

# BLM Colorado

## June E-News

### Grand Junction Partnership Expands Volunteer Opportunities

*by David Boyd, BLM Public Affairs Specialist*

A partnership between the BLM-Colorado's Grand Junction Field Office and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado recently led to a highly successful trail building weekend that brought motorcyclists, mountain bikers, equestrians and hikers together.

More than 60 volunteers recently completed 1.5 miles of trail through rugged, rocky terrain in the Bookcliffs north of Fruita. When completed, the 8-mile trail will provide a long-distance loop trail open to dirt bikes, mountain bikes, horses and hikers. The yet-to-be-named trail will provide an alternative to a busy county road for trail users.

"It took two days of extremely hard work from our volunteers to complete this extremely difficult section of trail," said Grand Junction Field Office Park Ranger Mike Jones. "It really shows how important public lands are to people in this community."

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Meet Michael Troyer

Michael Troyer was hired as Colorado's first Pathways student. He is conducting cultural resources inventory of BLM lands that will be used for an undertaking proposed by the Department of Defense – Fort Carson.

He demonstrates his abilities in the field and was quickly able to produce the required documentation in an organized, neat, and accurate fashion.

The Royal Gorge Field Office is grateful to Dr. LaBelle of CSU, the Youth Corps, and the State Office for making this internship happen. It is a great benefit to the RGFO, and an excellent first step for Michael's government career.



Volunteers clear a boulder as part of a trail construction project.

The Grand Junction Field Office's partnership with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado played a key role in publicizing and organizing the weekend.

The Grand Junction Field Office has had a strong volunteer program for many years," said Grand Junction Field Manager Katie Stevens. "Our recent partnership with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is creating even more opportunities."



Kyle Hickman and Frank Lillo work to remove a large boulder.

Since 2011, a full-time, jointly-funded volunteer coordinator has been stationed in the Field Office. Last year VOC helped 554 volunteers log more than 15,000 hours assisting the BLM Grand Junction Field Office with a variety of projects.

"Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is a statewide nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to motivating and enabling people to be active stewards of Colorado's natural resources," said Fran Parker, the volunteer coordinator for the Grand Junction Field Office.



Volunteers help build 1.5 miles of trail in the rugged Book Cliffs.

"Since 1984, VOC's volunteer, youth, and leadership training programs have engaged more than 92,000 people of all ages in caring for Colorado's outdoors – a total donated labor value of over \$18.6 million," said Parker.

To learn more about Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, visit: <http://www.voc.org/>



Colorado Deputy State Fire Management Officer, Cliff Hutton and Fuels Operation Specialist, Todd Richardson participate in the Colorado Fallen Firefighters Memorial

## Honoring Colorado Fallen Firefighters

*by Tina Brown, BLM Public Affairs Specialist*

On Saturday, May 11, BLM Colorado State Director Helen Hankins; State Fire Management Officer Ken Kerr; Deputy State Fire Management Officer Cliff Hutton and Fuels Operations Specialist Todd Richardson participated in a ceremony honoring fallen firefighters. During the ceremony five new names were added to the wall at the Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Lakewood, Colorado.

Several representatives from federal, state and county agencies

gathered to pay tribute to those individuals who gave their lives in service to the citizens of Colorado.

In total, 142 Colorado firefighters have been honored at the memorial.

Family members of those honored were invited and paid special tribute to their loved ones by releasing doves. Honoring fallen firefighters and their family members is an annual tradition in Colorado.

The program began with a fire apparatus parade followed by remarks from Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, bag pipe music, combined Honor Guard and a moment of silence for all the fallen firefighters



Firefighters pay tribute to those who gave their lives in service to the citizens of Colorado. The memorial included a moment of silence.



Attendees at the San Luis Valley Service First Planning Meeting.

Line-officers and staff from Great Sand Dunes National Park, the BLM San Luis Valley Field Office, the Rio Grande National Forest and the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuges met at the Great Sand Dunes National Park to discuss the upcoming field season and identify opportunities for coordination through Service First. Service First allows agencies to share people and resources, look across agency boundaries for a landscape approach to resource management and deliver one-stop shopping to the public. With sequestration and tight budgets, managers are also using Service First to save money.

About 35 people from all four agencies attended the meeting in San Luis Valley. The afternoon began with a cook-out lunch provided by Great Sand Dunes NP. During the meeting, line officers provided an overview of their priorities and the group discussed where they could potentially collaborate. At the end of the day, the group developed a list of action items and assigned a lead for each item. Areas for coordination include invasive species, climate change, road maintenance, law enforcement and water issues. The agencies agreed to meet in the fall to review progress on the action items and biannually after that to repeat the process.

## What Homeowners can do to Prepare for a Wildfire

The following are tips to help you to be prepared in case of a wildfire.

### Prepare for a Wildfire

Listed here are several suggestions that you can implement immediately. Others need to be considered at the time of construction or remodeling. You should also contact your local fire department, forestry office, emergency management office or building department for information about local fire laws, building codes and protection measures. Obtain local building codes and weed abatement ordinances for structures built near wooded areas.

### Prepare Your Home Survival Kit

A wildfire can strike at any time. Even though your home may not be directly affected by a wildfire, the fire could destroy critical infrastructure such as power lines or bridges. You may need to survive on your own after an emergency. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials will be on the scene after a disaster such as a wildfire, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days. In addition, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer.

### Find out What Your Fire Risk Is

Learn about the history of wildfire in your area. Be aware of recent weather. A long period without rain increases the risk of wildfire. Consider having a professional inspect your property and offer recommendations for reducing the wildfire risk. Determine your community's ability to respond to wildfire. Are roads leading to your property clearly marked?

Are the roads wide enough to allow firefighting equipment to get through? Is your house number visible from the roadside?

### Always be ready for an emergency evacuation.

Evacuation may be the only way to protect your family in a wildfire. Know where to go and what to bring with you. You should plan several escape routes in case roads are blocked by a wildfire. Always have a relative or friend predestination as a point of contact who others can call.

### Create Safety Zones around Your Home... Create Defensible Space

All vegetation is fuel for a wildfire, though some trees and shrubs are more flammable than others. To reduce the risk, you will need to modify or eliminate brush, trees and other vegetation near your home. The greater the distance is between your home and the vegetation, the greater the protection.

### Create a 30-foot safety zone around the house.

Keep the volume of vegetation in this zone to a minimum. If you live on a hill, extend the zone on the downhill side. Fire spreads rapidly uphill. The steeper the slope, the more open space you will need to protect your home. Swimming pools and patios can be a safety zone and stone walls can act as heat shields and deflect flames.

### Protect Your Home

Remove debris from under sun decks and porches. Any porch, balcony or overhang with exposed space underneath is fuel for an approaching fire. Overhangs ignite easily by flying embers and by the heat and fire that get trapped underneath.

For more tips and information on what you can do to reduce the risk of wildfires log on to: [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

