Soil Health & Climate Change

Contact MPCD/NRCS for additional assistance on rangeland restoration. www.middleparkcd.com | 970-724-3456

Climate Change and Land Management

Carbon sequestration, or carbon capture, has been proposed as one measure for mitigating climate change due to greenhouse gases. As alluded to on the previous page, Mother Nature has historically helped with carbon capture through natural carbon sinks, such as the ocean, soil, forests, and perennial grasslands.

So...what does that mean for land management in Middle Park? It means that some of the best things you can do for your land are to **manage for healthy forests, lush grasslands, and wet wetlands.** If you are concerned about climate change and want to do your part to reduce it, **THE WORST THING YOU COULD DO IS TURN A NATURAL LANDSCAPE INTO A PARKING LOT, HIGH RISE, OR SHOPPING CENTER.**

While farming and ranching sometimes get a bad rap for their "contribution to global climate change," properly managed agricultural lands can actually do the opposite...**they can mitigate climate change by capturing carbon**. Traditional farming practices that require annual tillage and conversion of croplands definitely have their faults; however, we do not have traditional farms in Grand or Summit Counties. We have ranches that subsist on perennial rangelands and hayfields that support their livestock herds. Most of these operations do not till, or rarely till, their land. Though it is true that improperly managed grazing lands do not capture as much carbon as properly managed lands, we hope the information provided on the previous pages will help reduce overgrazing, noxious weed encroachment, and soil degradation.

Additional tips for restoring degraded grazing lands include:

- Limit soil disturbance and tillage
- Implement proper grazing management practices
- Use water tanks, spring developments, and salt/mineral supplements to help with grazing management and livestock distribution
- Inter-seed areas of low production and plant native species with deep roots
- Plant nitrogen-fixing legumes (like clover and alfalfa) to improve soil health and productivity
- Fertilize to increase production
- Initiate proper irrigation management strategies to improve production
- Install sediment control structures where soils are highly erosive
- Install living snow fences (trees and shrubs) where wind relief is needed

www.middleparkcd.com/forestry-resources/

"Good farmers, who take seriously their duties as stewards of Creation and of their land's inheritors, contribute to the welfare of society in more ways than society usually acknowledges, or even knows. These farmers produce valuable goods, of course; but they also conserve soil, they conserve water, they conserve wildlife, they conserve open space, they conserve scenery."

~Wendell Berry, American poet, novelist, environmentalist, and farmer

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"I should understand the land, not as a commodity, an inert fact to be taken for granted, but as an ultimate value, enduring and alive, useful and beautiful and mysterious and formidable and comforting, beneficent and terribly demanding, worthy of the best of man's attention and care."

Wendell Berry

"Without natural resources, life itself is impossible. From birth to death, natural resources, transformed for human use, feed, clothe, shelter, and transport us. Upon them we depend for every material necessity, comfort, convenience, and protection in our lives. Without abundant resources prosperity is out of reach."

Gifford Pinchot

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."

Aldo Leopold

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Middle Park Conservation District

Motivating landowners to Pursue, Commit, and Deliver on-the-ground Conservation Practices

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