



VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS
NATIVE PLANTS
WINDBREAKS



STREAM RESTORATION
VOLUNTEER
GET OUTSIDE



PLANT SALE
NATIVE AND ADAPTIVE
PLANTS

NEWSLETTER



Douglas County Public Works Engineer Zak Humbles teaches Mile High Youth Corps how to install a log vane. Log vanes slow the stream flow creating diverse aquatic habitat. Photo by Bill Vanderpoel, Project Manager.

EAST PLUM CREEK RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

Douglas County Conservation District's mission is *helping people help the land* by promoting projects through education to further sustainable use of natural resources, while balancing the needs of agriculture and urban growth. The East Plum Creek Restoration Partnership is an extensive stream habitat improvement project along East Plum Creek, part of a central wildlife corridor, as it passes through the Historic Lowell Ranch in Southern Castle Rock. East Plum Creek's

importance is due to its position in the central wildlife corridor that connects thousands of preserved acres of National Forest, State Parks, State Wildlife Areas, and Douglas County Open Space. Impacts to East Plum Creek affect the Plum Creek and Chatfield Watersheds.

East Plum Creek Restoration Partnership aims to restore the creeks appropriate geomorphology and hydrology while improving water quality and reducing sediment loading. Decrease in noxious weeds and Russian Olive trees will improve and expand the habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife along this important corridor.

Historic Lowell Ranch is owned by the Colorado Agricultural Leadership Foundation’s (CALF) is a private working, agricultural education center. Please note that Lowell Ranch is open to the public during special events or by appointment only. For more information and *to get involved* please contact us or visit our website at **East Plum Creek Restoration Partnership**.

College \$cholarships

Are you or someone you know headed to college? We want to hear from you. Your Conservation District awards one scholarship every year and has awarded over \$20,000 since the program began in 2002. Our scholarship is worth \$4,000 over two years and four consecutive semesters at an accredited institution. Many of our scholarship recipients have gone on to have rewarding careers in the environmental sciences. Check out **our website** for details.



Grade School Curriculum

The Diggin My Doug Program teaches kids about their deeper connection with our natural environment and is key to our mission. This interactive and virtual class is available FREE to K through 3rd grade. We have two versions to offer at this time; *Butterflies!* by Kathy Okon and *The Soil Food Web* by Jessica Goldstrohm of **The Bees Waggle**. Please contact us to connect with our educators or to become an educator.

Annual Plant Sale

Purchase gorgeous native and adaptive plants suited for our climate and support conservation programs in Douglas County. Competitively priced, sourced from local nurseries for the most robust stock, and proceeds go right back into

Cost - Share Grants\$



Noxious weed Leafy Spurge, *Euphorbia esula* has a milky sap that may cause permanent blindness if rubbed into the eyes.



Fire mitigation work removes fuels from your property.

Check out our cost - share grants for noxious weed and fire mitigation at [on our website](#).

Showcase



Bluestem Joint Fir offers beauty year-round. Densely branched, this evergreen shrub grows 3 - 6' tall and wide.



Red Rocks Penstemon blooms pink with white from May thru July and is a pollinator magnet.



Hidcote Lavender is stuffed full of dark purple, highly scented blooms. Makes excellent dried flowers.

Douglas County conservation programs.

Conservation means the three R's; Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Growing these plants reduces water waste and benefits the native animals as habitat and food. Our native and xeric plant offerings are specifically selected to thrive in Douglas County's weather and soil conditions. Native plants are adapted to our local climate and soil conditions making them the hardiest plants one can buy and the least thirsty, once established. Native plants are also the most beneficial plants for nurturing native wildlife and beneficial insects. Check out this article from Colorado State University Extension titled **Penstemon: A Colorful Choice.**

Purchase until April 5, 2021 and pick up on Tuesday April 20, 2021 at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. Order online at **DouglasConserves.org/Shop.** Please watch our website for any changes to pick up day due to the pandemic.

Earth Day April 22, 2021

Earth Day tree plantings are a staple of our celebration as it brings us closer to nature which calms our hearts. Consider a set of 30 large-tubes of evergreens or 20 extra-large tubes of willow (at right) to share with friends and neighbors to celebrate your commitment to the earth.



These seedlings are grown in forests around the state and finished in greenhouses for you by the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery in Fort Collins. Check out the **History of Earth Day** here.

Workshops!

Join us for **Denver Audubon's Birds and Native Plants** program which is a lively talk about how to encourage birds to your yard. Which birds like what berries and seeds? Consider landscaping to maximize bird habitat. Bring questions and be prepared to learn something new! Thursday, December 28 at 5:30pm - 6:30pm, please email us to register.

Windbreak or Privacy Screen Design program is presented by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) with input from the Colorado State Forest Service - Franktown Field Office on tree selection. Windbreak design tackles your burning questions about how many trees, tree spacing, what type of trees, with windbreak or screen placement for your prevailing winds. Come with questions and let's talk windbreaks! Thursday, January 4 at 5:30pm to 6:30pm, please email us to register.

Youth Conservation Camp is held at the Historic Lowell Ranch in Castle Rock. This hands-on learning experience is for kids ages 7 - 15 years old. Kids get to play and learn outside with educators from our natural resource agencies, local scientists, and professionals on our Board of Supervisors. We strive to plant the seeds of stewardship to grow future conservationists. Space is limited. Registration info is to be determined. Please check our website for events.

[Check out our Events webpage.](#)

No-Till Seed Drill Rental

Truax Flex II Seed Drill is available for rent. Get that pasture tuned up. Did you know that native grasses will outcompete weeds given the right circumstances? Native grass and wildflower seed is available online at DouglasConserves.org/Shop. Plan ahead and book your spring seeding now. Rental starts at \$150.



Did you know?

Did you know that your Conservation District in partnership with Douglas County Public Works Department, maintains 22 watershed structures within the county? These were constructed in the 1960s to mitigate flood hazards, and they worked. In the 1965 floods these structures protected property and mitigated massive soil erosion. If you live close to one of these, you will see us on the structures periodically removing weeds and debris and making sure all is well. In some cases, we will be holding planting workshops and community events on select watershed structures.

Partners in Conservation

Who can visit your property and help you understand your soil, pasture, and other conservation issues? The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Colorado State University Extension Office, that's who. Visit these links for more information.

Natural Resource Conservation Service - Federal grants, site assessments and conservation expertise across the state.

Colorado State Forest Service - Franktown Field Office - Landscape-scale fire mitigation grants, seedling trees and perennials, and forest management expertise and located in Franktown.

Colorado State University Extension Office - Ask an Expert, conservation articles, 4-H Youth Development, and more and located in Castle Rock.

Colorado State University Small Acreage Management - Dryland Pasture Assessment, Colorado Forage Guide, gardening, chickens, online courses, and so much more and located in Castle Rock.

Board Supervisors Needed

The Douglas County Conservation District needs you. Our volunteer Board of Supervisors drive conservation efforts in the county. Please visit [our website](#) for details and contact us to get involved.



Deb Hill, Secretary of the Board of Supervisors is a lifelong educator and resident of Castle Rock. Passionate about educating our youth, Deb leads the popular Scholarship Program and is serving her fourth year on the board.



Conservationists of the Year

Each year we honor someone or a group like a Home Owners Association or a school club for their excellence in conservation in the county. In 2019, we met the Marion Family who excels at fun and who strive for excellence in conservation as evidenced by their family farm in Franktown along Cherry Creek. Implementing biocontrol to mitigate weeds (goats), to the lavender and orchard for habitat, composting and native reseeding of their pastures, and owl houses; this family cultivates maximum conservation effort.

Share your conservation story with us for consideration to be Conservationists of the Year. Individuals, schools and businesses can apply. Bragging rights last forever.



From back left to right: Board of Supervisor Vice President Kevin Shanks, Member Clete Lewis, Treasurer Bill Vanderpoel, Treasurer David Shohet, Secretary Deb Hill, District Manager Heather Kelly, Elaine Marion, John Marion and children holding their prized Conservationists of The Year Award at our 2019 Annual Meeting.

John and son working on the orchard to encourage birds and beneficial insects.

Thanks for reading our newsletter. Have a conservation story you'd like to share? Contact us!