

San Juan Public Lands People

News for San Juan Public Lands employees, retirees & partners

San Juan RC&D Named Weed Partner of the Year

DURANGO - The San Juan Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) has been awarded the U.S. Forest Service 2011 Award for Outstanding Partner against Invasive Species. This national award recognizes a agency partner who demonstrates outstanding collaboration and achievements related to the management of noxious weeds at the national, regional or community level.



To date, 42,872 acres have been inventoried, and 4,137 acres of noxious weeds have been treated under the San Juan RC&D's guidance.

County and the Upper San Juan Weed District hired Future Farmers of America students to complete noxious weed inventories.

Dolores County hired a local college student to provide expertise in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, while the Upper San Juan Weed Control District contracted with its local Soil Conservation District Office for GIS work.

Montezuma County and La Plata Counties used local contractors and county personnel to treat project areas, while Dolores and Upper San Juan Weed District used county personnel exclusively.

The RC&D also hired two locally qualified individuals to provide overall technical support and developed user guides for the use of Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) and GIS applications.

- Ann Bond

In 2010, the San Juan National Forest received \$1.5 million through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act to treat noxious weeds in fuel-reduction areas with the goal of reducing the threat that noxious weeds would invade cleared areas.

Seventy six project areas on National Forest lands in six southwestern Colorado counties were identified for treatment.

The areas were inventoried and treated through participating agreements with the Dove Creek Mandatory Weed Control District and the La Plata, Montezuma, and the Upper San Juan Weed Control District. The San Juan RC&D provided technical training and project oversight to the counties.

"The Forest Service is proud to recognize RC&D for its creativity and perseverance in managing and working with several cooperators employing different management strategies to accomplish their respective shares of work," said San Juan National Forest Supervisor Mark Stiles.

The goals were not only to manage noxious weeds, but to create local jobs and upgrade equipment and skills. Dolores



The project provided skilled summer jobs to youth and exposed students to new technology.



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SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Richard Detailed as FMO



DURANGO - Richard Bustamante, currently District Fire Management Officer for the Sandia RD of the Cibola NF in Tijeras, New Mexico, will be stepping in as San Juan Public Lands Forest Fire Management Officer this summer. His special detail will be from May to September.

Richard will work out of the Supervisor’s Office overseeing management of the Durango Interagency Fire Dispatch Center, Helitack Crew, Tanker Base and San Juan Interagency Hotshot Crew. He’ll also coordinate fire activities with the ranger districts.

Richard started his federal career in 1993 as a seasonal firefighter on the Apache/Sitgreaves NF in Arizona, while in college. In 2000 he landed a job as Engine Captain for the BLM Farmington Field Office in New Mexico.

In 2003 he moved to Oregon as Fire Operations Supervisor for the BLM Vale Field Office. In 2005, he moved back to New Mexico as Assistant FMO for the Magdalena RD of the Cibola NF, taking his current FMO position on the Sandia RD in 2008.

Richard holds a Bachelor’s degree in Agriculture from New Mexico State University. He and wife, Katie, have two sons; Baily, 10, and 6, Ethan. The family enjoys hunting and fishing. Katie is from Farmington, and Richard grew up in Reserve, a small town in the Gila NF.

“I am very excited for this opportunity to gain experience, meet new people, and challenge myself while enjoying the wonderful landscape that Durango has to offer during the summer months,” he says. - Ann Bond



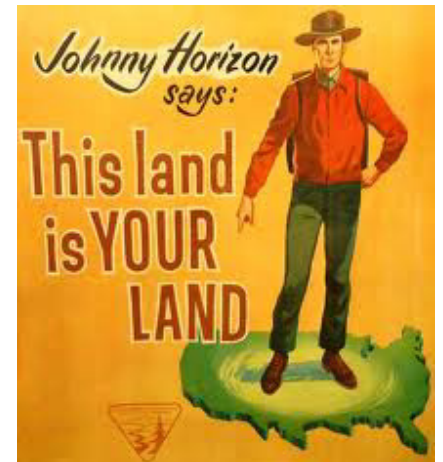
Allen is New PET



DURANGO - Alan White is a new BLM Tres Rios Petroleum Engineering Technician (PET) working out of the PLC on oil and gas inspections. Alan moved here from Silt, Colorado, where he was a BLM PET for the Colorado River Valley Field Office.

Alan started his federal career in 1987 as a U.S. Army Combat Arms Specialist and also held a temporary BLM position in Rawlins, Wyoming, from 2004 to 2006. He has an Associate’s degree in Criminal Justice from Tulsa Community College and has attended several vocational/technical schools.

Alan says he looks forward to working in the field. - Ann Bond



View of Durango from Animas City Mountain, managed by Tres Rio Field Office, BLM

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Jenn Takes on Two New Jobs!



DURANGO - Jennifer Jardine, former Dolores RD Range Program Lead, is the new BLM Tres Rios Lands and Realty Specialist working in the PLC on BLM land exchanges, acquisitions, rights of way, communication sites, easements, etc.

Jenn started her federal career in 1996 as a BLM seasonal firefighter in Vale, Oregon. She also worked in dispatch and on a fire effects crew at Grand Canyon NP before being hired as Rangeland Management Specialist trainee on the Medicine Bow-Routt NF Yampa RD in 2000. In 2002, Jenn moved to Bayfield as Columbine Rangeland Management Specialist. In 2007, she transferred to Dolores as Rangeland Management Specialist and became Range Program Lead in 2009.

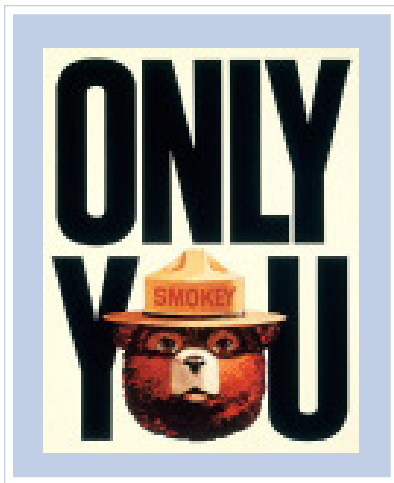
Jenn has been a member of the Society of Rangeland Management since 1998, serving on the board of directors and as newsletter editor for its Colorado chapter. She has also worked in the Durango Interagency Fire Dispatch Center. Jenn has a Bachelor's degree in Rangeland Resources from Oregon State University. She and husband, Parker, have a new baby boy, Evan, Vizsla dog, Lily, and four chickens.



Evan Reed Jardine, born March 7, 2012 9:18 am, 7 lbs 4oz, 19 3/4" long

"I'm really excited to start my new position," Jenn says. "I've worked in range for 12 years, so this will be a new challenge. I will miss all the grazing permittees I worked with, but it will be fun to get to know a whole new set of permittees and public contacts."

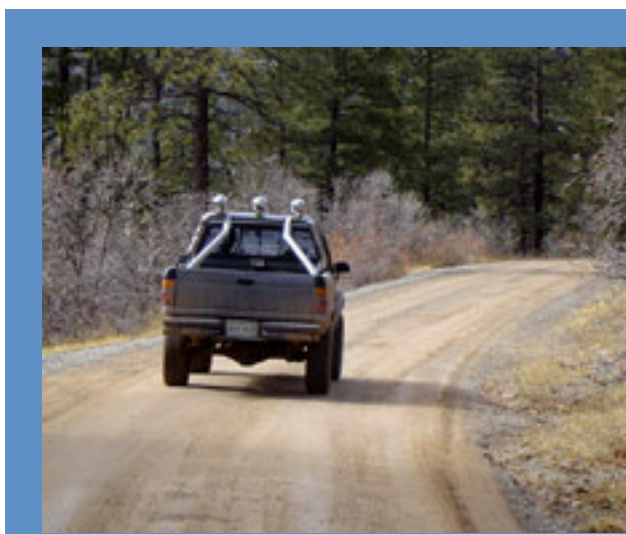
- Ann Bond



Brian has a New Boy



DURANGO - San Juan NF Recreation Staff Brian and his wife, Courtney, welcomed Graham White into their family on Feb 7, weighing in at 7 lbs 12 oz and measuring 20". Brian and Courtney are also the parents of Sophia, 2.



Most Used San Juan NF Roads

National Forest System Road	Average Daily Traffic Count
# 631 Piedra	1,032
# 585 South Mineral	564
# 171 Junction Creek	545
# 665 Nipple Mountain	285
# 608 Sauls Creek	284
# 526 Dolores-Norwood	260
# 135 Beaver Meadows	236
# 561 West Mancos	234
# 578 Hermosa Park	196
# 640 Williams Creek	187

Information courtesy San Juan NF Engineering Department

COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT

Chris Honored for Forest Protection

BAYFIELD - Chris Schultz, Columbine RD Wildlife Biologist since 2004, has been named Forest Protection Officer of the Year by the USFS Law Enforcement and Investigations Director.

The award honors Chris for his "willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty, resulting in exceptional achievement in Forest Service compliance duties or support to the Law Enforcement Investigation Program during Fiscal Year 2011."

Chris was presented the award in Vancouver, Washington, this month for his Forest Protection Officer work on the Columbine RD in 2011, when the district was without a Law Enforcement Officer (LEO).

Chris spent numerous days patrolling the district to provide resource protection and educational interaction. When LEO Shawn Cave came on board, Chris helped orient him to the district and law enforcement concerns.

The award recognizes Chris for volunteering time, in addition to work hours. He was specifically cited for helping enforce new travel management restrictions across the district, snowmobile restrictions on Molas Pass, seasonal motorized wildlife closures in the HD Mountains during hunting seasons, and camping closures in Junction Creek.

"I'm still amazed and humbled to have been nominated and ultimately selected," Chris says.

- Ann Bond



VANCOUVER, WA - Chris Schultz, Columbine RD Wildlife Biologist, receives the USFS 2011 Law Enforcement and Investigations Director's Award for Forest Protection Officer of the Year on Wednesday, April 11, 2012. (Left to Right): Tracey Perry, Deputy Director LE&I, Chris and David Ferrell, Director of Law Enforcement & Investigations.



And Marcus Makes 3!



Columbine GIS guru-ette, Jessey Ramirez, is back on the job 20 hours a week in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but her main focus continues to be the job of new momma to Marcus Ramirez, born January 26.

End of Winter Thank You



The Columbine RD held a volunteer appreciation day in March to thank the Vallecito Nordic Trail volunteers who groom free XC ski trails for the public under permit. District Ranger Matt Janowiak served homemade elk jerky, cookies and hot chocolate at the trailhead to volunteers, including USFS retirees Ron Klatt and Carolyn Long.

PAGOSA RANGER DISTRICT



Becca Moves to Lands

PAGOSA SPRINGS - Becca Smith, former Pagosa RD Hydrologist since 2001, was named the District's Lands and Minerals Specialist back in January of this year.

Becca began her federal career in 1990 as a BLM Geologist in Burley, Idaho.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Geology from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut and a Master's degree in Geology from Colorado State University.

Becca's former hydrology position is currently being covered by Ivan Geroy, who also works in the PLC.



- Ann Bond

Williams Creek CG Closed for Safety



PAGOSA SPRINGS - The Williams Creek Campground will be closed this season due to an outbreak of tree disease in the heavily forested campground.

Over the past decade, the Pagosa RD has been treating an aggressive outbreak of *Armillaria*. The only effective treatment for *Armillaria* is removal of affected trees and those immediately adjacent, because the disease spreads through intertwined root systems. Despite removal of more than 400 trees, monitoring has revealed up to 90 percent of the campground's remaining spruce trees may also be infected.

"Over the winter, at least 17 green trees came down, blocking roads, crashing onto tables and through campsites," said Paul Blackman, Pagosa District Recreation Coordinator. "Trees that otherwise appear healthy can fall suddenly without warning once enough of their root system has been compromised. This, of course, would put campers at great risk of injury and/or property loss."

Crews will be removing trees in the campground spring through fall, and public entry will be prohibited through a Supervisor's Order. Blackman says a portion of the campground may be reopened next summer, but the sections with denser stands of spruce may require several years to effectively treat.

Other nearby USFS campgrounds will remain open, including Teal, Cimarrona and Palisades Horse campgrounds north of Williams Creek Reservoir, and Bridge Campground to the south. Dispersed camping is prohibited within ¼ mile of the Williams Creek Road, except in two designated sites.



- Ann Bond



View from
Quartz Ridge,
San Juan
National Forest

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE



Ben Leaving for Wyoming



DOLORES - Ben Smith, USFS Range Technician at the Dolores Public Lands Office for the past three years, is leaving this summer for Wyoming to take the position of Wild Horse & Burro Specialist at the BLM Rawlins Field Office.

Ben started his federal career in Utah as a seasonal Range Tech on the Manti La Sal National Forest working on an engine crew for the Ephraim Ranger District in 2005. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture from Southern Utah University.

Ben enjoys bow hunting and is married to Mariah with a daughter Evalyn. He says he is proud of the relationship he has built with grazing permittees on the San Juan National Forest. "I have enjoyed my time here," he says. "The country is incredible topped only by the people who work on it." - Ann Bond



Nate's New in Wildlife



DOLORES - Nate West is the new Tres Rios Field Office Wildlife Biologist, working as BLM Wildlife Program Lead out of the Dolores Public Lands Office.

Nate began his federal career in 2002 as a USFS Land Use Compliance Officer for the Medicine Bow-Routt NF Douglas RD. In 2005, he signed on as Staff Sargent for the U.S. Army 133rd Engineer Company in Tallil, Iraq. In 2006, Nate went to work in Oil and Gas as a BLM Natural Resource Specialist in Vernal, Utah, but soon switched over to BLM Wildlife Biologist in Newcastle, Wyoming, where he has been until now.

Nate holds a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Biology and Management from the University of Wyoming, and spent 10 years in the Wyoming Army National Guard with the 133rd Engineer Company. He has also worked in construction and telecommunications.

He and wife, Jill, have four children; Norah, 8; Nolan, 6; Julia, 4; and Joel, 2. Their oldest "child" is Abby the dog, who will be 10 this fall. The family enjoys fishing, camping, tee ball and softball. - Ann Bond



Jeff Will be New Rec Planner



DOLORES - Jeff Christenson will be the new BLM Tres Rios Field Office Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner working out of the Dolores Public Lands Office. He'll be handling Special Recreation Permits, Wilderness Study Areas, Visual Resource Management, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Travel Management Planning.

Jeff began his federal career as a seasonal on USFS trail crews on the Willamette NF Bend-Fort RD in 1995. In 1997, he went to work for the BLM Coos Bay District, Umpqua Resource Area as lead seasonal Recreation Technician at the Loon Lake Recreation Site in Oregon.

In 2000 he went to the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office as a seasonal Recreation Technician, before landing at the BLM Challis Field Office in Idaho, where he's been the Recreation Planner since 2001.

Jeff holds a degree in Forestry Recreation with a minor in Planning from Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, where he grew up. His wife, Emily, is from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and has a teaching degree with a minor in Music from Fort Lewis College, Durango. They have a son, Kelter, 6, and daughter, Kyah, 3. Rounding out the family is dog, Tanis, and cat, Taz. Jeff enjoys white-water boating, mountain biking and backpacking.

"I look forward to meeting new challenges and exploring new country with my family," Jeff says. - Ann Bond

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE



Project Coordinator Ashton Hargrave inspects a ponderosa seedling.

A Forest for the Future



DOVE CREEK - Soon after the Narraguinne and Bradfield fires scorched 8,900 acres of the San Juan National Forest southeast of Dove Creek in 2009, the Dolores Ranger District began a recovery effort that continues today.

“When we surveyed the area in the spring of 2010, it looked like a moonscape,” said Ashton Hargrave, Dolores District Forester. “All of the trees were dead or scorched. The seed sources necessary to maintain the forest were gone, and the areas were on the path to becoming oak meadows. We opted to do something to try and influence the natural course.”

Hargrave put in a call to the Charles E. Bessey Nursery in Nebraska, the nation’s oldest federal tree nursery. Pine cones that had been collected in the Dolores District’s Doe Spring area back in 1983 were pulled from storage and germinated. Because they had come from local stock, the seedlings would be genetically disposed to survive the local climate and soils.

This spring those seedlings came home to the San Juan, after growing at the nursery for more than a year and being frozen over the past winter to prepare them for spring planting. They are the hope for a future pine forest on 160 acres of the burned area.

Cutting Edge Forestry of Oregon was hired under contract to plant 48,000 of the pine seedlings.

“They prepared a microsite for each planting by clearing a small area so the seedlings won’t have to compete with other vegetation,” said Hargrave, who oversaw the operation. “Seedlings were planted next to standing dead trees, clumps of oak, rocks or stumps to provide shade and shelter.”

Each seedling was planted with a handful of biochar, a carbon-based soil amendment produced by cooking wood in the absence of oxygen. Although biochar does not provide nutrients directly, it does create a habitat for organisms that facilitate the exchange of nutrients from the soil to the trees.



The seedlings were planted with biochar to help them survive.

Current studies show an increase in the growth and survival of seedlings planted with biochar.

“We wet the biochar beforehand to help offer a little extra water transport to each seedling’s root system for a short period of time,” Hargrave said. “The immediate goal is to help them get through May and June when we typically don’t have much rain.”

About 300 seedlings were planted per acre in 20 to 40 acre plots to create “seed islands,” in an effort to provide a source for future pine forests.

“There are scattered trees in the area with green crowns, but those trees are struggling to survive,” Hargrave said. “We don’t expect that most of the trees that survived the high intensity fire will be able to produce enough cones to re-establish the forest.”

That hope will rest with the seedlings planted last week. Hargrave estimates those that thrive will reach breast height in 15 to 20 years, and will begin bearing cones in 30 years. Stocking surveys will be conducted over the next five years to measure their growth and monitor their survival.

In addition to the replanting, other burned area recovery projects over the past two years have included aerially re-seeding with grasses, rebuilding of range fences and reinforcement of damaged bridges.



A contract crew of a dozen planters completed the job in just a few days this spring.

- Ann Bond