



*Connecting our farming heritage with our growing future*

**2016**

**What a Year!**

**26,000+**

Education Hours

**2,300+**

Students Reached

**4,000+ lbs of  
Produce Grown**

White House  
Kitchen Garden Trips

Mesa School  
Garden Installation

Mancos High  
Tunnel Installation

Drought Resilient  
Curriculum Manual  
*for grades 3-5*

4 States Ag Expo:

CALF Program  
Coordination

On Site Beehive  
Installation

First Farm Corps

## OUR VISION

Imagine a world where we all know the source of our food and value the farmers and ranchers that grow it for us. Where we are all familiar with innovative water and soil conservation methods that grow our crops and protect our natural resources. Drip systems, mulching, composting, drought tolerant plant and tree varieties, watershed knowledge and best agricultural practices become like knowing your last name - obvious and easily conveyed. And where every child, family, and community member has access to fresh, affordable, local food. Welcome to Montezuma School to Farm Project's vision for the future of our region.



## OUR MISSION

The Montezuma School to Farm Project unites our local agricultural heritage with our growing future by engaging students at the crossroads of sustainable agriculture, resource conservation, health, and economics through educational experiences in outdoor garden classes, on field trips, and in summer farm camps.



## HOW WE STARTED

Since 2009, the **Montezuma School to Farm Project** (MSTFP), a program of the Mancos Conservation District in southwestern Colorado, **has focused on providing integrated, hands-on, school garden classes in Montezuma County.** It began with a farm field trip for 40 Mancos students initiated by an AmeriCorps member in 2009. In the seven years since those barn doors first opened to local kids, the program has grown to incorporate six school garden programs, professional School Garden Coordinators, expanded farm field trips summer farm camps, a 2 acre School Production Area, and a cutting edge curriculum for more than 2,300 students on a weekly basis.



## WHAT WE DO

The school garden classrooms provide **accessible living laboratories** where diet/nutrition, active lifestyle, water and soil conservation, and core curriculum lessons intersect. Whether it's writing a poem about a plant's life cycle, actively learning the science behind seed germination studying the history of drought in the Southwest, cooking with fresh vegetables, or translating seed packet instructions into Spanish or Navajo, the garden is easily woven into every subject. **Classes are an integral part of the school day** so that learning in the school garden coincides with important science and math core lessons. Students integrate their learning in a meaningful way because they are an active participant in their learning experiences.

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN IN 2016

### MSTFP Students Invited to the White House, Twice!

It was a watershed year for the Montezuma School to Farm Project as Kemper School Garden 4th grade students headed to the White House twice. We were **honored to be chosen as one of four school garden programs** out of thousands in the nation to participate in the spring planting as well as the early summer harvest of the White House Kitchen Gardens. MSTFP students shined in their interactions with First Lady Michelle Obama, NASA Astronauts, famous Chef Rachel Ray and national media interviews. Not only did this experience widen our student representatives' eyes to what is possible for them to accomplish in the world, it included our entire region in that vision. The five students that attended included student representatives from the Ute Mountain Ute and Navajo tribes.



### Mesa Elementary School Garden: Program Launch

Many hands are responsible for building the new garden and restoring old infrastructure at Mesa Elementary School's Outdoor Learning Lab this summer. A team of local high-schoolers, participating in the **region's first Farm Corps**, laid the foundation for the garden. MSTFP partnered with Southwest Conservation Corps, the Cortez School District, and the City of Cortez to hire, train, and lead this youth team. AmeriCorps NCCC members provided mentorship to this team while assisting with the garden installation, too.

This fall, a continued collaboration with the Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project enabled students to plant a heritage fruit tree orchard at the site. The new **school garden is currently serving Mesa's 360 students** with weekly classes and fresh produce.

### Mancos High Tunnel Installation

The Mancos School received a grant through the Mancos FoodShare to install a high tunnel structure on school grounds in order to **increase food production** as well as **provide cold season classroom space**. The tunnel is a testament to the ingenuity of our staff who had to level a severe slope at the Mancos School in order to create a flat space for the structure.





# WHERE WE'RE HEADED IN 2017

## School Garden Program Coming to Manaugh Elementary

We are moving closer to our goal of offering every student in Montezuma County a school garden education! The collaborative Mesa Elementary School Garden install was so successful in 2016 that we'll be doing it all over again at Manaugh Elementary School in 2017. Our team has been **planning the new installation for over a year** with Cortez School District staff, students and community partners. Enthusiasm and passion for the project is palpable!

Cortez High School students are building a garden shed for the project and a new crew of SCC Farm Corps will work with MSTFP, Manaugh staff, and volunteers to install a state of the art school garden that **will serve an additional 280 students** in Montezuma County. The Montezuma Orchard Restoration Project will also be on hand to oversee the installation of a heritage fruit tree orchard on site. We look forward to seeing students and community members alike utilizing the space in the years to come!



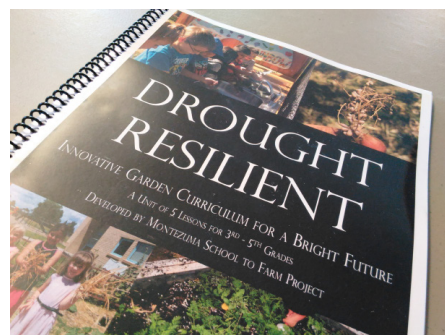
## New Greenhouse & Microgreens Production

At the Dolores school campus, a new greenhouse will soon replace the old, weather-beaten structure where MSTFP grows starts for all of its programming across the county. A service group from Pennington, New Jersey will arrive this spring to work with MSTFP staff and students on the overhaul.

This spring, **microgreen production will launch** in the newly constructed high tunnel at the Mancos School Campus. The growing system will include a **passive solar heating element**, and will have the **capacity to produce fast-growing and highly nutritious microgreens** for school cafeteria lunches, youth farmers markets, and student taste testings.

## K-2<sup>ND</sup> Grade Drought Resilient Curriculum Manual

Following up on our great successes developing 3rd-8th grade Drought Curriculum Manuals, MSTFP will use its expertise in effective school garden lesson plan development to round out the Drought Curriculum Manual with Kindergarten through 2nd grade lessons. These **Colorado Academic Standards aligned** lesson plans will be utilized in school garden classrooms, **across Southwestern Colorado and beyond**, to teach valuable water conservation, soil conservation and drought tolerant agricultural practices.



## Thank you to our 2016 Community Harvest Level Sponsors

*Our community business partners at **Southwest Health System**, **Skanska USA**, **Ricky King State Farm** and **First Southwest Bank** generously sponsored program and material support for school garden classes across Montezuma County as well as for the new school garden installation at Mesa Elementary School. They have been a vital component of our success and we look forward to continuing to build our community together in the coming years.*

## MSTFP Staff

**Sarah Syverson**, *Interim Director*  
**Erin Bohm**, *Education Consultant*  
**Patrick Alford**, *School Garden/Production Manager*  
**Renee Nall**, *Cortez Middle School Garden Manager*  
**Danyel Mezzanatto**, *School Garden/Curriculum Manager*  
**Christine Foote**, *New Programs & Systems Coordinator*

## MSTFP Serve Colorado AmeriCorps Members

**Maryssa Schlough**, *Kemper School Garden Coordinator*  
**Katherine Rose**, *Mancos School Garden Coordinator*  
**Emmy Welsh**, *Dolores School Garden Coordinator*  
**Michael McMillan**, *Cortez Middle School Garden Coordinator*  
**Amy Moscovitz**, *Serve Colorado AmeriCorps*

## Thank you to the following local support:

- Mancos, Dolores, and Cortez School Districts
- City of Cortez and Town of Mancos
- Mancos and High Desert Conservation Districts
- Mancos Valley Resources
- Tierra Madre Herbs
- Cliffrose Garden Center and Gifts
- Kiwanis Club of Mesa Verde
- Dolores Rotary Club
- Coutts & Clark Western Foundation
- Sophia's Retreat & Event Center
- Onward! A Legacy Foundation
- Kenney Brothers Foundation

## Mancos Conservation District

### Governing Board

Robert Becker, Board President  
Jack Burk, Board Vice President  
Ben Wolcott, Board Secretary/Treasurer  
Michael Nolan, Board Member, MSTFP Liaison  
Travis Custer, Board Member, MSTFP Liaison

### Staff

Gretchen Rank, District Manager  
Patrick Clements, District Conservation Technician  
Jeff Fowlds, District Conservation Technician

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