



DOUBLE EL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

October 2020

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Rocky Mountain Junipers for 2021!!



Going through the cooler...there are seedlings in all of those boxes!



Trees as far as the eye can see in one of the CSFS greenhouses.

Visit to Colorado State Forest Service

In January, Board members George Fosha, Valorie Meyer and Devin Schinzel, along with District Manager Heather Cross, took a trip to Ft. Collins to tour the nursery that provides our seedling trees. There has been concern regarding the quality of the seedlings over the past couple of years, and the Board felt it was important to meet those who run the nursery in person and discuss our concerns. It was a very beneficial trip. We learned that the nursery has gone through some major transitions in the past few years, leading to falling behind in number and quality of trees. We also saw many of the challenges they are facing related to older facilities that hamper the ability to grow healthy plants. However, what we saw on our tour was a group with a passion to work around the obstacles and implement new ways to grow healthy plants they can be proud of. The passion of those currently in charge of the nursery is infectious. As we toured the area where the seedlings for 2021 were being grown, we were amazed. The seedlings for next year already looked better than what we had received in the prior few years. We were shown the area where experiments are done on various ways to grow Rocky Mountain Junipers in an effort to get more seeds to produce trees. We saw the dedication of the staff that care for the seedlings as they ensured that the potted seedlings were free from weeds that would slow the growth of the future trees. And we saw the excitement from the staff as they looked forward to the future and ways to continue enhancing their procedures to provide even better plants to their customers. The Board was pleased with what they saw and have great hopes for improved seedlings in the coming years. A big thanks to David, Clay and John for showing us around!



Board Members (l-r: Valorie Meyers, George Fosha and Devin Schinzel) learn about techniques being tested to grow Rocky Mountain Junipers.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH DOUBLE EL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Website: conservation4you.org

Email: doubleelcd@gmail.com

Address: 504 Washington Ave - Simla - CO - 80835

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Cell Phone: 719-760-2598

Facebook: [@DoubleElConservationDistrict](https://www.facebook.com/DoubleElConservationDistrict)

2020 DOUBLE EL: TRANSITION

A FOND FAREWELL TO FORMER BOARD MEMBERS



George Fosha

Thank
You



Steve Payne

2020 was a year of change for the Double El Conservation District (DECD) Board. George Fosha and Steve Payne stepped down. George served on the Board for 20 years, and Steve for 8. Both gave a lot of time and energy towards projects to help land owners and provide stewardship for the District. Look for additional information in our Annual Meeting Newsletter coming out later this year.

A WARM WELCOME TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ben was raised on a dairy farm southeast of Simla. He spent 4 years in the Air Force and has been an active farmer/rancher ever since. Some of you may remember him from when he was the DECD District Conservation Technician and as a NRCS employee. He has also worked with the El Paso County Department of Transportation plowing roads, so is familiar with the benefits of our Living Snow Fence program first hand. Ben and his wife, Linda, have a ranch in the northwest area of our district, where they have been since 1979.

Tim is a third generation farmer. He and his wife, Johanna have a farm on the eastern side of our district. They farm approximately 6,500 acres of wheat, feed, corn and proso millet. He is a retired state board member of the Colorado Farm Bureau, having served for six years. He is currently serving on the Lincoln County Land Board, and the Genoa-Hugo FFA advisory board. He is looking forward to the challenges of serving the landowners of the Double El Conservation District.

Ben and Tim each have unique perspectives and experiences that will serve our district well.



Ben Hendrix

Welcome



Tim Brown

WHO'S NEW AT 504 WASHINGTON AVENUE?

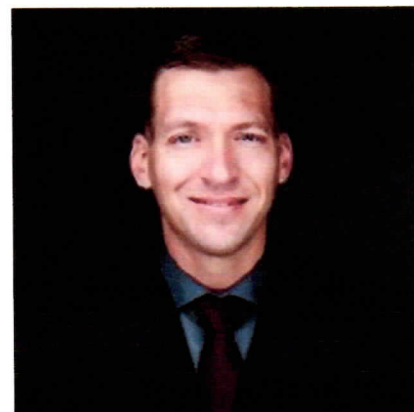
This year, NRCS brought two new people on board in Area 3, which includes Simla, Franktown and Colorado Springs. Blongshia Cha and Scott Nicholson were both hired during the governor's restrictions, so have been spending the bulk of their time at the Colorado Springs office. While they will be traveling between all three offices, when restrictions are lifted, they will both be based out of the Simla USDA Service Center.

We are very excited to welcome them and to introduce them to you!



Blongshia Cha is the NRCS Resource Conservationist for our area. Blongshia was raised in Colorado and graduated from Mountain Range High School in Westminster, CO. A recipient of the USDA 1890 Scholarship, she attended Langston University in Oklahoma where she acquired a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Natural Resources Management, and a minor in Crop and Soil Sciences. In the Spring of 2015 she was crowned Miss Langston University and went on to compete in the Miss Oklahoma pageant. During her time in college she was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc, served as the chapter president for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resource, and Related Sciences, and was a charter member of the Women in Purpose group. She began an internship with NRCS in 2014 and has since worked in various NRCS offices all over Oklahoma. She is looking forward to working with producers in the local area.

Scott Nicholson is the NRCS Soil Conservationist for our area. He earned a bachelors degree in Geography and Environmental Studies, with a Geology minor, completing comprehensive coursework in geographic information systems (GIS), hydrology, water resources, soils, geology, environmental studies, and sustainability. He is a military Veteran with interdisciplinary experience in Civil Engineering, Water and Fuel Systems Maintenance. He is a recipient of multiple awards for outstanding performance and professionalism including a Humanitarian Service Medal, two USAF Commendation Medals, a USAF Meritorious Service Medal and the Bronze Star Medal. Scott lives in Colorado Springs with his wife and 2 children.



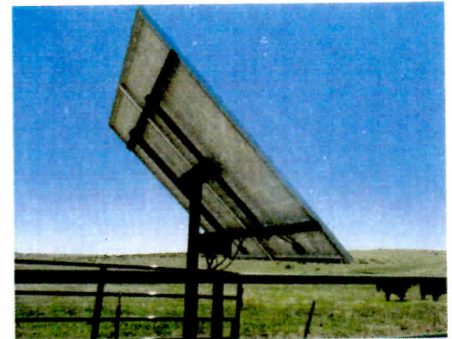
District Conservation Technician Program:



The District Conservation Technician (DCT) program is a grant available from CO State Conservation Board (CSCB). 75% of funding is provided by NRCS, 5% by CSCB and the remaining is required to be matched by the conservation district. The program is provided to increase technical assistance to district landowners for conservation planning and practice implementation to NRCS standards – increasing local activity to address natural resource concerns and helping maximize USDA cost-share opportunities. Lori Ellefson has been serving the Double El landowners since 2011 with the grant funding opportunities of the DCT program. She assists landowners with the planning of such things as windbreaks, tanks and cross-fencing, ensuring required specifications are met, leading to effective and long-lasting conservation benefits. Thanks for all your hard work, Lori!!

******2020 MATCHING GRANTS & COST SHARE PROGRAMS******

Double El CD was approved for a \$25,000 Rangeland Health matching grant for 2020. This grant has provided funding of up to 50% of the costs of installing range health practices for 13 local landowners. Projects this year included wells, water tanks, solar pumps, pipelines and noxious weed treatments. We are excited to be able to help landowners install such practices on their land as we all work to preserve our resources. In addition to the Matching Grant program, Double El provided funding for our own Windbreak Cost-Share program, providing approximately \$5,000 to help 10 landowners install windbreaks.



*******SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT*******

We have been informed that our applications for Matching Grant funds for 2021 have been APPROVED! We have a Rangeland Health grant of \$17,000 and a Windbreak grant of \$8,000, to which Double El will be adding \$2,500 for a total of \$10,500! We will be opening the application period soon. Look for updates on our website (conservation4you.org) or on our Facebook page (@Double El Conservation District)

2020 ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with great sadness and extreme frustration that the Double El Board of Supervisors has decided to cancel the 2020 Annual Dinner. This action is taken due to the inconsistent and unpredictable restrictions put in place by the governor. While many organizations are proceeding with various events and meetings in virtual platforms, we feel that the best part of our meetings is gathering together for fellowship, meeting new people and catching up with old friends. This is not something that can be experienced through screens or over phone lines. We explored various options, all of which severely limited the number of people we would be able to have attend. As much as we love this event and hate the thought of skipping this year, we believe it is the best course of action at this point. Be on the lookout for a special edition newsletter later this year, where we will announce our Conservationist of the Year, Small Acreage Manager, give reports of our activities throughout the year and more.



The Colorado Crisis Hotline gives rural families someone to talk to through stressful times. All of the call takers are trained and ready to assist farmers, ranchers and their families who may need someone to talk to. More and more people are using this service to help a loved one, a friend, a neighbor or themselves. If the stress is getting to you and you just need to talk, the folks at the hotline are available.



NRCS EQIP APPLICATION PERIOD

Now is the time to get your Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) in. While a cutoff date hasn't been announced, applications are being accepted for 2021 projects. You can find the application on line at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/co/programs/financial/eqip/>. Common practices are: wells, livestock pipeline, water facilities, cross-fencing and prescribed grazing. Please call 719-541-2358 for more information.



USDA SERVICE CENTER INFORMATION

Are you a bit confused about who's who in the USDA Service Center in Simla? Hopefully we can give you a little insight to clear things up. Three agencies reside in the center; Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Double E Conservation District. FSA and NRCS both fall under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) umbrella. Double E is a conservation district, which is a local unit of government established by state law to carry out natural resource management programs at a local level.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA): The Farm Service Agency (**FSA**) serves all farmers, ranchers and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs for all Americans. There are various programs through which FSA assists landowners. Conservation Programs, including Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), work to address farming and ranching related conservation issues. Disaster Assistance Programs help communities, farmers, ranchers and businesses that have been hit by various disasters. This year, FSA has been assisting livestock producers who have been affected by the current drought conditions through the Livestock Forage Program. Here in Simla, staff members are here to help you learn about how FSA can help you. You can also take a peek at the FSA website: fsa.usda.gov

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS): NRCS is a federal agency that works with private landowners (farmers, ranchers and foresters) to put conservation practices in place that will benefit the soil, water, air, plants and wildlife. NRCS provides farmers, ranchers and forest managers with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you. Their EQIP program is well known around here. Through this program many landowners have been able to install conservation practices that have improved operations on their land. NRCS staff in the Simla office include Deric Clemons, Blongshia Cha, Benny Kitten, Scott Nicholson and Linda Janssen. You can find more information about NRCS online at: nrcs.usda.gov.

DOUBLE EL CONSERVATION DISTRICT (DECD): As noted above, DECD is here to help landowners on a local basis. We are led by a five member, volunteer, Board of Supervisors. We have two annual tree programs, seedling and large trees, that provide trees for conservation purposes at low prices. In addition to the trees, we also sell accessories, such as weed barrier, rabbit guards and stakes. And for those who are interested, we have drip irrigation parts as well. We also provide matching grant and cost-share programs to assist with the installation of various conservation practices. We work closely with NRCS to ensure the projects with which we assist are installed properly. Heather and Lori are your helpful resources for DECD. Check out our website: conservation4you.org; or find us on Facebook @Double E Conservation District.

2020 Living Snow Fence Projects:

El Paso County has partnered with Double E CD for 25 years to install living snow fence projects to protect El Paso County roads. In spite of the governor's restrictions related to the virus this year, we were able to get one project done in El Paso County. Kevin Miller extended an existing snow fence by an additional 300 feet with 75 trees. The county also worked with us to get over 300 replants done in previously planted snow fences.

Elbert County has partnered with Double E CD for 11 years to install living snow fences to protect Elbert County roads. Unfortunately, we were unable to install new Living Snow Fences this year. We did, however, work with Elbert County to get replants done on some of our previous LSF projects. In one day, we managed to plant approximately 350 trees to replace some seedling losses.

We would like to thank both El Paso and Elbert Counties for their continued support of our Living Snow Fence program, and look forward to getting more trees out there in 2021!



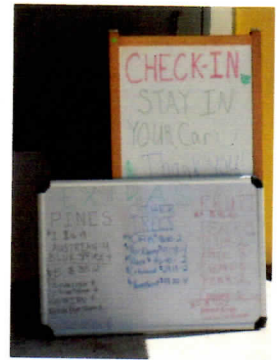
2020 TREE PROGRAMS:

In spite of the COVID restrictions, we were still able to run our seedling and large tree programs. We made a few changes. To reduce the number of people at the warehouse at one time we spread our pick-up dates over three days for each program. We also had masks, lots of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes available and encouraged social distancing. Large tree program distribution was May 5th through 7th. The Large Container Tree Program completed with just over 100 customers and nearly 1,000 large container trees. Seedling Tree Distribution was May 26th through 28th. 12,156 seedling trees were sold to 128 customers. While we had to keep the number of people at the warehouse at one time low, we did have a lot of help. A big THANK YOU to: Deric Clemons, Blongshia Cha, and Scott Nicholson (NRCS), George Fosha, Steve Payne, Valorie Meyer, Erv & Cheryl Churchwell, Caleb Churchwell, Devin Schinzel and kids Reagan and Rydell, Tim & Johanna Brown, Ben & Linda Hendrix, Lori Ellefson and son Hagen. From picking up the large trees, to the last of the seedlings being delivered, these folks were there.

The 2021 Tree Program will begin before too long. The order forms should be mailed before the end of December. Keep your eyes posted on our website and Facebook page!



It took 4 large trailers to bring the large trees to Simla!



We offered drive-thru to maintain low numbers of people in the warehouse at a time



George Fosha and Deric Clemons help load trees



Some of the amazing seedling trees offered this year.



Valorie Meyer taking care of the large trees

2020 SIXTH GRADE POSTER CONTEST

THE THEME: **WHERE WOULD WE BEE WITHOUT POLLINATORS?**

We are excited to announce that we will be having the 6th grade poster contest this year! This has been a staple for 6th grade classes for many years, and we won't let restrictions related to this virus stop us this year!!

We are looking forward to seeing what our 6th graders do with this year's pollinator theme. Look for the winners to be announced in our Annual Meeting Newsletter later this year.



2020 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS



The recipient of our \$1,500 scholarship for 2020 is Elivia Hilferty. Elivia graduated from Limon High School with a 3.5 GPA.

She has been very involved in both school and community activities, including sports (softball, cheer, basketball and track), 4H (Club President 2017-2019), CO State Patrol Youth Academy, band and so much more!

She plans to attend the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley to study Political Science. Her goal is to work as a legislative aid in Colorado and someday, in Washington DC, hoping to be a strong voice for rural Colorado in the political realm.

Elivia is the daughter of Timothy and Jodi Hilferty of Limon, CO.

The recipient of our bonus \$500 scholarship for 2020 is Molly Braun. Molly graduated from Simla High School with a 3.98 GPA.

She has also been busy with many activities, including Student Council (Co-President), Class Treasurer, National Honors Society and Crossroads Youth Group. She will be attending Chadron State College, majoring in Secondary Education.

She plans to be a rural math teacher, where she can share her passion for math, and make it less intimidating for her students.

Molly is the daughter of Kevin and Jennifer Braun of Simla, CO.



Riley Maranville was our 2019 Scholarship recipient, and has qualified for the second portion of the scholarship payment. She has maintained a 3.69 GPA in her first year at Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, CO. Great job, Riley, especially in this crazy year. Keep up the good work!

We Are Grateful for our Volunteers!

While this year has been a challenge, we still have had folks volunteer when possible. We are truly hoping things get back on track next year, and that we can open up to more volunteers coming to help us out. We have lots of small projects and events that could use extra hands. If you are interested in being a volunteer, let us know. You can call Heather at 719-541-2359 x180, or drop us an email at doubleelcd@gmail.com. We will keep you posted of volunteer opportunities. You can follow us on Facebook for announcements!



Chris & Christiann Schade of Calhan helped with our tree mailers last year. THANK YOU!



Charley Maranville, Skyla Harr (left), Kelsi Harr and Mendy Gonzales (right) help with our tree mailers. Fun day with fun folks!! Thanks everybody!



CONSERVATION EQUIPMENT FOR LEASE

PERC Machine:

PERC (Pressurized Exhaust Rodent Controller) equipment is for controlling prairie dog infestations. The treatment applies pressurized carbon monoxide to the burrows and is a humane method of control. Rental rate \$25/machine hour with a minimum charge of \$100. It requires a \$500 deposit (that can be applied to lease costs or refunded). Contact the office concerning scheduling and details of leasing requirements. Call 719 541-2359 x 180



Tree Planter:

Tree planter machine is to be used for planting seedling trees. Rental fee is \$40/day. Contact the office to schedule use of tree planter. Call 719 541-2359 x 180.



Git R Done Pest Control, Inc. Provides treatment services for prairie dog infestations. Two types of poison grain baits can be used for prairie dog control in Colorado: zinc phosphide baits, and those containing an anticoagulant poison.. Git-R-Done Pest Control's preferred method is Rozol® because it is economical (\$1.50/burrow and they have volume discounts), it is fast and it is extremely effective when applied correctly. Contact Ricky Zion, certified commercial applicator. Phone # 970 371 0245. Website www.Git-R-DonePestControl.com

BlackSheep, LLC: Provides for treatment of 4,000 burrows or more, generally with more than one landowner joining together to promote maximum effectiveness and share the cost. BlackSheep provides one operator applying bait using one BlackSheep provided ATV equipped with one THINGAMAJIGS4 baiter as well as a second ATV with marking system (customer must provide operator for additional ATV's). Depending on the number of burrows to be treated, BlackSheep provides additional ATV's with customer providing operators for the additional ATV's. BlackSheep is also owned by Ricky Zion. For information specific to the BlackSheep program, email THINGAMAJIGS4@gmail.com.

Prairie Dog Baiter equipment (used on an ATV) available for rent from Deer Trail Conservation District to help control prairie dogs. Call 303 822 5257 ext 101 in Byers for costs and details.