



*Promoting the wise use of all
natural resources*

Spring 2016

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Sec/Trea: Wade Cox
Supv: Scott Robertson

White River Board:

Pres: Neil Brennan
V. Pres: Gary Moyer
Sec/Trea: JD Amick
Supv: Bill Lake
Supv: Margie Joy

Contact Information:

Phone:
970.878.5628 ext. 101
Email:
Whiterivered@gmail.com
Callie.districts@gmail.com

District Update

Land and Resource Use Plan:

The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts with Rio Blanco County are developing the Land and Resource Use Plan as a tool that allows local governments to have a substantive impact on federal decisions, plans, policies, and programs. In fact, federal agency consideration of a local land use plan, or resource plan, can play a key role in the success of a local government engaging as a cooperating agency or with consistency review under the National Environmental Policy Act, coordination under the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act, or National Forest Management Act, as well as assisting in the Governor’s consistency review.

The Districts and the County held public input sessions across Rio Blanco County March 8-9, 2016, and the Plan was available for public comment the entire month of March. During the input sessions and comment period, we received a lot of valuable input. On May 16, 2016, the Plan will be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors of both Districts and the County Commissioners. The Plan will be available for public comment for 10 days after this review. If there are not any significant changes after the 10 day comment period, the Plan will be formally adopted at each Board’s June meeting. The Plan is available for viewing at www.rioblancolup.com.

Excess Horse Campaign:

The Districts were represented at the Wild Horse Advisory Board meeting in Redmond, Oregon on April 13-14 by Executive Director Callie Hendrickson. Callie spoke on behalf of the Districts and offered their support of fertility control and adoption programs, however emphasized the strong need for removal of excess horses. She stated; “Without a monumental increase in the number of excess horses directly removed, all fertility control research and adoption discussions are simply a distraction from the real issue of just how significantly the excess horses are degrading the land.”

The Districts, in partnership with the National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition are actively promoting the Excess Horse Campaign by means of social media. Social media has enabled the District to engage people on a much broader scale, reaching a diverse demographic nationwide. For more information, and to get involved please visit www.wildhorserange.org.

For additional information on any of these topics please stop by the District office at 351 7th Street in Meeker, or call 970-878-5628 Ext. 101.

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District Staff Attends BLM Sage-Grouse Meeting

The White River and Douglas Creek staff attended the BLM's Stakeholder Workshop titled, "The Next Step: Implementing for the Future", in Grand Junction on April 19, 2016. Multiple Department of Interior staff from Washington D.C. and Colorado BLM Director, Ruth Welch, spoke at the meeting. They expressed their desire to hear the stakeholders' questions, concerns, and input on the draft policies that will guide the implementation of the Plan. The policies were not available for review during the meeting.

Breakouts of the meeting included Listening Sessions in smaller groups and Information Sessions on Adaptive Management, Grazing, Mitigation, Oil and Gas Prioritization, and Surface Disturbance. During the Listening Sessions and the general session, the DOI/BLM staff heard frustration from the stakeholders regarding the changes in the "Colorado Plan". A multitude of stakeholders worked on the State Plan for two years to reach compromise we could all live with and the Plan came back from Washington D.C. with "consistency" aspects. After hearing all the frustrations, Deputy Assistant Secretary - Land and Minerals Management, Jim Lyons, assured the group that this was not a top down Plan. He had worked with each of the State BLM directors and stakeholders to finalize the Plans.

We were pleased to hear that, "well-managed livestock grazing is compatible with Greater Sage Grouse (GRSG) conservation". However, there will be changes in prioritization and management of grazing permits. In regards to processing permits, monitoring, field checks, thresholds and responses, Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) will generally be the highest priority and additional criteria may be included.

White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts' Executive Director, Callie Hendrickson's, final request of the BLM staff was, "We ask that while you are drafting the policies to implement this Plan, you recognize and consider all the other current regulations and stipulations that the public land users must already adhere to. They have to operate within so many other federal, state, and local regulations it is nearly impossible to function. The sage grouse regulations are piled on top of all the others."

Stock Tank Escape Ladders

The below design was developed by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, and will meet the requirements of NRCS Standard 614. The escape ladders are designed to help wildlife escape watering facilities to prevent drowning.

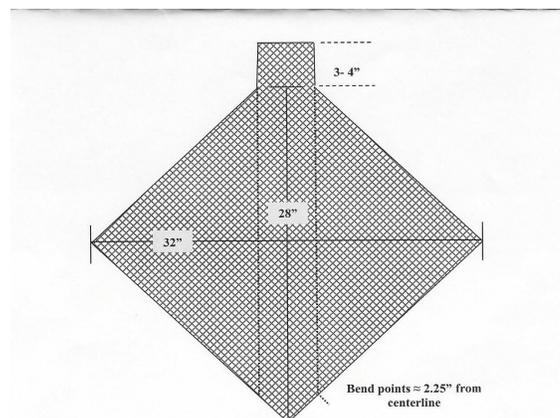
The design is somewhat like a diamond. The ramp length is approximately 28 inches, and the "wings" to be bent down are approximately 32 inches across.

They are made of 14 gauge expanded metal with 3/4 inch holes for the ladder effect. A pattern can be made from thick sheet metal, clamp it on the expanded metal, and cut them out with a cutting torch or plasma cutter, using the pattern as a template. One 4' x 10' sheet of expanded metal will yield six ladders.

After cutting the design out, the metal is bent to make the sloped sides or "wings" for the ramp. 3/16" rod can be used to form the hangers for round rim and rimless tanks, or use a bolt, washer, and nut to secure them to the tank. Another option for hanging the ladder is to leave a 3-4 inch tail on your diamond shape cutout, making it more kite shaped (see diagram below), after bending the wings, bend the tail in a half circle and use it as the hanger.

The ladders can be painted or dipped with a neutral color farm implement paint to prevent rusting. Be sure the paint is non-toxic after drying.

The design can also be modified for rubber tire tanks, by rounding the outer edge of the "wings".



Sage Grouse Habitat Seed

Greater Sage-Grouse is a sagebrush obligate found throughout the Intermountain West. Their habitat requirements vary by season including; dense sagebrush for nesting cover and winter forage, open areas for spring breeding leks, and native forbs and grasses for spring and summer diets. Efforts to restore these habitats have recently increased. The following lists of plant species are appropriate for restoring or improving Sage-Grouse habitat.



Grasses

Indian ricegrass, Sand bluestem, Bottlebrush squirreltail, Thickspike wheatgrass, Streambank wheatgrass, Slender wheatgrass, Needle and thread, Prairie junegrass, Great basin wildrye, Western wheatgrass, Muttongrass, Canby bluegrass, Sandberg bluegrass, Bluebunch wheatgrass, Nuttall alkaligrass*, Alkali sacton, Sand dropseed

Legumes

Cicer milkvetch*, White prairie clover, Purple prairie clover, Northern sweetvetch, Birdsfoot trefoil*, Silverleaf lupine, Tailcup lupine, Falcata alfalfa*, Sainfoin*, Strawberry clover*, American vetch

Forbs

Western yarrow, Pacific aster, Blueleaf aster, Canadian milkvetch, Arrowleaf balsamroot, Early Indian paintbrush, Rocky mountain beebplant, Purple coneflower, Wyeth buckwheat, Sulfur flower, Blanket flower, Lewis flax, Blue flax*, Scarlet flax*, Fernleaf biscuitroot, Prairie aster, Hooker evening primrose, Sweet anise, Broadbeard penstemon, Firecracker penstemon, Palmer penstemon, Rocky mountain penstemon, Prairie coneflower, Small burnet*, Scarlet globemallow, Gooseberry-leaf globemallow, Munro globemallow, Golden banner, Mule's ears

Shrubs

Low sage, Basin big sagebrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, Fourwing saltbrush, Gardner saltbrush, Rubber rabbitbrush, Spiny hopsage, Winterfat, Antelope bitterbrush, Oakbrush sumac, Golden currant, Silver buffaloberry, Common snowberry, Mountain snowberry.

* Denotes species introduced into North America.

~Source: Granite Seed Company

Diverse Native Plant Communities Protect Against Erosion, Store More Water, And Foster Healthy Soil. Rangelands Are Like an Upside-down Forest.

Contributed by Tiffany Jehorek, NRCS.

On the sage-steppe, most of the plant matter grows below your feet. A healthy sagebrush plant community includes shrubs (like sagebrush), grasses (like bluebunch wheatgrass and Sandberg bluegrass) and forbs (like lupine, maiden blue-eyed Mary, and buckwheat). Scientists lump individual plant species into 'functional/structural groups' based on features they have in common, such as their shape above and below ground and how long they live.

Each type of plant uses a different strategy to take advantage of niches and resources on the sagebrush sea. For example, annual plants that live only one year 'get rich quick' by putting their energy into producing seeds instead of well-developed roots. Perennial plants that come up every year are 'long-term investors' that put down deeper roots, allowing them to ride out drought years.

Plants roots provide organic matter at a variety of depths, which helps feed billions of soil organisms and assists in essential water and nutrient cycling that drives land productivity. For instance, some species, like lupine, help fix nitrogen in the soil, which in turn nourishes other plants. Why is this a benefit? Building drought resilience requires a diverse composition and structure in the plant community and helps the land capture, store and safely release the rain and snow.

**White River and Douglas Creek
Conservation Districts**
351 7th St
PO Box 837
Meeker, CO 81641



*District Website address:
www.whiterivercd.com*

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UPCOMING EVENTS May/June/July

- Douglas Creek Meetings: May 4, June 1, July 6
- White River Meetings: May 9, June 13, July 11
 - **OFFICE CLOSED:**
Memorial Day, May 30
Independence Day, July 4



The District still has tire tanks for sale! They are 11 feet in diameter, and nearly indestructible.

For more info call the District office at:
878-5628 ext. 101

DISTRICT EQUIPMENT

HDPE Fusion Machine with a Facer and Heater. It has capabilities to fuse 1"-4" pipe. The rental rate is \$50/day.

Weed Sprayers: ATV mounted weed sprayer and also one that fits in the back of the truck. Both rent for \$50/week. Available in Meeker & Rangely.

No Till Drill: Truax no till drill available for \$7.50/acre. It is reserved on a first come first serve basis. It has 3 seed boxes and can be calibrated for more accuracy.

Broadcast Seeder: ATV mounted broadcast seeder available at \$50/day.

Call the District at: 970.878.5628 ext. 101 or email whiterivercd@gmail.com for more information.