Survey	West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Assn.	White River Alliance	White River Conservation District	Yellow Jacket Water Conservancy District



WRIWI Public Input Sessions Winter 2020



2nd Place September Fest Parade Float



Water Law in a Nutshell Seminar



Showing the River Trailer during the Fishing Derby at Kenney Reservoir

Douglas Creek Conservation District



Range Monitoring Cage