



# Conservation Connection

DEC. 2022

## Upcoming Events

- Dec. 22 - Jan. 2 - MCD Office Closed for the Holidays
- Jan. 9 - MCD Board of Supervisors Meeting
- Jan. 11 - 7AM - 9AM - MWSMP Q&A at the P&D
- Jan. 30 - Feb 1 - One Watershed - One Community Workshop 2
- Feb. 6 - MCD Board of Supervisors Meeting
- Mar. 13 - MCD Board of Supervisors Meeting
- April 2 - MCD Annual Meeting
- April 3-5 - One Watershed - One Community Workshop 3
- 1st Friday of every month - River Literacy Lesson @ Mancos Public Library
- 2nd Wednesday of every month - River Watch Sampling

Photo by: William Kroeker



## A message from MCD

**Gretchen, Neva, Sensa, Chris, Cory, & Maggie**

MCD would like to wish the entire Mancos Valley and our watershed partners a very happy holidays! We hope you all have a joyous, friend- and family-filled winter.

As we look back on the past year, MCD realizes we are most grateful every day to be able to serve Mancos Valley Landowners and explore our wonderful watershed. We are lucky to call the Mancos Valley not only home but also our work place. We enjoy every second of exploring and improving the beautiful and diverse habitats and homes. We're excited to continue to serve you and your families in the coming year.

# Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan

Our first 'One Watershed - One Community' workshop was a huge success. Around 20 community members spent three days creating a shared vision for our water and forest resources, while learning about conflict and conflict resolution. Our next workshop will be held on January 30 - February 1 at the Mancos Community Center; spend a day (or all three!) exploring how scarcity affects our resources, and learn how stereotypes impact conflict.



[Register here!](#)

The Mancos River Agricultural Committee members are working hard on finding creative ways to involve agricultural producers and water users in the MWSMP process. Join us for coffee at the P&D on January 11th to learn about how you can be involved!

**Mancos River  
Agricultural  
Committee  
Members:**

Ryan Brown	Cathy Kennedy
Kasey Wallace	Ben Wolcott

Through a grant from the Southwest Water Conservation District, MCD has piloted the Mancos Valley Smart Metering Project with three local ditch companies. Each ditch has been equipped with a meter and telemetry equipment that allows water managers to easily access data in a central location, to allow for better management of the water in the Valley.

We have partnered with Round River Design to complete fluvial hazard zone mapping to give insight into pre-fire actions that our community can take to protect critical assets and infrastructure and help create a 'Wildfire Ready Watershed'.

## District Conservation Techs

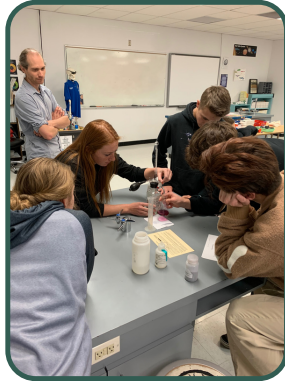
Our District Conservation Techs (DCTs) played a key role in this fall's field work. They helped collect eDNA samples and supported the installation of a beaver flow device and beaver dam analogs on private property, while continuing our monthly River Watch sampling and Sonde probe calibrations. They continue to provide their expertise on engineering and design projects and are crucial to MCD's ability to get projects completed.



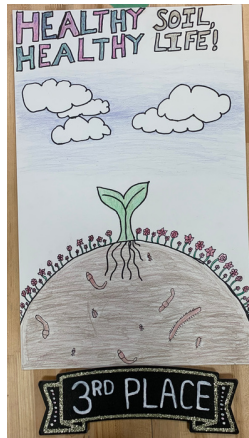


# River Literacy Lessons

The Mancos Conservation District has piloted an initiative to connect younger generations with our watershed resources. MCD's Watershed Coordinator and AmeriCorps VISTA member teach natural science lessons at the Mancos Public Library the 1st Friday of each month.



We have also been teaching the MHS chemistry students how to collect and titrate River Watch samples. The lab techniques they are learning, along with the chemistry concepts and data they're collecting, will be integrated into their chemistry curriculum to help connect students to the importance of water quality and chemistry!



We also were able to teach 3rd graders at Mancos Elementary School about erosion, and facilitate a poster contest about the importance of healthy soils with the 5th grade art students.



# Water Quality

In addition, to our monthly sampling with River Watch Colorado, MCD received funding from the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund to implement an eDNA sampling project. Environmental DNA, or eDNA, samples were collected at 24 sites throughout the watershed and will be used to inform on what species of fish and amphibians are present in the watershed. MCD staff is collaborating on this project with Lilly Figueroa, a Mancos High School senior, who will be analyzing amphibian eDNA as part of her Science Fair project.





# STAR Plus Soil Program

The MCD, in partnership with High Desert CD, closed out the first year of the STAR Plus soil health program. The seven participating producers incorporated various soil health practices into their land management techniques including, cover crops, rotational grazing, biochar and compost. The goal is to improve soil health within their operations. Soil tests taken at year 1 and 3 will be compared to see if soil health indicators have improved over time. STAR Plus practices were financially incentivized by the Colorado Department of Agricultural for a total payout of \$19,089.00 straight to participating producers. In addition, as part of this program, MCD was able to purchase a no-till seed drill that will be available for rental in spring of 2023!

## Forestry

MCD staff has been working closely with the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative (DWRF) and Wildfire Adapted Partnership (WAP) to begin conducting site visits for landowners interested in participating in our wildfire risk mitigation efforts, funded through the Colorado Strategic Wildlife Action Program (COSWAP). The goal of these site visits is to assess the overall stand composition, size, density, health, and susceptibility to wildfire, so that landowners can work with contractors to prioritize actions for forest improvements. For more information on CO-SWAP please go to our website's [forestry page](#).



## Mancos Watershed Group

The Mancos Watershed Group Leadership Team meets regularly to share updates with partners about projects happening in the watershed. A team of Technical Advisors has been formed to oversee Phase II of the Steam Management Plan as projects get underway!

The MWG is open to the public - for more information contact Sensa Wolcott at:

[mancoscd.coordinator@gmail.com](mailto:mancoscd.coordinator@gmail.com)





# Partner Updates



In addition to STAR Plus partnership, the High Desert Conservation District and MCD worked collaboratively on the HDCD's Master Land Steward (MLS) Program. The MLS program took place this fall, with seven properties and twelve participants registered for the six-class program. The program included speakers from Ft. Lewis College, CSU Extension, Montezuma Noxious Weeds Department, Wildfire Adapted Partnership, Give a Dam, SW Seeds, NRCS, and more to discuss topics such as irrigation water management, soil health, beaver, fire mitigation, weeds, seeds, and pasture management. The MLS program will continue with land management workshops throughout 2023.



The Town of Mancos is pursuing a grant to support the creation of a stormwater master plan. In addition, they have been exploring options for Town residents to be able to participate in curbside recycling programs. Mancos is also making progress with their water tank replacement project. All materials are estimated to be on site in summer 2023 for implementation. The Town will not take the old tank offline until all of the necessary building materials are on site, then the old tank will be demolished and the new tank built at that location.

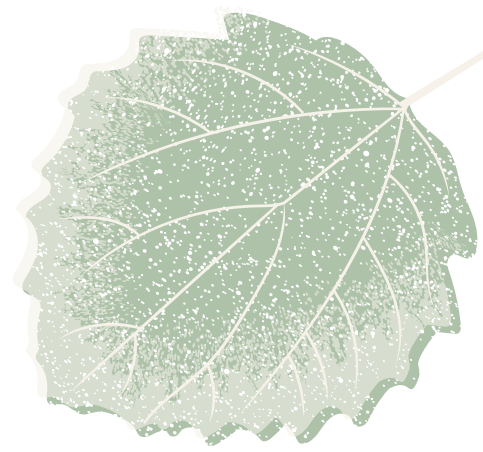
## Mancos Conservation District

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Mancos, CO 81328

[mancoscd.org](http://mancoscd.org)

(970) 533-7317



The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, one of MCD's Mancos Watershed Group partners, has an opportunity for landowners to participate in their Ute Traditional Harvest Access Program. Check out the flyer that was shared with us by the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe below for more information!

**MONTEZUMA LAND CONSERVANCY**

**UTE TRADITIONAL HARVEST ACCESS PROGRAM**

**PURPOSE**  
(RE) CONNECTING VOLUNTEER LAND OWNERS WITH INDIGENOUS LAND STEWARDS OF THE REGION FOR EQUITABLE & MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS.

**BE A TRAILBLAZER IN CONSERVATION! JOIN US!**  
Our program is looking for habitats with some of the following species:  
Plains cottonwood, Lodge Pole Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Narrowleaf Cottonwood, Firs, Quaking Aspen, Osha/Bear root, Pine Nuts (Pinyon Pine), (young) Willows, Wild Berries, Cattail, Wild Onion, Peppermint, Mountain Sage, and Rocky Mountain Juniper (Mountain Cedar).

Does this sound like your land and a plan you'd volunteer for?  
Connect with Montezuma Land Conservancy today!

CONTACT  
970-565-1664

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MONTEZUMA LAND CONSERVANCY

ANCESTRAL LANDS CONSERVATION CORPS

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UTAH MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE

