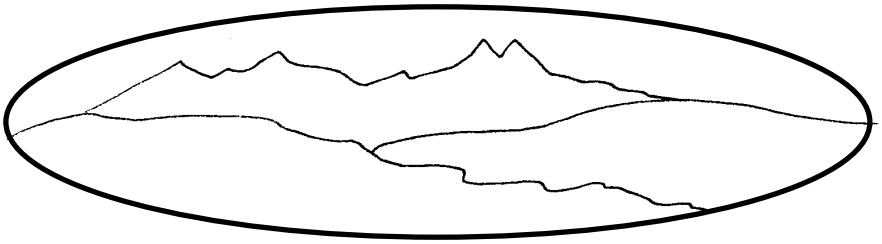

Central Rockies Chapter of the Society For Ecological Restoration

CeRSER NEWSLETTER

Volume 7, Number 1 **June 2004**

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION IS THE PROCESS OF REPAIRING DAMAGE CAUSED BY HUMANS TO THE DIVERSITY AND DYNAMICS OF INDIGENOUS ECOSYSTEMS. — THE SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

CERSER MISSION STATEMENT: TO FOSTER ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, AND ACTIVITIES AMONG A BROAD SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPANTS.

WE'RE BACK!

By Chris Rutledge

After a bit of a hiatus, CeRSER is back! During a meeting that followed the High Altitude Revegetation Conference in February, several CeRSER members met to discuss the future direction of our local chapter.

The group agreed that there is a niche within the local restoration community for an organization like CeRSER. For example, CeRSER is a great medium for getting information out about local restoration projects, fostering restoration-related discussions, promoting volunteer opportunities, and disseminating news about the restoration projects in the Central Rockies. Some ways that we can meet these needs were discussed, including updating and using the CeRSER website to disseminate restoration-related information, announcing volunteer opportunities in the newsletter and on the website, and establishing a list-serve that could be used to discuss local restoration-related topics. Some other ideas that sprouted from this meeting were to host field trips to visit local restoration projects, host social events for the restoration community on both the Front Range and Western Slope of Colorado, and possibly host a workshop sometime in the next year.

The group also discussed the CeRSER Officer positions. Chris Rutledge will take over as the CeRSER President and Tom Grant will continue as Treasurer/Secretary. A number of positions are open, and we will be meeting in July to discuss how to best fill these positions.

We want your input too as we charter our future course. So, keep reading to find out how you can get involved…

PROJECT NEWS

ACCELERATED SUCCESSION IN AN UPLAND PRAIRIE SWALE

By Deb Keammerer
The Restoration Group, Inc.

Developing areas in the Front Range frequently rely upon native prairie swales for storm water conveyance. These drainages often develop an incised channel configuration within a very few years in spite of generous development set backs. In a new development, increased runoff from paved surfaces and rooftops may rapidly lead to elevated soil moisture in these drainages. With the installation of the first storm drains, native prairie swales characterized by intermittently moist soil conditions may become perennially saturated. Native prairie vegetation that was adapted to periodically moist historic soils may begin to drown in the newly wet channel conditions.

Disturbance of the historic vegetation usually begins along the center of the historic channel. Within two years of the first storm drain installation, the vegetation along the low flow areas of the newly wet channel has begun to degrade due to saturated soils and silt deposition. No longer reinforced by healthy root systems, the disturbed prairie swale may begin to down cut. Given a few more years, the once broad prairie swale floodplain will become hydrologically disconnected from periodic run off events.

Deepening incised conditions lead to the next phase of swale disturbance. The shoulders of the incised wet channel are now drier than they were before

development. This leads to desertification. With desertification, the zone of disturbance along the incising channel widens. Spring thaws and summer rains no longer saturate this vegetation. Surface flows quickly run off into the deeper channel, leaving the now isolated historic floodplain high and dry. The previous rhizomatous swale vegetation begins to lose species dependant upon periodic soil saturation. Upland weeds with shallow root systems colonize the degrading plant community on the shoulders of the incised channel.

It may be possible to slow this process and reduce the degradation of these channels by sequentially augmenting the prairie swales with native species adapted to the newer hydrologic conditions. Since these more hydric species generally occur only in the moister areas down stream in the drainages, water transport cannot help recruit them to these newly disturbed swales. Generally, the wind carried seeds of cottonwood, willows and cattails are first to find they way into the disturbed sites. Other wetland and woody vegetation may slowly be recruited from adjacent areas by wildlife.

Vegetation augmentation is a form of accelerated succession. This concept of vegetation augmentation is being tested in Highlands Ranch south of Denver. In spring of 2003, a trial area along a portion of Upper Big Dry Creek was planted to several more hydric prairie species. Monitoring was initiated the following August to provide the baseline data for evaluating this method. Permanent quadrates were installed. Additional monitoring should show the effectiveness of this new concept in channel protection. As the valley responds to this augmentation process, a field trip will be scheduled to the site. Information about this trip will be announced in a future newsletter.

GROWING PLANT CONSERVATION IN COLORADO

By Michelle DePrenger-Levin
Denver Botanic Gardens Research Assistant

What do you do when you have a problem where you can see a vast need, a lack of resources, but a great deal of passion? At Denver Botanic Gardens a program was developed to address the needs of native plants and habitats in Colorado. We looked at amazing grassroots projects run in Chicago, New England, and Washington and wondered how we can bring that passion and organization to Colorado. There is a wealth of volunteer organizations, plant groups or societies, professional ecologists and botanists working for a common good, but no structure to link these efforts. Alone, each group can make a substantial difference, but together we can train and share volunteers, identify experts from each field, expand projects, and give volunteers the resources necessary to become leaders in native plant conservation. Partners for Colorado Native Plants (PCNP) - an alliance of non-profits, government agencies, plant societies, and concerned individuals - was born in 2002. Today our main foci are rare plant monitoring, invasive species control, native species seed collection and propagation, and volunteer training. We take volunteers with passion and a desire to learn, match them with experts and the tools they need, and get well-designed, creative solutions to plant conservation problems. Land managers are able to utilize the volunteers; volunteer organizations are given a trained, enthusiastic audience; and we are ensuring the protection of Colorado's natural beauties. In 2004 a floristic inventory, noxious weed control, and several native plant restoration projects will take place at Bluff Lake Nature Center as a partnership between dedicated volunteer leaders, Sand Creek Regional Greenway, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Natural Areas Program, and citizen scientists. Volunteers will head to the high country to monitor rare orchids and survey the prairie at the Plains Conservation Center. For more information or to get involved contact Michelle DePrenger-Levin by phone at: 720-865-3630 or by email at: deprengm@botanicgardens.org.

COAL SEAM FIRE RESTORATION

By Laurel Potts & Randy Mandel, Rocky Mountain Native Plants Co.

In June 2002, the Coal Seam Fire destroyed over 12,000 acres of land including some loss of residential property in the Glenwood Springs area and surrounding canyons. Heat from an underground coal seam fire ignited the dry Gambel's oak brush community west of town on June 8th. The wind driven wildfire quickly spread north towards the Colorado River, jumped over the I-70 Interstate, and headed into West Glenwood Springs. By June 28 the fire was 90 percent contained.

The post-fire suppression phase brought a different set of challenges. With the loss of the duff layer which plays an important role in infiltration as well as loss of vegetation and its protective groundcover, increased runoff and possible debris flow and sediment deposition were huge concerns. Also worthy of note is the high potential for spread of noxious weeds. Recovery of the herbaceous layer and shrubs may occur within 3-5 years, with more severe burned areas taking 10 years or more. By fall, focused primarily on surrounding BLM lands, aerial hydromulching was applied to reseed burned areas. The fire impacted a variety of plant community types. Of special note were the cottonwood gallery forests in the riparian areas, the juniper woodlands, and the juniper-oak ecotones on the steeper slopes.

The Colorado State Forest Service facilitated a generous federal grant to buy trees for the restoration efforts. The City of Glenwood Springs in partnership with the Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers (RFOV), the Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC), the Natural

Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and others, organized a large-scale volunteer effort to revegetate some of the burned areas on April 26 and 27, 2003. Rocky Mountain Native Plants provided almost 5,200 plants (quart, 1-gallon, and 5-gallon size containers) for this planting event. Key species used in the project were: boxelder, thinleaf alder, river birch, Rocky Mountain juniper, ponderosa pine, cottonwood species, chokecherry, and Gambel's oak.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

COLORADO WILDERNESS NETWORK RESTORATION WEEKENDS - 2004

Join the Colorado Environmental Coalition (CEC) and the Colorado Mountain Club for a restoration weekend in one of Colorado's Citizens Wilderness Proposal Areas! Explore a new area while helping to restore its natural qualities. Participants should bring work clothes, sack lunches, and car-camping gear. We will provide tools and hot breakfasts and dinners for hungry workers! There is a thirty-five dollar donation for food. You can sign up on our website at www.ourcolorado.org, or call Corrie Knapp at: 303-534-7066 X205. Make sure to reserve your space on one of our popular weekends! Also be sure to check out CEC's great calendar of local events on their website!

Sept 17-18, Oil Spring Mountain
Illegal ATV route restoration
Northwest Region- 25 miles south of Rangley

This area has thus far retained its distinction as an oasis in a sea of development, making it an exceptionally important refuge for a diversity of wildlife. Vegetation types ranging from conifer and aspen forests on the northern slopes to mahogany, oak brush, pinion, and juniper on the southern slopes accentuate this variety. Numerous cultural point of interests can be discovered while in the area, from petroglyphs carved into the sandstone cliffs to ancient artifacts dating back 7,000 years.

October 1-3, 2004; Dominguez Canyons
Project TBA
Midwest Region - 20 miles southeast of Grand Junction

Covering a breadth of ecosystems, this locale is noteworthy for its distinctions in Colorado as the largest BLM road-less area and as host to one of the greatest concentrations of rare and endangered species. Pinon-juniper woodlands along the Gunnison River characterize the lower elevations, douglas fir and ponderosa pine forests dominate the slick rock canyon slopes, and aspen and spruce-fir forests grace the terrain of the upper elevations.

Check out our website for more information about upcoming CEC trips and volunteer opportunities at: www.ourcolorado.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

2004 High Altitude Revegetation Summer Field Tour

The High Altitude Revegetation Committee, through Colorado State University, invites you to the 31st annual High Altitude Revegetation Summer Field Tour. These free, annual summer tours, visit some high elevation disturbed areas and take a close-up look at reclamation and revegetation issues and projects. The tour this year, in northeastern Utah, will focus on stream channel stabilization and restoration, erosion control, wildlife habitat restoration, and mining reclamation. As always, your spouse, children, and friends are encouraged to attend the tour.

For more information, check out the HAR website at: http://www.highaltitudereveg.com/har/up_coming_events.htm

2004 SER Conference: Restoration on the edge

University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia
August 24-26, 2004

The Event: SER2004 is an event that includes many different elements, all of which explore the current state of the art and science of ecological restoration:

- Conference: three days of plenaries and sessions cover in the full range of restoration issues
- Exhibition: Exhibits of products, policies and projects
- Local Restoration Exhibition: Exhibits by local non-profit restoration and stewardship groups
- Field Trips: Field trips before, after and during the conference, ranging from half-day local visits to week long tours of the ecology and restoration of BC's ecologically diverse landscape.
- Culture and Restoration: Art, performances and installations related to restoration.
- Web Exhibition: Searchable online exhibition of restoration projects, products and policies, beginning before the conference and continuing after, extending the conference to the world
- Online Proceedings: Posted proceedings of the conference, maintained as a searchable online resource.

For more information on this upcoming conference, go to: http://www.serbc.info/public/ser_seminar

DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION FOR THE CERSER

WEBSITE

If you have upcoming volunteer projects or talks or other activities related to restoration, please send them to one of the CeRSER board members. We will put it in the newsletter and post it on our website.

CERSER MEETING

CeRSER Planning Meeting

July 13, 2004, 6:00 pm - Denver Botanic Gardens

Come join us for a CeRSER planning meeting. During this meeting, we will discuss ideas for future CeRSER projects, including field trips, workshops, and other potential CeRSER events.

CERSER T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

It has been a hot spring, and in Colorado you never know when you'll want to slip into a **short-sleeved, 100% organic cotton t-shirt**. Not only are these fine quality off-white t-shirts **comfortable**, they bear the **beautiful vivid pink** flowers of *Pedicularis groenlandica* (Little Red Elephant, or Elephant's Heads). Accented with bright green stems, the SER logo, and tasteful text and accents in black, who could resist? Well wait no more!! Simply send a check for a mere $15 per shirt, indicate the size(s) desired, and they will be on their way to you. What better way to prepare for spring than with a new t-shirt that also supports an organization you believe in! T-shirts are available in Medium, Large, and Extra-Large. They are generously sized and are pre-shrunk. To order send a check with the information requested above to: Tom Grant. For any questions, feel free to contact Tom at 720 865-3562 or email at grantt@botanicgardens.org.

CERSER NEWSLETTER HEADER DESIGN CONTEST

We have decided that the CeRSER newsletter needs a new look. If you would like to try your hand at designing a new header for the front page of the newsletter we are accepting ideas and illustrations. Please submit your ideas and designs via email to Chris Rutledge (crutledge@greystone.us) or by mail to the mailing address listed on the front of the newsletter. The deadline for submissions is August 1, 2004. If you are the winner you will receive a free membership to SER (basic level) and CeRSER for a year. So send us those entries!

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

All the back issues of the Journal of Range Management from 1948-1998 are available online, visit: http://jrm.library.arizona.edu/ or http://www.srm.org

The Native Plant Revegetation Guide for Colorado is available online at: http://parks.state.co.us/cnap/Revegetation_Guide/Reveg_index.html.

If you know of other restoration related sites that you would like to share with others, send the link to Chris Rutledge at: crutledge@greystone.us.

CeRSER Officers and Committees

CeRSER address:
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Denver, CO 80212-0551

Chris Rutledge, *President*
crutledge@greystone-consultants.com

Tom Grant, *Treasurer/ Secretary*
GRANTT@botanicgardens.org

Newsletter Editor: Chris Rutledge

Open committee positions:
Vice President, Volunteer Projects, Elections, Membership, Grant Development

A special thanks to those who contributed to this issue of the newsletter: Deb Kemmerer, Michelle DePrenger-Levin, Laurel Potts, and Randy Mandel for their contributions to this issue.

The headquarters for the **Society for Ecological Restoration** is located at:

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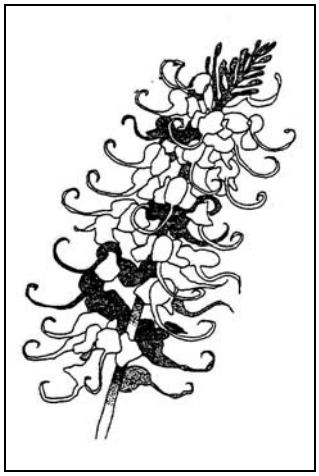

Drawing by Donna Nemeth

CENTRAL ROCKIES CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION
SER and CeRSER SUBSCRIPTION / REGISTRATION / SURVEY

Please fill out and return to: SER, 285 W. 18th St., #1, Tucson, AZ 85701

Membership and Newsletter Subscription information:

Name_____ Phone_____

Affiliation _____ Fax_____

Address_____ Email_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Email*_____ * Required for confirmation of payment

Membership and Subscription Options:

Check membership levels and put total amount enclosed on the line below.

CeRSER Chapter Membership and Newsletter (**must also join national SER at some level**) $15.00_____

Chapter membership includes quarterly newsletter and discounts to CeRSER sponsored conferences, workshops, and annual meetings.

Individual SER national membership (receive SER News national publication and basic membership benefits, no journals) $35.00_____

Student/Income Challenged SER membership (same benefits as Individual SER national membership above) $22.00_____

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National SER memberships below receive one or both of the SER peer-reviewed scientific journals. For additional membership choices see the national SER webpage at: http://www.ser.org **Please note the rates below are good for the year 2004 only.**

	Restoration Ecology Journal	Conservation in Practice
Individual SER membership	_____$58.00	_____$25.50
Student/ Income Challenged	_____$46.00	
Business / NGO SER membership	_____$108.00	

NOTE: All national SER membership levels include SER News quarterly newsletter, information about member discounts to upcoming SER & SER Chapter conferences, workshops, and other services and activities.

Grand Total Enclosed_____

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SER
SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION