

# White River & Douglas Creek Conservation Districts Natural Resources Conservation Service

April 2015

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## Developing a Land & Resource Use Plan for Your Community

The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts (Districts) are made up of locally elected landowners who provide leadership in the wise use of the natural resources within the Districts' boundaries. In partnership with Rio Blanco County, the Districts will be developing a Land & Natural Resource Use Plan and Policy ("Plan") to translate their statutory mandate (Colorado Revised Statutes § 35-70) into land management policy and direction guided by local landowners. The policies and powers of the Districts encompass the obligation to protect the customs and culture of the people of the Districts and to provide for community stability. The Districts will develop the Plan as a guide to efficiently and effectively use the resources while protecting the environment.

The key to the success of this important Plan is a collaborative effort with landowner input. This Plan will identify the Districts' and County's policies to facilitate, protect, and preserve the utilization and conservation of natural resources. These policies will support agricultural concerns; protect private property rights; protect and enhance the customs, cultures, and the economy; protect the tax base; assure the well-being of the people; and provide for the public health, safety, and welfare of the Districts' citizens.

Once developed, the Plan will be applied to County, State, and federal regulatory frameworks that govern the management of private, state, and federal land in regards to the rangeland, soil, water, wildlife, air, and energy resources. Federal law requires federal agencies to give meaningful consideration to policies asserted in plans developed by local governments, including conservation districts.

Look for information on public meetings this summer to provide your input.

For More Information Contact the District office

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## Tire Tanks Have Arrived!



We currently have 11 Ft tire tanks for sale. They are indestructible and make great water tanks for livestock. They sell for \$600 each plus loading charge.

## BLM Excess Horse Removal Plan

The BLM WRFO (White River Field Office) is proposing to gather excess wild horses in the West Douglas Herd Area (WDHA) and the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (PEDHMA). Within the WRFO, the priority would be to remove excess wild horses from within and adjacent to the WDHA. However, if it becomes difficult to gather excess wild horses from that area, the WRFO would gather excess wild horses from areas within and adjacent to the PEDHMA. The WRFO is tentatively allocated space in holding facilities for up to 167 excess wild horses in fiscal year 2015; gather of any excess wild horses within the PEDHMA is contingent upon whether or not (and if so, how many) excess wild horses are gathered and removed from the WDHA.

The White River & Douglas Creek Conservation Districts are in full support of the BLM upholding their White River resource Management Plan (WRRMP) by conducting a roundup of all excess horses in Rio Blanco County. The herd numbers inside and outside of the Piceance East Herd Management Area (PEDHMA) have well exceeded the management plan's maximum population and we expect the BLM to comply with the policy as stated in the WRRMP. In fact, the plan calls for zero horses outside the PEDHMA.

In order to sustain range health in the arid climate of Rio Blanco County, grazing management strategies are a necessity. Because BLM cannot actively manage the horses by moving them from one location to another, the horses don't give the forage a rest so it can recover from grazing. Repeated heavy grazing that removes too much leaf material weakens plant root structure making it difficult for plants to recover. As a result, less forage is available for grazing and pastures are vulnerable to weed invasion and erosion. Horses are very selective and will repeatedly graze the best-tasting and nutritious plants, stressing them beyond their ability to survive. A specific example is the overgrazing by excess horses on newly seeded oil and gas reclamation areas. They are diminishing the long-term success of the reclaims, causing increased erosion and stormwater issues and reducing the BLM's own goal of increasing biodiversity, and sustainable restoration.

## Polyacrylamide (PAM)

### Cross-Linked:

- Hold water
- 1mm-7mm crystals
- Forms Hydrated Gel
- Water holding capacity

### Linear PAM

- Dissolves in water
- Forms a viscous slurry– i.e. retains fluidity
- Used for erosion control, flocculent, dust prevention, water clarification, pond sealing, ditch sealing.

PAM product is directly spread on sites where you plan quick basic remediation - like on dam areas where there are known leaks and for setting up the surface of a new pond prior to filling with water; granular PAM is also used for flooded field irrigation and ditch projects when premixed in water - the resulting viscous mix introduced to water flow; Slow release tabs are used held in mesh bags staked into water flow in ditch systems, pond inlets and for flooded field irrigation, requiring significantly less labor and equipment; We have the various types of PAM for sale .



## Web Soil Survey

Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent in the near future. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information.

Soil surveys can be used for general farm, local, and wider area planning. Onsite investigation is needed in some cases, such as soil quality assessments and certain conservation and engineering applications. For more detailed information, contact your local USDA Service Center or.

To access Web Soil Survey please go to: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>

## NRCS in Colorado Gets a New State Conservationist

The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts want to welcome Clint Evans to Colorado. Clint is the new Colorado NRCS State Conservationist. Prior to coming to Colorado, he was the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in Idaho. Clint is very well respected by the Idaho Association of Conservation Districts and we look forward to working with him.

## New Rangeland Management Specialist– Dusty Jagger

“I started as your Rangeland Management Specialist with NRCS in November 2014. My current position is split 50/50 serving Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. I have been with NRCS about 4 years prior working for South Dakota State University Extension Service as a Range Management Educator. I grew up in South Dakota where my family raised Black Angus cattle and put up hay. During college I attended Farrier School and have shod horses for the past 12 years. My mom and brother live in a small village near Stuttgart Germany where my mom is a teacher and brother manages the recreation activities on Patch and Panzer military bases. I look forward to working with you and if you have any questions or would like to visit please feel free to give me a call. The field season will be hitting us soon and I may be hard to catch in the office but will be glad to meet with you as soon as I can.”

“I would like to work with interested producers on monitoring annual range production across the county; if you are interested in this project please let me know. We need to get exclosure cages put out as soon as possible. This monitoring project will help producers gain an idea of the pounds of production their rangelands are producing, and after the grazing season we can look at how many pounds were taken off by livestock, wildlife, and other influences.

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## 2015 Annual Meeting

The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts held their Annual Meetings and Banquets in January and February respectively. This year the District partnered with Community Agriculture Alliance to provide a Water Workshop featuring the Water Issues Affecting Rio Blanco County. We heard from Jay Gallagher, Northwest Representative of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, reporting on the State Water Plan and the Yama, White, Green River Basin Plans. Water Attorney, Aaron Clay, discussed Prior Appropriations Law vs. Public Trust Doctrine to help people understand the difference and recognize the real possibility of a future ballot initiative proposing Colorado water law be changed to the Public Trust Doctrine. In addition, Jim Prokrandt, with the Colorado River Water Conservation District, spoke at the White River meeting about West Slope Water Obligations. Lastly, the Districts' Executive Director, Callie Hendrickson gave the District Update for 2014 and goals moving into 2015.

