



Open Space & Recreation Program
Parks / Fairgrounds / Trails
Open Space / Historic Preservation

Annual Report 2013



Parks 2013

Parks

Improvements completed this year at the Placerville Park included the installation of a new irrigation system, a new pathway around the park, new landscaping, new horseshoe pits, and improvements around the historic schoolhouse.

San Miguel County Open Space and Recreation Staff also installed the Haining Memorial Plaque in Placerville Park and built a new irrigation ditch above the Placerville Cemetery after the monsoons left flood damage in the cemetery. High School students from the Telluride High School helped clean up and improve the cemetery damage caused by flooding.



Fairgrounds 2013

Fairgrounds 2013

We had it all! The San Miguel Basin Fair, Rodeo & Carnival, the Music & Motocross event, Renaissance Fair, Star Spangled Saturday, 5/10K run, a Winter Carnival, horse & baseball events, clinics of all kinds, jackpot and buckle series roping, gymkhanas, tournaments, and horse shows. We have ice skating and Nordic skiing, not to mention a “new” recycled water tank in 2013. We even have a bakery located in the Event Center. Community lives and raises their children here. Just as it should be - the San Miguel County Fairgrounds & Regional Park.

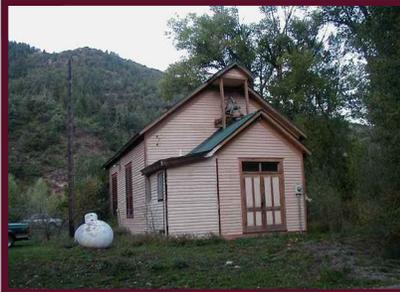


Placerville Schoolhouse 2013

Placerville School

Starting in January 2013, Dave Bush and various contractors completed a historic restoration of the Placerville Schoolhouse. The newly refurbished building was ready for community use by September. Built in 1908, the one-room school served grades 1-8 until 1959 when the area schools were consolidated and Placerville students went to Telluride. From the 1960s, the building served as a community center for elections, potlucks, dances, bible school, bingo, and funerals. In recent decades, community use of the building declined due to lack of upkeep.

The renovation included anew foundation, removal of an add-on bathroom, replication of a rear deck and replacing a limited amount of damaged exterior siding. Improvements include new electrical wiring and fixtures, new bathroom plumbing and a new hot-water heat system. The original walls, ceiling, windows and floor were repaired, painted or refinished.



Historic Preservation 2013

Trout Lake Water Tank

A structure assessment and design and engineering for drainage work around the Trout Lake Water Tank were completed in 2013. Actual drainage and structure repair work will commence in 2014.

Veterans Project

OSR staff continued to add military service veterans to the veteran's project in the courthouse. The project displays photos and military service information of veterans from or associated with San Miguel County.



Alvin Steven Herndon, U.S. Navy, Ensign, Jan 1942-Dec 1945, Pacific Theatre, WWII



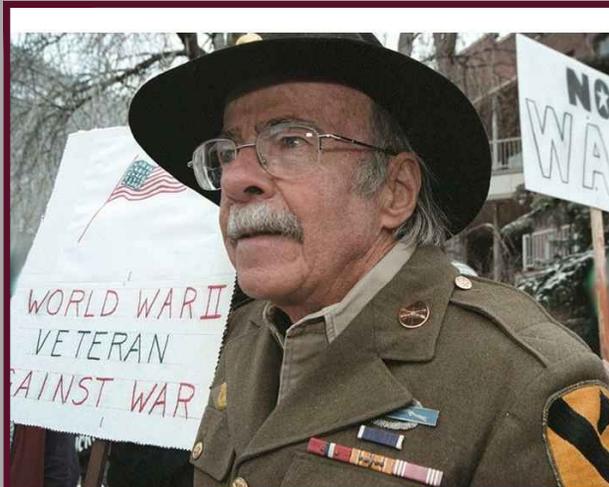
SPC Heather L. King
928th Area Support Medical Company
Dates of Service 2009 – 2015
Afghanistan 2011



Chris W. Bonebrake
U. S. Army, Rank E – 3
Service Dates: 1969 – 1972
Graduate of U. S. Army School of Music



James Russell
U. S. Navy, Lieutenant
Service Dates: 1966 – 1971
Vietnam 1969



Phil Miller, U.S. Army, First Cavalry, Corporal, March 1943 – Sept 1945, WWII Pacific Theatre, Battle of Admiralty Islands, Battle of Leyte Gulf, Awarded Purple Heart

Trails 2013

County Litigates to Keep Wasatch Trail Open for Recreational Use

San Miguel County attorneys spent more than two years researching and litigating the Gold Hill Development Company's (GHDC) claim that the Wasatch Trail in upper Bear Creek as it traverses certain private mining claims is closed to public recreational traffic.

Although the Wasatch Trail is under the jurisdiction of the USFS, San Miguel County stepped up to challenge when GHDC launched a campaign warning hikers that the popular trail was closed. The County asserted at trial that the Wasatch and East Fork Trails are public by prescription and R.S. 2477. R.S. 2477 is a specific kind of dedication of a right of way for public highway purposes located on the public domain.

For more than a century, the public has continuously used both trails adversely and under a claim of right, in substantially the same alignment, with the knowledge of GHDC and its predecessors in title, and without objection until 2010, when GHDC first notified the public that the trails were closed across its private property. A claim of right was established as a matter of law in 1879 when the Ouray County Commissioners declared most of the trail alignment to be a County Trail. In 1879, San Miguel County was part of Ouray County. In addition to the 1879 Ouray County claim of right as a matter of law, in 1886 the San Miguel County Commissioners appropriated money for maintenance of the Nellie Bridge. And in 1889 and 1911 the Commissioners again appropriated money for maintaining the roads and trails in Bear Creek.



Locally, the Bear Creek trail system was one of the primary transportation and shipping routes leading in and out of the San Miguel River valley, along with Boomerang Road, Bridal Veil Road and Tomboy Road.

Other Trail Projects:

The San Miguel County Open Space and Recreation Program is in the process of acquiring easements so that a connection between the Lawson Hill Underpass and the existing Galloping Goose Trail can be constructed this summer. An application for a Great Outdoors Colorado grant has been submitted and we are hopeful that some funding will come from them.

The Open Space and Recreation continues to partner with the Telluride Nordic Association by providing a groomer and snowplowing services. This year cross country skiing at Trout Lake and Priest Lake has been better than ever.

A trails workday with the Telluride Mountain School provided much needed maintenance on the Keystone Gorge trail.



Open Space 2013

Open Space 2013

On March 28, 2013, the County Open Space Commission partnered with Bill Silberstein of Isaacson Rosenbaum law firm, Ariel Steel of Tax Credit Connections and other area land conservation entities to host a regional landowner seminar regarding conservation easements. About 50 people attended the seminar.

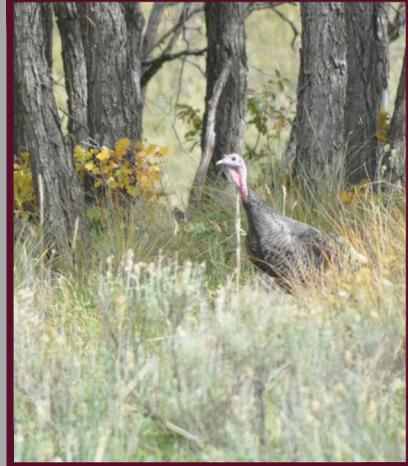
Rare Plant Payment for Ecosystem Services 2013

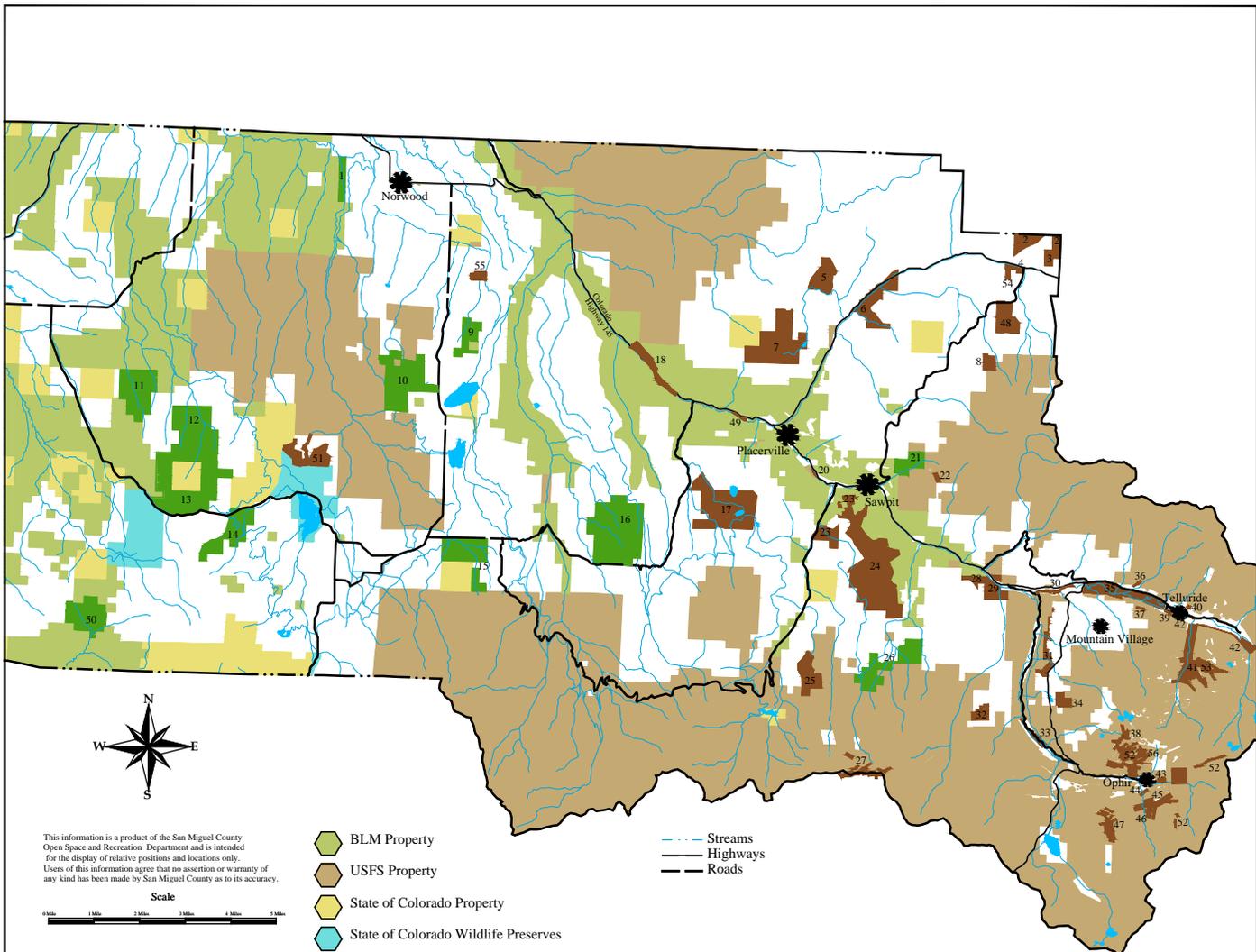
The OSR program attempted to continue the rare plant Payment for Ecosystem program (PES) in 2013 by surveying for two globally rare plants found in San Miguel County, Little Penstemon (Penstemon breviculus and Naturita Milkvetch (Astragalus naturitensis. However, according to botanist Peggy Lyon, conditions in 2013 were not conducive for regeneration of these particular plants, and no plants were identified. A rare plant PES pilot program was completed in 2012. The pilot compensated seven landowners for their participation in the program, and two properties were found to contain populations of one of the four targeted rare plant species.



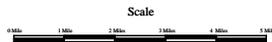
Gunnison Sage-grouse Payment for Ecosystem Services

Due to the possible listing of the Gunnison Sage-grouse (GuSG) as a threatened or endangered species, the OSR program contracted with GuSG Working Group Coordinator to perform outreach to landowners to see if they would be interested in a PES program related to Sage-grouse and if so the types of projects they would consider participating in. Ecosystem Services are the services provided by healthy ecosystems that benefit society. Examples are clean water, clean air, habitat for fauna and flora, ground cover etc. Payment for Ecosystem Services offers financial incentives to landowners to provide ecological benefits. Potential GuSG projects include protecting or enhancing breeding habitat for the GuSG, developing a grazing plan that benefits GuSG, weed management and control.





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- BLM Property
- USFS Property
- State of Colorado Property
- State of Colorado Wildlife Preserves
- Other Conserved Land - 12,357 Acres
- San Miguel County Land Heritage Projects - 11,692 Acres
- Streams
- Highways
- Roads

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|-------|------------|----|--|------|------------|----|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| 1 | Foley Property | TNC | 240 Acres | 20 | Down Valley Park | TLR | 4 Acres | 39 | River Park Trail | SMCF | 14 Acres |
| 2 | Dallas Divide Ranch | TNC | 264 Acres | 21 | Mystic Valley Ranch | TLR | 319 Acres | 40 | North and East Investments Property | TOT | 4 Acres |
| 3 | Double E Bar Ranch | TNC | 160 Acres | 22 | British Lion and Hidden Treasure Mining Claims | VLC | 20 Acres | 41 | Bear Creek Preserve | SMCF | 430 Acres |
| 4 | Leopard Creek Ranch | VLC | 70 Acres | 23 | Berman Ranch | TLR | 493 Acres | 42 | Kentucky Placer | SMCF | 101 Acres |
| 5 | Amphitheater Property | SMCF | 395 Acres | 24 | Deborado Property | RMEF | 2384 Acres | 43 | Ferric Oxide Placer | SMCF | 21 Acres |
| 6 | Cicero Property | TNC | 574 Acres | 25 | Elk Creek Reserve | SMCF | 386 Acres | 44 | Honduras Lode | SMCF | 10 Acres |
| 7 | CD Conservation Property | TLR | 1246 Acres | 26 | Schmid Ranch | SMCF | 800 Acres | 45 | Cluster of Mining Claims | SMCF | 173 Acres |
| 8 | Dietrich Property | TNC | 114 Acres | 27 | Wilson Peak Mining Claims | TPL | 194 Acres | 46 | Game Bird Claims | SMCF | 26 Acres |
| 9 | Oak Hill Ranch | CCALT | 365 Acres | 28 | Price Property | TNC | 108 Acres | 47 | Eldorado Claims | TPL | 165 Acres |
| 10 | Wire Pasture Ranch | SMCF | 1254 Acres | 29 | Silver Mountain Industries Property | TNC | 242 Acres | 48 | Last Dollar Ranch | AFT | 400 Acres |
| 11 | Hamilton Land Partnership | SMCF | 1034 Acres | 30 | Keystone Gorge | TNC | 37 Acres | 49 | Fayette Placer (Spear Colorado LLC) | TNC | 17 Acres |
| 12 | Barrett Brothers Ranch | CCALT | 1190 Acres | 31 | Zoline Property | TNC | 229 Acres | 50 | Starks | CCALT | 880 Acres |
| 13 | Bray Property | CCALT | 1928 Acres | 32 | Hajas Property | TNC | 128 Acres | 51 | Evelyn Carlson Living Trust | CDOW | 459 Acres |
| 14 | O2B29 Ranch | CCALT | 770 Acres | 33 | Ilium Preserve | TNC | 37 Acres | 52 | Paul's Mining Claims | TPL | 725 Acres |
| 15 | Wire Pasture Ranch | SMCF | 830 Acres | 34 | Skyline Ranch | TNC | 109 Acres | 53 | Cooper Mining Claims | SMCF | 115 Acres |
| 16 | Beaver Mesa Ranch | CCALT | 2082 Acres | 35 | Valley Floor | SMCF | 560 Acres | 54 | Stemmler Family Trust | VLC | 35 Acres |
| 17 | Irwin Property | SMCF | 1531 Acres | 36 | Silver King Lode | SMCF | 8 Acres | 55 | Schoening Trust | MLC | 90 Acres |
| 18 | Idaho, Montana, Kansas and Channel Placers | TNC | 277 Acres | 37 | Boomerang Lode | SMCF | 10 Acres | 56 | Merrimac Mine | TPL | 10 Acres |
| 19 | Deleted - sold to CDOT | | | 38 | Gold King Holdings | TNC | 36 Acres | | | | |

TNC - The Nature Conservancy
 VLC - Valley Land Conservancy
 SMCF - San Miguel Conservation Foundation
 TLR - Trust for Land Restoration
 CCALT - Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
 TPL - Trust for Public Lands
 TOT - Town of Telluride
 AFT - American Farmland Trust
 CDOW - Colorado Division of Wildlife
 MLC - Montezuma Land Conservancy

Vegetation Control Program 2013

San Miguel County Disappointment Creek Renewal Project

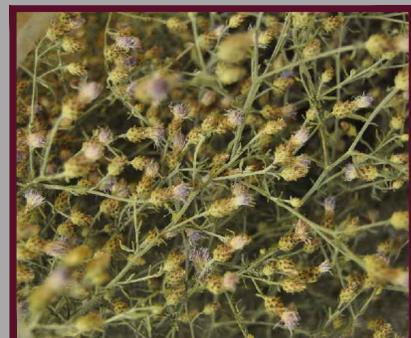
In the summer of 2012, the Serengeti Foundation, owners of a 4196 acre ranch straddling Disappointment Creek called upon the San Miguel County Vegetation Control staff to consult with them regarding a heavy infestation of Russian Knapweed on the upland areas of their property and infestations of Russian Olive and Salt Cedar in the riparian areas along Disappointment Creek.

The Serengeti Foundation had bought the 4196 acre ranch as a means to provide a sanctuary for wild mustangs. They realized that the infestation of Russian Knapweed was a severe deterrent to the achievement of their goal of maintaining a wild horse preserve. They were also concerned with the existence of Russian Olive and Salt Cedar in the riparian areas within the ranch.

Russian knapweed typically invades degraded areas, dominating plant communities and crowding out desirable plants. Russian Knapweed is toxic to horses. Among the serious direct impacts of Salt Cedar is the displacement of native range plants by its aggressive growth. Salt Cedar has a rapid evapotranspiration rate which has the potential to deplete groundwater and increase deposition of sediments in Salt Cedar - infested streams. Russian-olive thrives on poor soil, has low seedling mortality rates, matures in a few years, and outcompetes wild native vegetation. It often invades riparian habitats where cottonwoods have died.

With the cooperation of the ranch manager and landscape architect employed by the Serengeti Foundation, San Miguel County Vegetation Control staff instituted an eradication program for Russian Knapweed and a model revegetation program using drought tolerant native grass mixes.

The ultimate goals of this project are the eradication of Salt Cedar and Russian Olive in the riparian area along Disappointment Creek, the restoration of high quality fodder for livestock and grazing wildlife by replacing Russian Knapweed with native drought resistant plants and educating the owners of large ranches in the Disappointment Creek watershed about weed management by creating a model.

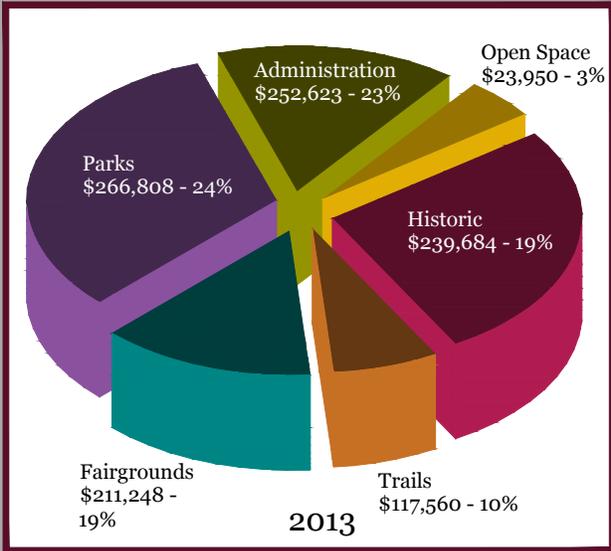
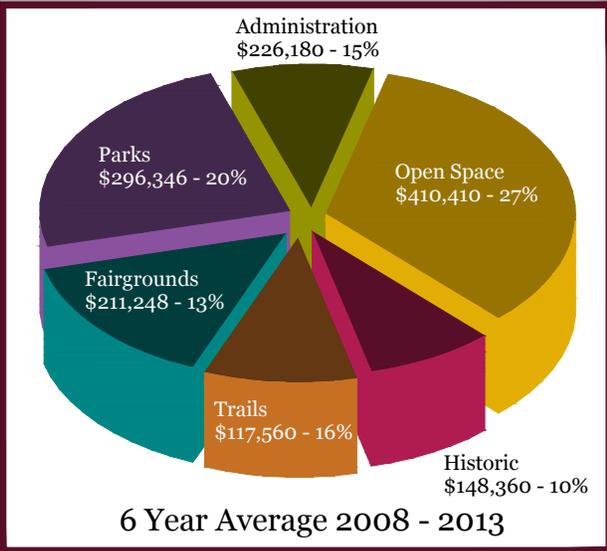


Summary of Finances

| | Administration | Open Space | Historic | Trails | Fairgrounds | Parks |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2008 | \$147,508 - 9% | \$925,621 - 58% | \$73,488 - 5% | \$74,988 - 5% | \$154,658 - 10% | \$218,523 - 14% |
| 2009 | \$158,198 - 6% | \$778,900 - 28% | \$217,571 - 8% | \$1,156,500 - 42% | \$223,870 - 8% | \$213,397 - 8% |
| 2010 | \$254,188 - 23% | \$359,879 - 33% | \$97,735 - 9% | \$22,339 - 2% | \$184,330 - 17% | \$183,636 - 17% |
| 2011 | \$283,498 - 20% | \$337,137 - 24% | \$47,065 - 3% | \$18,332 - 1% | \$177,240 - 13% | \$522,839 - 38% |
| 2012 | \$261,064 - 24% | \$36,994 - 3% | \$214,615 - 20% | \$23,305 - 2% | \$190,402 - 18% | \$372,877 - 32% |
| 2013 | \$252,623 - 23% | \$23,950 - 4% | \$239,684 - 19% | \$117,560 - 10% | \$211,248 - 19% | \$296,347 - 24% |

\$49,450 in Non-Profit Program Contributions and Community Services through OSR

In 2013, ten non-profit organizations received total contributions of \$49,450 through the Open Space and Recreation program mill levy. The organizations are as follows: The Telluride Institute's Watershed Education program - \$1,200: The Gunnison Sage Grouse Coordinator - \$9,500: The Watershed Coalition - \$5,500: The Telluride Historical Museum - \$1,000: The Colorado Avalanche Center - \$2,500: The Nordic Association - \$10,000: The Norwood Historical Society - \$500: Telluride Foundation - \$5,000: The Colorado Rare Plant Guide. In addition, the county's participation in the OHV High Country Ranger program, \$8,500, is budgeted through the OSR mill levy. Community Services include Community Weight Scale Certification - \$250 and snowplowing for recreational access - \$5,000.



Photos thanks to the San Miguel County Open Space and Recreation Staff