



# CUSP

## 2012

### 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.

Though 2012 marks ten years since the largest fire in Colorado history, the devastation from the fire still impacts the surrounding landscape and water resources. We will diligently continue work 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 you help to do this!

The main focus areas of work for the 2012 season will be in the Trail Creek, Westcreek, and Horse Creek drainages near Deckers and will include ephemeral drainages that greatly impact downstream water users. CUSP will also work in the Lake George area along the South Platte River at Happy Meadows, and on trail restoration within the watershed. In addition to water centric activities, CUSP will continue work on numerous forest health initiatives.

#### **TRAIL CREEK RESTORATION**

The Trail Creek area is part of a major restoration effort to stabilize drainages carrying high sediment loads to the South Platte River. Because of the intensity of the fire here and 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 utilizing natural materials such as burned trees and boulders will raise the height of creeks and stabilize steep eroded banks to re-create more natural flows and fight erosion. Retention ponds to stabilize runoff and sediment will be added.



**Volunteers will complete the rehab by stabilizing work sites with willow plantings and restoring ephemeral draws with log-step structures and log erosion barriers.**

### Media Coverage

<http://www.koaa.com/news/new-effort-to-stop-increasing-hayman-burn-area-erosion>

*(Hayman is 2nd half of the news story)*

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

[http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci\\_19269219](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_19269219)



### HORSE CREEK STABILIZATION

Camp Creek feeds the Westcreek and Horse Creek drainages just above the South Platte River near Deckers, Colorado. This area was severely burned. As a result, this ephemeral drainage has experienced significant flood events, often closing emergency access for the community, and adding tons of sediment into the river and downstream reservoirs. This critical drainage will be one priority project area for 2012. **Volunteer work be challenging and will involve a 2 to 3 mile upstream hike. Initial estimates put the need to plant several hundred thousand willows to stabilize this riparian corridor.**

### HAPPY MEADOWS RIVER RESTORATION

Located on the Western perimeter of the Hayman burn area, this heavily used area consists of USFS Happy Meadows Campground and approximately 16,000 linear feet of stream. Fishing opportunities here abound but have seen significant degradation due to increased sedimentation from fire denuded slopes.



### Volunteer work supports ongoing major river restoration goals:

- Partial dam removal and creation of a wetland habitat
- River channel narrowing and placement of in stream structures
- Restoration of natural river processes & riparian habitat, creating better fisheries
- sediment load reduction in the river, including alluvial fans
- to provide transferable findings for use on other fire impaired stream segments



The project is a cooperative effort of the USFS, DOW, Trout Unlimited, CUSP, private land owners and committed volunteers.

**Volunteer work includes reclamation of ephemeral draws, sites where log structures have been placed to slow the flow of transient flood events. Project work may include: obliteration and contouring of areas disturbed by equipment, transplanting willows & sedges, and reseeding native vegetation to stabilize the restored areas.**



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### Project Types

#### **EROSION CONTROL**

CUSP, in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute and the USFS, has assessed the Trail Creek basin and estimated that over 280 head-cuts need restoration. Our initial estimates are that this work will take over 90 weeks to complete. Work will include building log fall structures, log cross weirs, and plantings.



#### **PLANTING**

Volunteers will continue planting native pine, fir and willows to reforest burns areas. CUSP plans to plant over 100,000 willows, enhancing stream bed stabilization in ephemeral drainages and along the main stem of Trail Creek and Horse Creek. In addition, areas that have been disturbed during the restoration of Trail Creek will be reseeded with native grasses.

#### **EXCLUSIONARY FENCING**

Following restoration along Trail Creek CUSP will reinstall buck and rail fencing to hasten recovery of the riparian areas.

#### **INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

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



## TRAILS

Water is the enemy to the sustainability of trails. If a trail is not designed properly, water can create havoc, sending sediment downstream, cutting into the tread and making the trail unsafe. CUSP, in partnership with Denver Water, maintains sections of the Gill Trail high above Cheesman Reservoir. CUSP and the USFS have partnered to continue assessments and closures along the Cheesman Canyon Trail which accesses primitive fishing areas. We will also work with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute at Signal Butte to restore a severely degraded trail that overlooks the entire Trail Creek basin.

## FOREST HEALTH

Through reduction of forest fuels, by thinning densely stocked ponderosa pine stands, we will enable the forest to be more resilient to catastrophic wildfire. Thinning also helps create resistance to bark beetle infestation. Work includes: chipping, mitigating fuels and creating burn piles for winter prescribed fires. This is a great opportunity to help your forests.

## VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP CORPS

The workload for 2012 will be intense. CUSP will need significant help from volunteer leaders. If you are interested in joining CUSP for the 2012 Volunteer Leadership Corps (VLC) please speak with CUSP's Volunteer Coordinator, Lisa Patton. The goal of the VLC will be to train long term volunteers to help CUSP lead numerous large projects over the summer.

If you are up to the task, you will learn first-hand how to manage and lead volunteers, how to properly restore lands impacted by fire, build trails, identify and eradicate noxious weeds, monitor project effectiveness and learn about forest health and river restoration.

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



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