



Conservation Connection

JUNE 2023

Upcoming Events

- July 10 -MCD Board of Supervisors Meeting
- July 11 - Mancos River Clean Up
- July 18 - Monthly River Watch Sampling
- July 20 - Ag Water Issues Presentation & Discussion - Fire
- July 21 - Summer Fridays @ The Library -
Living All Together On The River
- July 24-26 - One Watershed - One Community Workshop 4
- Aug. 2-3 - R2Cross Training
- Aug 14 - MCD Board of Supervisors Meeting

Photo by: Braden Gunem



Check out the [Events page](#) on our website to stay up to date on what's happening in the Mancos Conservation District!

Summer Water Saving Tips!

Water use increases in the summer as residents begin to water lawns, plants, and spend more time outside. There are several changes you can implement to make a difference in water usage.

- Check for irrigation system breaks and leaks
- Water during the cooler parts of the day between 8 pm and 5 am
- Introduce drought resistant plants and vegetables to your garden
- Implement a cycle and soak watering schedule

You can go to our [Water Quality and Conservation](#) page for more tips and resources!

Cycle & Soak Irrigation



- CYCLE 1**
Wait 30 - 60 minutes
- CYCLE 2**
Wait 30 - 60 minutes
- CYCLE 3**
Wait 30 - 60 minutes

- Alternate cycles between zones
- Be sure to wait at least 30 minutes before you water a zone for the next cycle
- Break up watering into shorter watering times (15 minutes = watering for 5 min 3x)

Meet The New MCD Staff

We're excited to have a growing team and capacity for conservation projects. Here is a quick introduction the the new members of the staff.

Tara Harris - Forestry Program Coordinator



Tara Harris joined MCD in June 2023. She graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a degree in Natural Resources Management. After college, Tara began working for the U.S. Forest Service, where she deepened her knowledge of forest ecology and resilience. After 5+ years working for Public Lands agencies - including the San Juan National Forest - and 2 years in private environmental consulting, Tara is excited to collaborate with her community on local conservation projects. Outside of work, Tara spends her time outdoors - hiking, backpacking, and riding horses.

Erica Holm - Office Manager



Erica grew up in Mancos and is the fifth generation of her family to live in Montezuma county. Erica went to college at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs where she competed on the track team, and obtained a Bachelor's Degree. She has worn many hats; working as a restaurant manager, administrative assistant, elementary education teacher, and is now excited to jump into the conservation world. She loves to spend her free time with her husband and dogs, outdoors whenever possible.

Taylor Schultz - AmeriCorps Vista



Taylor is from Elizabeth, CO and spent the last 4 years in Gunnison going to Western Colorado University. She just graduated in May with her Master's in Environmental Management where she worked on creating sustainable and resilient communities in Western. In her free time she enjoys paddleboarding, skiing, and traveling.

Arantxa Curley - Forestry Apprentice



Arantxa is from Shiprock, NM, and currently a Senior at Fort Lewis College studying Environmental Biology with an emphasis of Field Ecology and Biology. She is currently studying wildfire severities on understory plant communities of Hermosa Watershed in Durango, CO. In her free time she enjoys cooking, being outdoors, and adventures with family!

Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan

3-Year Timeline For the 2025 Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan

GOAL
01


Feb. 28, 2024 - 1st Draft


Guided by extensive community outreach and feedback, the 1st draft of the Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan will be complete.

GOAL
02


March - May 2024 - Comment Period

The MWSMP comment period is a space for constructive feedback from community members and experts

GOAL
03


September 31, 2024 - 2nd Draft


Using the feedback collected during the comment period, a revised draft of the Mancos Watershed Stream Management Plan will be complete

GOAL
04


Oct. - Dec. 2024 - Comment Period

The revised draft of the MWSMP will be open for comment & constructive feedback from community members and experts.

GOAL
05


March 31, 2025 - Final Draft

After 5 years, and with immense gratitude to those who provided their input and feedback, the final draft of the MWSMP will be complete and available to the public.



Learn more at:

[HTTPS://MONTEZUMACOUNTYCONSERVATIONDISTRICTS.ORG/
STREAMMANAGEMENTPLAN](https://montezumacountyconservationdistricts.org/streammanagementplan)

One Watershed One Community Workshops

Our 2nd 'One Watershed - One Community' workshop took place at the end of January and covered the topic of managing scarcity of resources. The 3rd workshop covered managing power conflicts related to the watershed, one-on-one conflict resolution and interviews. Our final workshop will be held on July 24th-26th at the Mancos Community Center; spend a day (or all three!) exploring how diversity and consensus can support natural resource conservation.

[Register here!](#)

Mancos River Agricultural Committee

The Mancos River Agricultural Committee hosted the first of four Ag Water Issues Presentations & Discussions. May's meeting focused on irrigation and solicited feedback from participants on what issues ag producers are facing in the watershed and what needs may possibly be addressed by the MWSMP. The next Ag Water Issues Presentation and Discussion will take place July 20th @ 6:00pm at the Mt. Lookout Grange.

Mancos River
Agricultural
Committee
Members:

Ryan Brown	Cathy Kennedy
Kasey Wallace	Ben Wolcott

Fluvial Hazard Zone Mapping

Round River Design is in the process of completing their fluvial hazard zone mapping efforts 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'. A "Lunch and Learn" presentation of the findings will take place on August 7th at the Mt. Lookout Grange from 11:30 - 1:00.

Other MWSMP Events

In May, MCD's AmeriCorps VISTA member, Maggie Sandusky, coordinated with a variety of watershed partners, including the US Forest Service, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and the Mountain Studies Institute to host our first annual Mancos Splash. This educational event introduced the community to our watershed partners while providing fun, educational activities related to watershed conservation

Opportunities to improve the recreational aspects of the Mancos River through the Town of Mancos were discussed with MCD Staff, Town of Mancos Staff, riverside business owners and Chris Pitcher, of Southwest River Engineering, in order to gather feedback to refine concepts plans for potential improvements as part of the MWSMP.

The Watershed Coordinator is in the process of summarizing the feedback from these events. All the relevant MWSMP documents produced can be found in this [Google Folder](#).

River Literacy

The Mancos Conservation District wrapped up their Mancos Public Library Lessons in May, with the end of the school year. This year so far, students have learned about avalanches, adaptations, bioaccumulation, and the water cycle. Lessons will pick back up after school starts in the fall.

Water Information Program's 2023 Children's Water Festival was back this year after a break due to COVID-19 and MCD Staff was excited to participate! We were able to teach our 'Water Readers' lesson about how to measure water quality to several hundred 5th graders from the southwest part of Colorado, helping to foster connections to water conservation in our youth.



MCD is pleased to announce that we have been selected to receive a Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Partners in the Outdoors Grant for 2023 - 2024. The goal of this grant funding is to “cultivate partnerships that advance and balance outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado, promote Colorado's Outdoor Principles, and support the priority areas identified in our Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.”

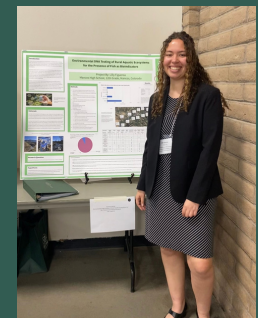
To achieve these goals in the Mancos Community, MCD will support a variety of activities that promote stewardship throughout the Mancos Watershed. These activities will include watershed tours of both the upper and lower portions of the watershed, a river clean-up focused on the in-town stretch of the Mancos River, and quarterly stewardship activities. These activities will allow MCD to share the conservation and stewardship work we have been participating in by providing hands-on opportunities for the community to engage in conservation projects to benefit our natural resources, as well as meet and collaborate with our partners in the watershed. We are excited to offer these opportunities to the Mancos Community while working alongside CPW. These events will be added to our Events webpage when they are scheduled, so check back for more information on dates and times.

Water Quality

MCD has continued to collect and analyze samples at our nine River Watch Colorado sites throughout the Valley, in addition to collaborating with Mountain Studies Institute to collect synoptic water samples at high water to investigate heavy metal mobilization during runoff. MCD staff will also be collecting macroinvertebrates at all our River Watch sites as an additional way to analyze water quality in the watershed.



MCD also collected a second round of eDNA samples, thanks to funding from the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund. This data will help indicate where fish and amphibians are located in the watershed. MHS graduate, Lilly Figueroa, analyzed eDNA data collected on amphibians as part of a Science Fair project, and won the Da Vinci Award for Best in Fair at the San Juan Basin Regional Science Fair in February.



STAR Plus Soil Program

MCD, in partnership with High Desert Conservation District, is in the middle of the second year of the three-year program. As part of the program, the 7 enrolled producers have received soil moisture meter sensors that log soil moisture levels to assist with irrigation efficiency. STAR producers are busy incorporating soil health practices such as rotational grazing and cover crops into their management protocols for the 2023 season. To support soil health, MCD has a no till seed drill and wood chipper available to rent [here](#).



Forestry

Through our outreach efforts and forestry workshops last fall and early spring, MCD has received feedback on the need for a forestry program in Montezuma County. This program will focus on education, technical assistance and forestry planning specific to larger parcels outside of the defensible space zones. We also are currently offering implementation cost share dollars for private landowners near the Jackson Lake and Summit Lake areas and a wood chipper available for rent. Please reach out to the district today for more information on these new opportunities.

Affordable Housing

MCD is excited to see our affordable housing project take shape. In July, we will see the addition of a roof, stucco, and solar installations being completed. Our team is also working on landscaping designs that will be a beautiful example for water conservation through drought tolerant xeriscaping.



District Conservation Techs

The MCD techs have been staying busy. as they are currently helping landowners by conducting site visits and assessments, engineering and designing irrigation systems, and they have also played a role in supporting the improvements of irrigation diversions in the Mancos Valley. This work ensures that agricultural producers are able to receive their allotted water efficiently. while also supporting healthy aquatic ecosystems by allowing fish to move up and down the waterways whenever the temperature or habitat needs dictate that. Many irrigation head gates are blockages, fragmenting fish habitat and causing declines across fish species.



2023 MCD Scholarship Winners



Mancos Watershed Group

The Mancos Watershed Group hosted a Spring Watershed Meeting about "Fire in the Watershed" on April 27th. Shauna Jensen with US Forest Service presented a Burned Area Response Scenario for the Watershed, Danny Margoles with the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative spoke about Collaborative Forest Management in Montezuma County, and Catherine Gehring, PhD, from Northern Arizona University gave an Overview of Research at Mesa Verde National Park for Determining Successful Management and Restoration Strategies for Maintaining Resilient Pinon-Juniper Communities. A recording of this meeting can be found on the [MWG website](#).

The MWG is open to the public.
For more information contact Sensa Wolcott at:
mancoscd.coordinator@gmail.com



Partner Updates



In spring of 2023, the High Desert Conservation District was awarded capacity funding to support 10 additional producers into the STAR Plus program beginning in 2024. The district will be taking applications from July thru the end of August. HDCD and MCD will continue their partnership with the ongoing STAR program, and have also received funding to add 3 new producers into the existing STAR program. Both districts continue to work collaboratively on workshops, including an irrigation workshop in June, and upcoming workshops for the Master Land Steward Program to be held this fall.

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