



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Partnership Peaks

San Juan National Forest Partner Stories, Opportunities, and Updates

Summer 2022



Florida River in summer

FIELD SEASON IS FIRE SEASON

By Lorena Williams

It's been a busy summer already, with field season and fire season kicking off at the same time. San Juan National Forest employees and all of our partner organizations are in full swing carrying out the projects they spent the winter planning.

During an unusually hot and windy spring like we've experienced in Southwest Colorado, wildfires can take over the headlines, the skylines, and our professional and personal lives. When fires are burning and communities are threatened, priorities shift from planned work to emergency support. A community wildfire drives a community effort, and the San Juan National Forest has been both proud of and grateful for the extra effort and time from our partners, volunteers, and employees.

Much of the work we are all doing together out in the woods is in the name of forest resilience to protect our communities, watersheds, wildlife, and way of life. Enjoy these summer days knowing that the work we do together makes a difference.

Inside this issue

Forest Supervisor's Corner
PG.2

Landscape-Scale Programs:
Spring Prescribed Fire
PG.3

Mapping Noxious Weeds
PG.5

Chimney Rock Anniversary
PG.7

Honoring Dan Kaufenberg
PG.8

Partnership Opportunities
PG.9

Welcome New Employees!
PG.10

Forest Supervisor's Corner

We are thrilled to welcome to the San Juan our acting Forest Supervisor Dave Neely. Dave assumed the role of Acting Forest Supervisor on June 6 behind Kara Chadwick while Kara is on assignment in the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region.



Dave has served in the Forest Service since 1996 in various roles on four Ranger Districts and in the agency's National Headquarters. Most recently he was the District Ranger in Vail, Colorado for six years before joining the Legislative Affairs staff in Washington DC and then the Ecosystem Management Coordination staff (also in DC) where he supports national policy around land management planning, environmental analysis, monitoring, and adaptive management.

"I'm absolutely thrilled to join the team of dedicated public servants and land stewards here on one of the crown jewels of Southwest Colorado," said Neely. "This is a spectacular working landscape offering resources that are foundational to the quality of life we enjoy in this part of the country, and the spirit of collaboration and partnership is obvious at a glance. I'm looking forward to engaging with communities, local and tribal governments, and our many stakeholders to support and advance the great work long underway here."

Dave enjoys a wide range of outdoor recreation and is excited to return to the mountain lifestyle. He will serve in the role for approximately 4 months.



Also joining us on the San Juan is Daniel Jordan, who will serve as acting Columbine District Ranger for the next four months. In May, we bade farewell to James Simino, who just started his new position as Forest Supervisor for the Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan!

Daniel joins us from the Apalachicola National Forest in Florida, where he is a Deputy District Ranger. He was born and raised in Alabama, and studied Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University. He has spent 19 years with the U.S. Forest

Service and is retired from the Army Reserves. As someone who loves the outdoors and travel, we're sure he'll love his time on the San Juan! "What brings me here is diversity and the challenges that this forest offers," Daniel says. "I've been hearing nothing but awesome about the San Juan!"

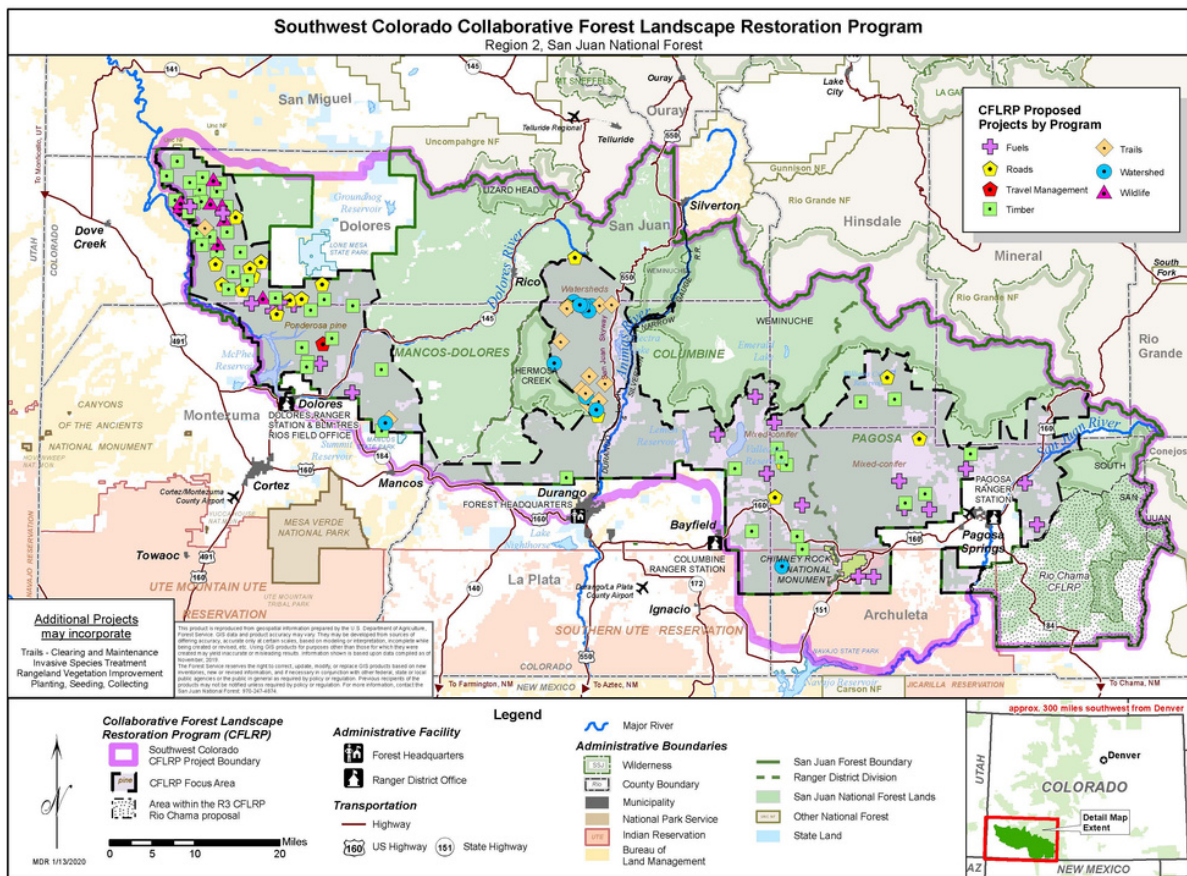
Welcome Dave and Daniel! We hope you enjoy your time here.

Landscape Scale Programs

San Juan National Forest awarded landscape-scale restoration funding

by Lorena Williams

In April, the USDA Forest Service announced the San Juan National Forest will receive roughly \$3 million per for the next ten years for restoration work through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The Southwest Colorado project was one of twelve chosen nationwide to enhance the resilience of critical watersheds, wildlife and aquatic habitats, community infrastructure, economic drivers and forest conditions. The program will enable the area to adapt to future disturbance while retaining ecosystem function, services, and productivity.



Potential Project Map from 2019 Proposal

Nationwide, CFLRP proposals are extremely competitive--so why Southwest Colorado? One major factor is its collaborative capacity and the community relationships and support necessary to make a landscape-scale program successful. Dozens of community members came to the table in 2019 to draft the application for the CFLRP, many of whom were members of Southwest Colorado's three Forest Health Collaboratives: San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership, Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative, and the newly forming Four Rivers Resilient Forest Collaborative. Likewise, coordination and implementation of the CFLRP will be a collaborative effort. While funds from the CFLRP may only be spent on SJNF lands, much of the implementation will be done by partner organizations, and CFLRP funds will be use attract investments for work on adjacent lands.

Landscape Scale Programs (cont'd)

Partners from around Colorado have come to the table to develop the CFLRP governance structure which, when completed, will lead and coordinate collaborative input on CFLRP efforts for Forest Service and associated projects on adjacent lands.



Firefighters on the Plumtaw Fire used a fuels reduction treatment along Fourmile Road to stop the fire's spread.

One of the cross-boundary hallmarks of CFLRP is conducting forest restoration treatments that reduce hazardous fuels. Ashley Downing, Executive Director of Wildfire Adapted Partnership, says, "CFLRP funding for fuels reduction and forest restoration projects in southwest Colorado will make our communities safer. Treating public land in addition to the work completed by private landowners will lead to true landscape scale change and ultimately reduce the risk of wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface."

Resilience is critical to communities, forests, and other values, including wildlife. In summer 2022, work is beginning on multiple fish barriers on the San Juan, including one in the Hermosa Creek Wilderness and another near Wolf Creek Pass. CFLRP funds will bolster partner funds and efforts to construct barriers to upstream fish migration, which will benefit San Juan Lineage Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. The barriers will increase management flexibility and help maintain ecosystem function by extending current habitat as well as allowing for additional populations of this

incredibly rare fish. By stocking the San Juan Lineage Trout in additional streams, the species grows more resilient to disturbance. Partners on these projects include Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Mountain Studies Institute, National Forest Foundation, Southwest Conservation Corps, and Trout Unlimited. This work is just one example of the way a landscape-scale program can have greater impacts.



Populations of the San Juan Lineage Colorado River Cutthroat Trout will grow and become more resilient thanks to multiple fish barrier projects.

2022 also marks the beginning of the third year of the Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI). RMRI has three focal landscapes across the state including the marquee landscape in Southwest Colorado. CFLRP and RMRI are distinct initiatives but complement each other to improve conditions for people, animals and vegetation across all lands in Southwest Colorado. There is significant geographic overlap in the focus areas of CFLRP and RMRI, and, working together, these initiatives will be critical to accomplish our shared goals. One of the most important outcomes is to mitigate the impacts of large-scale wildfire at a landscape scale throughout Southwestern Colorado.

"We know that our forests need restoration, our communities and watersheds need protection and that we're not doing enough," said Patt Dorsey, West Region Director of Conservation Operations for the National Wild Turkey Federation. "CFLRP in combination with RMRI increases our ability to try new strategies, increase collaboration and make a difference in moving our forests to a more climate and wildfire resilient state."

Mapping Weeds in the 416 Fire Burn Scar

Citizen scientists, partners, and the FS map noxious weeds after the 2018 fire

By Abe Proffitt



Diffuse knapweed



Oxeye daisy



Dalmatian toadflax



Spotted knapweed



Plumeless thistle



Houndstongue



Chamomile



Absinth wormwood



Leafy spurge

"Most wanted" list of noxious weeds in the San Juan National Forest

Disturbed areas, including recently burned forests and grasslands, create ideal environments for invasive plant species. During the summer of 2018, the 416 fire burned nearly 55,000 acres of land in the San Juan National Forest, leaving a significant area susceptible to invasive plants, also known as noxious weeds.

With the large-scale disruption to this ecosystem, these plants can propagate rapidly and outcompete native plants for resources - some producing as many as 10,000 seeds at one time. Native plants can be slow to regenerate after a disturbance, lying dormant and not producing seeds until the following season. By contrast, noxious weed species grow quickly throughout the season and have very few natural predators or diseases.

Now that trails in the 416 Fire area are open for recreation, the San Juan NF and [Mountain Studies Institute](#) (MSI) are concerned about invasive plants and their impact on the ecosystem. Justin Marler, the San Juan NF Noxious Weed Coordinator, has been managing weeds for the Columbine District since 2013. For over 10 years, he spent summers pulling Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*), a sunflower family member, which is rapidly becoming a familiar nuisance in the 416 burn scar. "What I want to know is--are we seeing an increase in invasive plants on both existing and decommissioned trails?" said Marler during a collaborative workshop at Fort Lewis College. "Early detection and rapid response will be crucial to this project, so our partners and the public must get involved early in the process."

Mapping Weeds (continued)

Today, the Colorado Native Plant Society (CNPS) has a “most wanted” list of noxious weeds, which Marler has adopted for this project, including Canada Thistle, Oxeye Daisy, Yellow Toadflax, Hound’s Tongue, and Spotted Knapweed. “For a sedentary organism, plants have evolved a lot of ways to be mobile,” Amanda Kuenzi, chair of the southwest chapter of the CNPS, explains. “A lot of them have adapted ways to ‘hitchhike’ on animal fur, bike tires, boot shoelaces, your clothes, or your dog. They attach themselves to cattle and sheep, which move freely.”



The 416 Fire scar is the focus of a citizen science effort to map noxious weeds that spring up post-disturbance.

But individual plant monitoring can be tedious and labor-intensive. Enter iNaturalist—a citizen-science-based app that allows everyday visitors a chance to help with animal and plant identification. To record observations, visitors can [open the app and take a photo](#) of the weeds.

The app records the GPS locale and helps identify the species, which the Forest Service will use to identify areas for eradication. Visitors are encouraged to remove invasives if they are able and have made a positive identification, but many weed species require herbicide applications for effective control.

Along with workshopping iNaturalist, partner organizations like MSI and CNPS have been instrumental in coordinating volunteers for the project. Jeremy May, Education Coordinator at MSI, recently presented to a class at Fort Lewis College on using the iNaturalist app and encouraging volunteers.

Overall, Marler is optimistic about the project and using citizen science to identify areas with invasive species: “This project has the potential to make a difference in the Hermosa Creek Wilderness by preventing a large-scale invasion. It’s relatively non-infested, it has minimal impacts from humans and animals, and the seed banks from established weed species are minimal, so we have a good chance of eradicating noxious weeds in the wilderness area. If we have enough responses, we would like to implement eradication strategies, such as herbicides or bio-controls, at the beginning of next year.”

Identifying and eradicating invasive weeds also has a substantial impact on our regional ecosystem. While this project focuses on the 416 burn scar, its collaborative framework and results have far-reaching implications for Colorado forests and beyond.



Plumeless Thistle is one of the multiple noxious weeds the San Juan NF is concerned about.

Mark your calendars for the 10th Anniversary of Chimney Rock as a National Monument!

By Brandy Richardson

Chimney Rock National Monument (CRNM) was designated by Presidential Proclamation on September 21, 2012. The Forest Service and Tribes are planning a 10th anniversary event to recognize the designation of Chimney Rock as a National Monument September 23-24th 2022. The 10th anniversary of CRNM is an opportunity for the Forest Service to honor Tribal traditions, histories, influences, and continued connections to the area; recognize the work of monument partners; and highlight the Forest Service's role in preserving the legacy of the past while providing the public meaningful recreational and educational experiences.

For more information visit the website. Details on events will be posted on August 1st or as they become available.

CHIMNEY ROCK NATIONAL MONUMENT

**10th Anniversary of the Proclamation
2012-2022**

SAVE THE DATES | SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2022

| | |
|---|--|
| <u>DIGNITARY DAY</u> | <u>PUBLIC DAY</u> |
| FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 | SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 |
| Chimney Rock National Monument will be closed to the public for tribal exclusive use. | 10-Year Anniversary Recognition Day Free to the public - activities for all ages |
| Invitations will be sent to selected individuals and affiliated tribes. | Food and merchandise vendors, demonstrations and traditional dancing. |

LOCATION: Chimney Rock National Monument, 3179 CO-151, Chimney Rock, CO 81121
From Pagosa Springs, drive west about 17 miles on US-160, then south on CO-151 about 3 miles to the monument entrance.

Honoring Dan Kaufenberg



It is with deep sadness that we report the loss of one of our colleagues, Dan Kaufenberg, District Fuels Assistant Fire Management Officer on the Dolores Ranger District. Dan unexpectedly died last March 31st. He leaves behind his wife, and two children, a son and a daughter.

Dan's U.S. Forest Service fire career started in 2007 as an engine crewmember on the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest. He spent six seasons on the Beaverhead Deerlodge, where he worked his way to a seasonal Senior Firefighter position. Dan then worked two seasons for the Lolo National Forest in Montana as a permanent Senior Firefighter. In 2014, he accepted a position with the US Forest Service in Region 2 as an Assistant Engine Captain on the San Juan National Forest. He remained with the San Juan until the spring of 2018 when he accepted an Engine Captain position with the Bureau of Land Management Southwest Colorado District. Early in the summer of 2019, he accepted an Engine Captain position and returned to the San Juan Nation Forest in Dolores, CO. His last assignment was as District Fuels Assistant Fire Management

Officer on the San Juan National Forest, Dolores Ranger District.

Dan worked to ensure a safer, more efficient, accepting, and diverse workplace that provided superior service to the federal agencies, employees, coworkers, and public that he served throughout his career. He continually worked to achieve an environment that focuses on using every individual's strengths and coaching them on any possible deficiencies to turn them into strengths. Working within this environment helped him to promote stronger partnerships, individual talents, teamwork, and to build successful future leaders.

Dan was a colleague and friend, and he will be missed.



Daniel Kaufenberg 1/13/1987 - 3/30/2022

Partnership Opportunities



In 2021, Creeper Jeepers Gang Jeep Club, Colorado Jeep Girls, La Plata County, and Keeping Colorado Beautiful tackled an ambitious graffiti removal project at Kennebec Notch.

Photo Credit: Creeper Jeepers Gang

The San Juan National Forest works to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of this region's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. One way to achieve that is through partner connection. Our partners include land management agencies across all levels of government, nonprofit and for-profit entities, tribes, and community groups. By working with partners with diverse backgrounds and knowledge, we are increasing the resiliency of our natural resources and strengthening the community that enjoys and works in these lands. For information about partnering with the USFS, follow this link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/partnerships>



To become a partner with the San Juan NF or for questions, contact SJNF Partnership Coordinator Lorena Williams by email at lorena.williams@usda.gov or by phone at (970) 422-2939.

For general questions about the San Juan NF, call (970) 247-4874, visit the [forest website](#), or follow us on social media:



Welcome New Employees

We have so many great new employees this quarter that we were unable to gather all of your bios and photos. And while we may not have captured your bio, we are excited to welcome each and every one of you!

Pagosa Ranger District



Brandon Caley - Support Services Specialist

Brandon has taken on a new role as the Support Services Specialist, tasked with handling filing, volunteer agreements and general office support services. He has been the Pagosa Visitor Service Information Assistant since 2013, providing customer service, education, and public engagement. Before coming to the SJNF, Brandon was delivering exceptional visitor services on the Tongass and Chugach National Forests in Alaska. In his free time, Brandon likes to paddle board, play board games, hike, and mountain bike with his husband Thomas.



Tucker Bowman - Civil Engineer

Tucker recently graduated in May of 2021 from Montana State University in Bozeman, MT with a Master's in Environmental Engineering. He worked on the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest for almost a year before transferring to Durango to work full-time for the SJNF as a civil engineer. When he is not working, he is usually having fun skiing, biking, backpacking, rafting, camping, traveling, or whatever the weather permits. He has loved living in Durango so far and has been enjoying the variety of community events this town has to offer – especially ones with free beer and eccentric costumes.

Other new employees joining the Pagosa Ranger District:

- Walker Henry- Developed Recreation Technician
- Brian Austin- Assistant Crew Supervisor for Crew 6
- Logan Foll- Assistant Fire Engine Operator, Engine 661
- Adriana Palomar- Fuels Crew Assistant, Squad 6

Welcome New Employees

Columbine Ranger District



Trevor Marsh - Columbine Developed Recreation Crew Lead

Trevor is a new permanent seasonal employee on the Columbine Developed Recreation staff after working as a seasonal employee with the same crew since 2018. Trevor started working with the Forest Service in 2011 as a member of the Wilderness Crew on the Eagle/Holy Cross Ranger District of the White River NF, then later as the OHV ranger on the same district. Between 2014 and 2018, he worked as a private forestry contractor in Oregon and Washington state. In the winter, Trevor is a ski and snowboard instructor. He likes to spend his free time mountain biking, paddle boarding, and woodworking.



Brenda Waddell - Recreation Manager

I have a love of travel which has taken me up and down the Rockies working in the Recreation Departments for Regions, 1, 2, 4, 6 and 10. Coming back to Colorado after 3 ½ years with the Olympic National Forest on the Washington peninsula, I am truly looking forward to exploring this corner of the state. Wandering with my dog and camera are some of my favorite things to do year round, hoping to catch sight of a Lynx in the wild here in the lower 48. For many years, while living in Colorado, I volunteered for a Wildlife Rehabilitation, and a rescue and release program.

Other new employees for the Columbine District:

Fuels Crew:

- Peter Morrone- Assistant from Senior Firefighter
- Arcenio Trujillo- Senior Firefighter, came from Pagosa

Columbine Wildland Fire Module:

- Nate Christiansen- Captain
- Dan Paladino- Squad Leader from Senior Firefighter
- Warren Baxter- Senior Firefighter
- Ashley Ting- Senior Firefighter
- Luke Dunn- Senior Firefighter

Welcome New Employees

Forest Headquarters



Audrey Huse - Forest Aviation Officer

Audrey Huse Forest Aviation Officer for the San Juan, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests. Audrey comes to us from the Dixie National Forest out of the Great Basin where she was a Helicopter Program Manager. Audrey has worked for several National Forests though out her career in fire and aviation. Audrey started the aviation direction of her career in 1999 working at Mesa Verde NP on their Helitack crew. Audrey is super excited about coming back to the Durango Zone and feels she has come home. She enjoys hiking, cooking and traveling.



Nathalie Wolosyn - Assistant Dispatch Center Manager

Nathalie has taken a new position as the Assistant Center Manager for Durango Interagency Dispatch Center. She has worked with Durango Dispatch since 2019, in Lewistown, MT Dispatch before that, and also has roots in Mesa Verde NP. She has taken two details as a GIS Specialist – one on the Dolores RD. Nathalie holds a M.Sc. in Geography/GIS focused on modeling the diffusion of the mountain pine beetle epidemic across western North America. She also has a B.A. in French and is a Madagascar RPCV. Free time will find her enjoying this incredible landscape with her partner and dog; gardening, cooking, and reading with their two cats.



Rachael Zima - Initial Attack Dispatcher

Rachael recently accepted a position as a Dispatcher with Durango Interagency Dispatch. Rachael has been working on the San Juan National Forest since 2017, spending the past couple years as a senior firefighter with Durango Helitack, following several seasons with Columbine Wildland Fire Module. Before coming to the Forest Service, she spent some time doing prescribed burning with The Nature Conservancy and Fish and Wildlife across the midwest and southeast. Already enamored with the mountains, waters, and deserts of this area, Rachael is delighted to continue to call the beautiful San Juan's home.

Other new employees for Headquarters:

- Kristin Reid, Forest Geologist

Welcome New Employees

Dolores Ranger District



Abraham Proffitt - Timber Cruiser

Abe is a new permanent employee at the Dolores Ranger District working as a qualified timber cruiser, but over the past year, he's been helping to reinvigorate this very newsletter! He recently received his Master's of Environmental Management from Western Colorado University, where he coordinated a visitor use study for the Ouray Ranger District. In his free time, Abe enjoys mountain biking, backpacking, rafting, traveling, cooking, and playing board games.

Other new employees for the Dolores Ranger District:

- Lidia DeHaven- Archaeologist
- Micah Hansen- Fire Engineer
- Katie Alexander- Fire Apprentice
- Jeremiah Hatcher-Assistant Engine Operator
- Wyatt Griego- Senior Firefighter
- Griffin Harris- Harvest Inspector
- Colin Slade- Trails Technician
- Austin Lindig- Assistant Fire Engine Operator
- Micah Hansen- Fire Engine Operator
- Trevor Williams-Developed Recreation Technician



Across the San Juan NF, program managers are welcoming and onboarding this year's group of temporary seasonal employees and interns. Each year, seasonal employees arrive to the San Juan with fresh energy and enthusiasm to carry out much of our day-to-day project implementation. From trail building to fish surveys, firefighting to weed monitoring, seasonal employees are a critical component of our workforce. Welcome, San Juan NF Seasonals! Photo of Columbine District Trail Crew, 2020.

[Click here if you would like to receive this quarterly newsletter via email](#)