



Watershed Watch

A publication of the *Coalition for the Upper South Platte*

A Healthy Watershed ~ Now and in the Future

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 12, Number 2, Summer 2011

Thanks to CUSP's Board

Carol Ekarius, Executive Director



The truck Swithin Dick donated, hard at work with the CUSP chipper.

I value the CUSP Board of Directors (the complete list of board members is on page 3). They are our backbone, and our conscience. They contribute, both financially and spiritually. For example, I can count on Marie Chisholm to donate each year even though she is long-retired and on a fixed income, and to be our advocate wherever she goes, while Swithin Dick, who donated the old blue and white truck that serves CUSP's field crew everyday, has also sought donations of materials and supplies from other entities, such as GPS units and digital cameras, and has brought out groups of volunteers. Our Board's support is absolutely critical!

Two of our Board members have "retired" from our Board, but will continue to support us as Emeritus Advisors to the Board. Dave Wissel is one of the original signatories to the MOU that formed CUSP in 1998, representing the Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District (USPWCD). Dave is intimately involved in water issues, and has been a watchdog for mountain residents' interests when it comes to water quality and quantity. Jeff Zepp, a member

of the Rising Sun 4x4 Club, started volunteering with other members of Rising Sun the year of the Hayman Fire, and has continued to come out ever since. Jeff helped to represent the interests of recreation, and motorized recreation in particular, and has been fast to contact me over the years to offer insight on issues that affect recreational users of our public lands.

Two new members are joining the Board: Lynda James, a past Park-County Commissioner, and also a signatory to the original MOU forming CUSP, is going to return to our Board after a decade-long absence, this time replacing Dave Wissel as the representative for the USPWCD. She too has a passion for water, is a trained geologist, and is a great writer. She is also involved with Park County Vision 2020, a nonprofit that works to improve the rural quality of life in Park County, and is the director of Recycle the Park, an initiative to increase recycling in Park County. Tedd Stiles is also new to our Board, serving as an interested individual. Tedd is a pilot for United, but when not jetting around the globe, he and wife Pat spend as much as time as possible at their property near Lake George in Sportsman's Ranch. Tedd has been an instrumental community member in helping us to move river restoration efforts forward at Happy Meadows and Sportsman's Ranch, a cross-boundary project that will start this year after four years of planning and design. Tedd has spent lots of time rallying his neighbors; volunteering to help collect the data that was necessary for the design and permitting; and gathering donations. He recently asked if there was anything else he could do for CUSP, and I said, well, we are looking for some new board members if he'd be interested. His immediate response was an enthusiastic *yes!*

Our Board members and staff donate to CUSP, but we really count on your donations as well. We will be starting to do some fundraising mailers this fall, and participating in some opportunities that will help you to help us (read more on page 7.) We are also still looking for additional board members—if you are interested, please contact me. And thanks for what you already do as a stakeholder to keep CUSP strong.

Joplin Missouri 2011- Three Stories Bruce Metzger , Mark Herndon and Brad Ziemer

Over the Memorial Day weekend holiday, three of our staff members traveled east to Joplin, Missouri, to aid with disaster relief after the historic and devastating tornado that ripped through this midwestern town of 50,000.

CUSP has a long relationship with the Joplin community: Over the past eight years, hundreds of volunteers from the United Methodist Church in Joplin have come to Colorado in the summer to help with restoration efforts in the Hayman burn area, so CUSP wanted to return the support to our Missouri friends. Heroes to us all, our brave-in-heart and generous-of-spirit crew of Brad, Bruce and Mark, heard the call, saw the need, and traveled to Joplin using their vacation time to help. All of us at CUSP are proud of them!



As the three of us arrive in the early morning, it's eerily quiet around the streets of Joplin. There is an initial shock for all of us, as we try and picture the tornado that left the carnage and wreckage that is evident wherever we look. Still a little groggy from the road, it almost seems surreal to look at the amazing devastation surrounding us.

Fully understanding that the May 22nd tornado has altered the course of Joplin, Missouri and that the rebuilding effort will take many years, we are here to lend a hand.... to participate in the relief effort only one week following such a traumatic event. After the initial visual shock we begin to comprehend the extent of the situation, and we gain a realization of the destructive power of this storm. In spite of it all, we were very impressed with the amount already accomplished during what must have been a chaotic first week following the storm. Most evident was that the primary and secondary roadways were nearly all adequately cleared and extensive efforts were already underway to rebuild affected public utilities. As a sawyer crew, we could appreciate the amount of progress already made toward clearing the seemingly endless landscape of hazardous, sheared, broken, uprooted, and relocated trees.

The first work zone we arrived at is our main project for the week: a half block from which we will work to remove trees from houses, cars, and other buildings. Trees and debris blocked people from returning home to gather their belongings and to rebuild. As we're gearing up that morning, we notice a flag in a debris-free area of the lawn. As I walk closer I notice there is something at

the bottom of the American flag. Sitting at the base lays a VHS tape, aptly titled, "Gone with the Wind". As we find out through the course of our trip, humor does help people cope with a catastrophe of this kind.

CUSP's good friend, Barry Sanborn, and the array of folks from Joplin's First United Methodist Church (FUMC) graciously serve as our hosts during our stay. Their hospitality and appreciation seemed to be reflected back in multiples from members of the Joplin community wherever we went. Our beginning-of-the-day appearance made it obvious we were a unique, smartly-prepared, out-of-state team participating in the relief effort while our end-of-the-day impression must have surely included us with the impressive masses of heat-and-humidity-worn relief workers and participating community members. Being continually showered with recognition and appreciation was especially humbling in consideration of how nearly all in the community were intimately affected by the tornado and its aftermath.

One of the most rewarding events for us was being able to dine with different families, and hear their stories of how they were affected by the tornado. At times it felt as though you were more help lending an ear for someone to cathartically pour their heart out, then wielding a chainsaw all day to free a house from the clutches of a giant oak tree.

One encounter that stuck with us was meeting a young musician as we were unwinding one night, exploring a piano bar. He played a captivating acoustic set of original songs with strong lyrics, while keeping up an upbeat banter with the crowd. His name was Jason Kinney, and we discovered →



he was one of the many unlucky people who lost almost everything, including his house, in the tornado. Even though we hadn't helped him directly, he felt compelled to thank us repeatedly for our help, embracing both Brad and Bruce with a tear in his eye.

Even though we reached our goal of finishing the half block project site, it seemed like a drop in a bucket as far as the clean-up and rebuild goes, but we did make a difference to those families lives. What was brought home in heart and thoughts was that the small footprint generated by our on-the-ground efforts was minuscule relative to the countless hours and square miles of work left to be accomplished by others in our tracks. Regardless, ours was a role in helping a community strong-in-will, yet still in shock, by creating an orderly process, prioritizing starting points, picking the proper choice of tools, and safely establishing small beginnings for the benefit of the whole. Our crew experienced daily open and emotional conversations with affected folks throughout Joplin. These exchanges appeared to fill a need for people to recount their stories and experiences. If we helped by providing a listening ear, then we were served in even greater magnitude by absorbing and retaining such examples of positive spirit and perseverance.

Follow-up is in progress between the CUSP Joplin relief-effort team and the Mission's Committee at Mountain View United Methodist Church (MVUMC) in Woodland Park. Complimenting an already existing relationship between FUMC and MVUMC, CUSP's experience in Joplin set the stage for both an October 2011 adult trip and a March 2012 youth trip for purposes of tornado relief. Also, CUSP is anxiously looking forward to summer of 2012 when Barry promises to return again to Colorado with a contingent of his Joplin youth to put tools to the ground on our recovery projects, and to experience the 10th anniversary of our Hayman Fire, which has become special to him in the ways this tornado has become special to us.

Learn more about Joplin's efforts at www.rebuildjoplin.org.

Joplin Missouri is alive and well! We are thankful for the partnership with the folks at CUSP over the last eight years. - this partnership continues today and will grow into the future.

CUSP team members Mark, Bruce and Brad came to help out in Joplin with a variety of large tree projects. For the first few weeks after the tornado, it was not easy to travel in and out of our town of 50,000 people, because of the tree limbs and debris lining the streets in the central part of the city.

People here in Joplin were THRILLED to hear that experienced, professional loggers and sawyers were coming from Colorado to help out! With the help of many great folk, Joplin is now on the road to recovery.

Joplin's future is very bright! We look forward to helping with the Hayman recovery in June 2012.

-Barry Sanborn, First United Methodist Church, Youth Minister, Joplin, Missouri

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TELLER ENERGY

by Brent Kennedy, *Community Energy Coordinator*

Teller Energy is CUSP's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy program supported through the Governor's Energy Office. In partnership with Teller County and the City of Woodland Park, we aim to encourage responsible and sustainable energy and resource use in homes, businesses, industry, and government.

The Community Energy Coordinating (CEC) team (Suzanne Brown, Brent Kennedy and Helen Dyer) has made numerous strides in recent months. Among these accomplishments are website development and updates, creation of a strategic plan, community outreach at the Woodland Park Farmers Market, and Teller County's first ever sustainability fair.

The website TellerEnergy.com is a central access point for information, resources, local contractors, web links, and discussion topics for all things energy related in Teller County. Other topics covered include conservation, recycling, energy related education, kid friendly sites, rebates and incentives, business and economics, and strategic planning efforts internally, locally and regionally. Many thanks to our IT guru Jeff Ravage for creating a functional, navigable and attractive website!

Collaboration with members of our Teller Energy Advisory Board has culminated in the development of a strategic plan. Through this planning process we have identified objectives, strategies, and action plans to drive our efforts in several categories. The primary areas of focus are:

- 1) Outreach and Education,
- 2) Conservation, Recycling and Transportation,
- 3) Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- 4) Institutional Resource and Asset Management

We have purposefully kept this plan aligned with the existing Teller County Strategic Plan and Woodland Park Comprehensive Plan. The goal is for our efforts to support and strengthen those objectives and action plans that have been developed previously by the leaders and constituents of our community, as well as those in the process of development in the region, such as the emerging Regional Sustainability Plan of the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments.

The Woodland Park Farmers Market has been a very effective and engaging outreach opportunity. Held every Friday from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm, June through September, it brings together local growers, ranchers, craftsmen, artisans, and food vendors and is well attended by locals, tourists, families and even their pets. At our booth we provide a range of timely information as well as recycling batteries, corks, CFLs and cell phones. To help promote



Lisa lets Brent try the saber

our work, we have given away several hundred reusable shopping bags and have signed folks up for a free drawing for sustainable goodies, to be held at the end of the season. CUSP's Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Patton joins us when her busy schedule

allows and is easily recognized by her engaging smile and her lightning bolt saber, with which she battles the "evils of energy inefficiency".

On Sunday, July 24 we coordinated the Teller County Sustainability Fair. More than 200 attendees braved rather testy weather to help make it a successful inaugural event with approximately 40 vendors representing fields such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, health and wellness, and environmental preservation, to name a few. Rounding out the festival was great music from local artists from the Mountain Acoustic Music Association, food vendors, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Tai Chi and yoga demonstrations, and even a food preservation workshop held in the adjoining public library, hosted by the Harvest Center (with our good friend and partner, Lee Willoughby). Response from participants and exhibitors was very enthusiastic. Our deep thanks and gratitude go to our official sponsor, Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mining Company, as well as our supporting sponsor, Black Hills Energy.

Teller Energy has made great moves forward, but we know there is still much work to be done. It is our sincere hope that we can bring about positive changes in the community, encouraging responsible energy choices which benefit everyone's triple bottom line: *People, Planet, and Prosperity*. We are thankful and proud to be a part of the team at CUSP. Together, we'll make the world a better place!

Contact **Teller Energy** at 689-5745, 687-5204, or at info@tellerenergy.com

Thanks to Our Volunteers for Very Special Moments, *Lisa Patton, Volunteer Coordinator*

Every season that rolls by at CUSP, we attempt to formulate in words and numbers how volunteers and contributors make our organization a success and to show our gratitude. I am forced to bug the ladies in our office - Chris and Stacey, who amazingly track and hunt down every number/record/ slip & snippet of data - for totals, types of groups, and projects numbers. Yet,



Shared visions are made possible by the energy and relationships built and sustained by the many volunteer groups who have come to the Upper South Platte and given generously.

These, visionary and dedicated volunteers contribute their time and resources helping CUSP to fulfill our mission. We send our



putting the accomplishments of volunteers in numbers doesn't really get to the heart of what they do. Rather than 'show you the numbers' I'd like to share a bit of the 'moments' that matter more, to me, than the number of volunteer hours captured or trees planted.

After several awesome stream restoration and forest health projects, Cripple Creek & Victor Schools, "21st Century - Soaring Without Limitations" group talked about how creating a healthy forest in Woodland Park affected their backyard. One little naysayer miles from home said, "That's not my backyard!" Jeff Ravage, CUSP staff geek and a dad, prompted the kids to think about how fast and far a wildfire would travel with the current heavy forest fuels. Ravage (also a wild land firefighter) sparked their curiosity about the fire triangle - *heat, oxygen and fuel* - with the comparison of the smaller, cooler wildfires of 100 years ago to the crowning and catastrophic fires of recent years. Eyes wide and taking in the forest around them, the kid's lit up - they got it! You could see a completely clear recognition of 'my backyard,' as less of a boundary, and more of a community. The connections made on that day, between nature and their place in it, are just as rewarding to us as the amount of stream or forest that they helped to restore. To the schools two teams, "Saving our Streams" and "Burn Doctors," the CUSP staff would sincerely like to thank you; we so look forward to seeing you again on your next project.

It is amazing that such diverse groups—corporate, spiritual, educational, ecology minded, ranch and recreation based—have shared visions that also cross boundaries. I feel the unique successes that CUSP shares are due in no small part to the common commitments for our natural world. Shared visions aren't kept "in the box", or confined by a political agenda, and they don't stop at an artificial boundary.

unending gratitude and deepest appreciation to these very special people who are the true heart of the watershed.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER!

- Boys & Girls Club of Fairplay
- Boy Scouts of America Pack 30
- Cripple Creek Victor Schools
- Preserve America Youth
- Cutthroat Chapter Trout Unlimited
- Douglas County Employees
- Girl Scouts of America Troops 256, 3707, & 2676
- Braidon Hosp, Zach Madsen, and Blake Barger Eagle Scout Projects
- Lonetree Latter Day Saints
- Lexis-Nexis
- Metro Elementary Schools
- Pikes Peak Chapter MENSA
- Hartel Depot Restoration Committee
- Silverheels Middle School
- The Watershed School
- United Methodist Church Groups from:
Colorado Springs, Nebraska, Missouri and Texas
- Up With People
- Xcel Energy
- HOA members from Colorado Mountain Estates, Ridgewood, Perry Park East, Indian Creek, Ranch Estates, Woodrock and Sageport

Watershed Heroes - Gary Nichols

"Those who go above and beyond in their efforts to protect the Upper South Platte Watershed"

Article by Lisa Patton, Volunteer Coordinator

In attempting to figure out what gives Gary Nichols his enthusiasm and creative drive one will hear the words, 'dogged determination' and 'humble insight' in the same sentence. Is he an oxymoron? Perhaps. Does the man move mountains? We think so. As Director of Tourism and Community Development for Park County, Gary is not just an avid promoter of things worth doing in the County, but he's also the recipient of Park County's "True Pioneer Award." Gary works tirelessly to create a desirable community for both visitors and residents, while always making the most of our abundant natural and cultural resources.

Gary is a collaborator. He quickly points out that he works with a variety of stakeholders to accomplish a wide spectrum of projects. Over the years that we've worked with Gary, he has not only helped us to make CUSP projects happen, but has also played an instrumental role in other programs, ranging from positioning Park County as a Colorado heritage tourism destination, to developing the unique *South Park Trout* fishing program, and most recently facilitating a partnership between Park County and the Colorado Division of Wildlife that allowed the County to acquire the Cline Ranch (northeast of Como) for public recreation.

Early in his tenure with the county, Gary recognized the value of 'heritage experiences.' These rich glimpses of ranching, railroads, mining, frontier schools and churches; museums, natural and scenic areas; and outdoor recreation areas, can be a cornerstone of our economy. That insight comes easily to Gary because he loves this place and sees its past bridged to its future for the betterment of all.

The *South Park Trout* program is something Gary is particularly pleased with. "The program is designed to allow angling access on private properties, for a nominal fee," he says. "Anglers now get to enjoy fly-fishing on eight historic ranches in a manner that promotes conservation and secluded recreation



"People are coming here to experience something as an alternative to other vacation options. We need to distinguish ourselves as a destination in order to create a sustainable economy. The most important thing is to move from a boom and bust economy towards something not subject to fluctuations in the world market. My underlying motivation is to help people realize the stated goals for their properties, businesses and their communities."

Gary Nichols

experiences. The program was originally funded through a grant from GOCO but is now self-sustaining."

Now in its 9th year, the fishing program is attracting anglers from around the country (visitors initially came mainly from the Front Range), 40% of visitors are now coming from other states. Encouraging adaptive uses of properties, this innovative program combines conservation goals while engaging public use and economic sustainability.

Gary says, "As an outgrowth of the *South Park Trout* program, the ranch recreation program is the culmination of relationship building with local residents and business people who rely on the land for their livelihoods. The process has contributed to conserving several working ranches, enhancing their agricultural lands, preserving historic ranch structures, and developing a number of new business concepts." The trend is growing, with 24 local ranches each now offering something unique to the public. These novel programs simultaneously create benefits for visitors, local landowners, businesses and communities. Gary is especially enthusiastic about the Cline Ranch project, which will provide public access for fishing on 2.7 miles of Tarryall Creek and hunting access on this 1640-acre property. The site will open in the fall of 2010 and will be managed as a state wildlife area.

Gary's humble side shows when he quickly gives credit for the successes to others. He says all the partners are critical, but he is particularly thankful

for the support of the voter-approved Park County Land and Water Trust Fund, a county-wide sales tax aimed at protecting the County's water resources, and to the Land and Water Trust Fund Board, a group of dedicated volunteers who ensure that Trust Fund revenues are used to accomplish a variety of projects.

Visit www.ranchrecreation.com or www.southparktrout.com to learn more.

Seasons of Giving



CUSP is developing a new fundraising campaign to support our organization throughout the year, since there really is no such thing as "off-season" here at CUSP—our work is ongoing, changing and adapting with the seasons. Winter, spring, summer and fall each bring different projects, different

challenges and their own amazing characteristics of beauty throughout the region. We respond to the ever-changing landscape that is shaped by the elements of the seasons and plan our work with deep sensitivity to Nature's vibrant play upon the land.

To remain effective, timely and germane, we need your help. At CUSP we understand that your giving choices are based on many factors, but that they are always an investment made for the betterment of your community. When you donate to CUSP, 100% of your donation goes directly to our organization. Furthermore, your tax deductible contributions also demonstrate invaluable "local" support when we seek funds from foundations and other granters. These granting entities make decisions based at least in part on community support as well as program need, so your donations grow in value, leveraged by our grants. A recommended healthy model of nonprofit budgeting is as follows:

- 85% to programs
- 10% to administration
- 5% to fundraising
- 100% TOTAL

In 2010, CUSP shattered that model when our annual audit revealed that 93% of our funding went directly to our programs! The remaining 7% was split 6% to administration and 1% to fundraising. What this budget model demonstrates is our commitment to effective and strategic asset and resource management.

So, over the next year, we will be coming to you for support—highlighting the work we focus on each season. We understand that certain seasons and certain projects resonate differently with our donors, but you can donate anytime by calling our office (719-748-0033), using our handy online paypal system at www.uppersouthplatte.org, or by mail at PO BOX 726, Lake George, CO 80827.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Colorado State Forest Service, Douglas County,
Park County Land & Water Trust Fund, Teller County,
US Forest Service, Xcel Energy Foundation,
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Centennial Waste & Sanitation District,
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Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Sage Port HOA,
United Methodist Church Missouri Conference,
Governor's Energy Office, Blackhills Energy,
Home Depot, Lowes
Upper South Platte Water Conservancy District,
Colorado Mountain Estates Wildfire Protection Group,
Colorado Preservation Inc., Rising Sun 4x4 Club of Colorado,
Canyon Enterprises, Ridgewood POA,
Sandy Forrest, David & Ellen Baese, Gail Hallock,
Mike Meadors & Karen Dudnikov, Connor Baker,
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Kurt & Carolyn Theone, Bob & Terry Lightfoot,
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Alice Pierson, Herman Strobl, Chris Fuller, Chris Sturm, Marti
Campbell, Karen McCubbin-Linch, Richard DelMargo,
Helen Dyer, William & Carol Hinesner, Carol Ekarius,
Dave & Karen Praner, Randall Labac, Ian Warner,
Lee & Marilee Van Arsdale

INDY GIVE!



CUSP is excited and pleased to announce that we have been accepted in the Colorado Springs Independent *Give!* Campaign class of 2011. This exciting program began in 2009 to support local nonprofits through a unique multimedia marketing campaign designed to generate funds, attract volunteers and raise awareness of the important work of our region's nonprofit sector. Another benefit of the campaign is to attract unique donors, those who are new to

donating to CUSP, and encouraging donations above traditional donors' annual gifts.

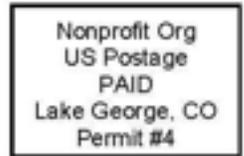
The campaign kicks off on November 1st! We will provide the information about how to participate in the coming months, but if you give through *GIVE!*, your donations are matched by businesses and foundations!



CUSP

PO Box 726, Lake George CO 80827
719.748.0033 www.uppertsouthplatte.org

A Healthy Watershed ~ Now and in the Future



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Bright Ideas

Carol Ekarius

A few months ago I was riding with Teller County Commissioner, Jim Ignatius, to a meeting at the U.S. Forest Service. We got talking about CUSP's Teller Energy program. Jim also owns commercial real estate in Woodland Park, so our discussion veered to halogen spotlights, because the outside and upstairs hall of Jim's building were lined with them. We talked about the new LED bulbs that are now available, and I said to Jim that I'd read about how much longer they last, as well as how much less energy they require. We also discussed CFLs (compact florescent lightbulbs). The next time I saw Jim he was ecstatic. Based on our discussion he'd replaced his outside bulbs with CFLs, and the hall lights with LEDs, and in the first month he saw a major savings! The outside lights are on their own circuit, so they are most telling:

- Jim replaced: 40 halogen spotlights with CFLs seven months ago.
- Prior to replacement: Jim would have needed to replace four burned out halogen bulbs per month--he has only replaced one CFL in seven months.
- Halogens cost him about \$7 each to purchase; CFLs about \$1.50
- His electric bill on that circuit dropped from \$100.00 per month to \$40.00 per month!

Jim says his upstairs energy use for lighting where he installed LEDs also definitely went down, but due to new renters moving in about the same time and who use lots of computers and servers, it is hard for him to determine by how much. Nonetheless, he doesn't regret the decision... and he believes that they are saving money on air conditioning costs.



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