



CUSP 2013

Volunteer Projects

FOCUS AREAS

This season, the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) and our dedicated volunteers will assist in a range of projects designed to improve the health of the Upper South Platte Watershed. Our goals include restoration of lands and riparian areas damaged by the Hayman Fire of 2002 and beginning restoration of lands impacted by the 2012 Waldo Canyon and Springer Fires.

Though 2013 marks eleven years since the largest fire in Colorado history, the devastation from the Hayman Fire still impacts the surrounding landscape and water resources. We will continue to work diligently to minimize the damage to Colorado's precious water supply from flooding, erosion and sedimentation in reservoirs fed by the South Platte River. We need your help to do this!

In 2013, CUSP will continue to work in the Trail Creek, West Creek, and Horse Creek drainages near Deckers. Along Trail Creek, the work will include projects on ephemeral drainages that greatly impact downstream water users. The majority of in-stream river restoration work has been completed, but over 8 miles of roads and trails will need to be maintained, restored or decommissioned. CUSP will continue to work in Lake George along the South Platte River at Happy Meadows Campground, and on several trails within the watershed. In addition to the water-centric activities, CUSP will undertake numerous forest health initiatives, and embark on projects related to the devastating fires of 2012.

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HAYMAN FIRE WATERSHEDS

GREATER TRAIL CREEK WATERSHED

The goal of this critical effort is to fully restore the four watersheds within the Upper South Platte Watershed that are still producing significant amounts of sediment. The work will occur in the West Creek, Manitou Park, Lower Trout, and Four Mile Watersheds. The total project area encompasses over 115,000 acres, but the majority of the work will take place on the 44,516 acres of these watersheds burned in the Hayman Fire. This ongoing restoration project will significantly improve the resilience of the ecosystem and begin to return these watersheds to their pre-fire state. In 2013, much like a river flows, CUSP will begin to work downstream from Trail Creek.

Recent media: (click on the links to read the stories)



<http://www.gazette.com/articles/one-127926-restoring-scar.html>



http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_19269219

TRAIL CREEK AND HORSE CREEK WATERSHEDS

The Trail Creek area, in Douglas County near Westcreek, is located within the greater West Creek watershed. Because of the intensity of the fire around the Westcreek community, the soil remains loose and unable to soak up rain. Runoff frequently turns to high-volume floods, damaging roads, downstream creeks and filling reservoirs with sediment. Starting in the fall of 2011, crews employing a natural channel design methodology (http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/guidance/wetlands/upload/12-natural_channel_design.pdf) using natural materials, such as burned trees and boulders, re-created more natural flows and allowed new banks to fight erosion. Volunteers are needed to complete the final elements of this amazing watershed restoration project and continue similar projects downstream of Trail Creek, along Horse Creek and Hwy 67.

Work will include:

- Exclusionary Fencing
- Post Construction Rehabilitation
- Riparian Plantings
- Installation of Erosion Control Structures (including check dams, grade controls, contour logs, straw wattles, and log falls)
- Raking, Seeding, Mulching and Tree Planting

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HAPPY MEADOWS

This project is located in the Pike National Forest on the far western side of the Hayman Fire perimeter. This heavily used area consists of a United States Forest Service (USFS) campground and approximately 3 miles of stream. Fishing opportunities abound, but have seen significant degradation due to increased sedimentation from fire denuded slopes. In 2012, the Happy Meadows Restoration Team:

- 1) improved physical in-stream river channel and trout habitats
- 2) decreased river channel width and restored natural river processes
- 3) restored riparian habitat at USFS Happy Meadows Campground, providing a better fisheries resource
- 4) removed a dam that acted as a fish barrier



Work will include:

- Contouring and Reseeding areas disturbed by heavy equipment.
- Transplanting Willows, Sedges, and Reseeding
- Social Trail Assessment, Mapping and Obliteration
- Trash Clean up Days





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ELEVEN MILE CANYON

This picturesque canyon was once only accessed via a train that whisked city weary visitors from Colorado Springs up to the mountains. In one of the several old rail tunnels carved into the rock, you can still see the soot from the train engine's exhaust. The canyon is a recreational mecca and has been impacted by overuse, or as we like to say, "too much love."

Work will include:

- Trail Maintenance
- Clean up Days
- Riparian Restoration
- Fencing
- Invasive Control
- Fire Impacted Land Restoration
- Infrastructure Improvements



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WALDO CANYON FIRE

At over 18,000 acres, the Waldo Canyon Fire was not the largest fire Colorado has ever seen, but the potential damage from the post-fire flooding could be great. There are three levels of soil burn severity within the burn scar; 41% of the area is low/unburned, 40% is moderate severity, and 19% is high severity. Of the total acres burned, 14,422 acres are national forest (79%), 3,678 acres are private (20%), and 147 acres are Department of Defense land (<1%).

CUSP has taken the lead role in emergency rehabilitation and restoration projects and anticipates many thousands of hours of work on projects within the fire area, both on private and public lands.

Work will include:

- Emergency Sandbag Wall Building
- Raking, Seeding and Mulching
- Installation of Erosion Control Structures (including check dams, grade controls, contour logs, straw wattles, and log falls)
- Post Construction Rehabilitation
- Tree Planting

Project Types

EROSION CONTROL STRUCTURES

In Trail Creek, CUSP identified over 280 degraded areas in need of work. Within the Waldo Canyon Fire burn scar, it is estimated the overall number of degraded areas will be very similar in scope to those of Trail Creek due to similar topography and soil types. Work will include building log fall structures, log cross weirs, and plantings. Erosion control work will occur in the Trail Creek and Horse Creek watersheds, Eleven-Mile Canyon, and the Waldo Canyon Fire areas.

PLANTINGS

CUSP will plant willows and will begin planting native conifer seedlings and shrubs to reestablish essential hillslope vegetation and enhance streambed stabilization in ephemeral drainages and within all of the CUSP 2013 Focus Areas.

EXCLUSIONARY FENCING

CUSP will continue to install buck and rail fencing to minimize impacts along trail and road corridors, and hasten recovery of areas disturbed by restoration activities.

INVASIVES

Invasive weeds, the silent wildfire, destroy millions of acres annually by displacing native vegetation and harming wildlife and aquatic environs. Work will include mapping and eradicating invasives within the watershed.

TRAILS AND ROADS

Water is the enemy when it comes to the sustainability of trails. If a trail is not designed properly, water can wreak havoc, sending sediment downstream, cutting into the tread and making the trail unsafe. CUSP continues to support recreation in the watershed by working with diverse partners on trails across the watershed. Work includes trail design, building, maintenance, closure and clean-ups.

FOREST HEALTH

Protecting the green forests is of utmost priority. Join CUSP as we work on large forest fire mitigation projects within the watershed. Work includes hauling forest by-products to chip or pile, which helps create firewood for our partner, Help The Needy.





VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP CORPS

The workload for 2013 will be intense. CUSP is as active as we have ever been and will need a significant investment from volunteer leaders. If you are interested in joining CUSP for the 2013 Volunteer Leadership Series, please speak with CUSP Volunteer Coordinator, Lisa Patton (lisa@uppersouthplatte.org; 719-748-0033). The goal of the Volunteer Leadership Corps (VLC) is to train long-term volunteers to help CUSP with numerous large projects over the summer.

If you are up to the task, you will learn first hand from CUSP how to manage and lead volunteers, properly restore fire-impacted lands, build trails, identify and eradicate noxious weeds, monitor project effectiveness and learn about forest health and river restoration. This program is a great fit for anyone who wants to spend some time working outdoors to improve the Colorado land we love.

The VLC will involve a significant time commitment, but the rewards will be great!



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Interested in volunteering with CUSP?

For information regarding projects mentioned within this document please feel free to contact CUSP through the following methods:



SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEERING:

- 1) Visit www.uppersouthplatte.org/Volunteer
- 2) Find an event that interests you using the calendar or search tools
- 3) Sign up by following on-screen instructions

OR

- 1) Call 719-748-0033 and ask about short-term volunteering opportunities

LONG-TERM VOLUNTEERING / GENERAL INQUIRY:

- 1) Contact Lisa Patton, Volunteer Coordinator for CUSP, at lisa@uppersouthplatte.org or 719-748-0033
- 2) Ask about long-term volunteer/internship opportunities including the Volunteer Leadership Corps

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with CUSP. We look forward to working with you to protect our vital watersheds!