

# 2025 Annual Report

Climate and Environment  
Commission



December 2025

Report composed by Sharon Morris,  
CEC Chair

---



## Introduction

The New Castle Climate and Environment Commission (CEC) provides information to town residents on environmental and climate issues. It develops a work plan with educational and outreach activities and provides recommendations to the Town Council on how the Town can meet the goals of the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

## Commissioners

The CEC membership has changed significantly in the past two years. Five of the seven members have joined since April 2024. New members bring expertise and experience in wildlife biology, native landscaping, trail development, and event planning.

The Commissioners are:

Kendall Bakich  
Nancy Barnes, Secretary  
Myrna Candreia - Vice-Chair  
Ryan Deyarmond  
Julia Koch - Commissioner  
Bruce Leland – Town Council Representative  
Sharon Morris - Commission Chair

# CEC 2026 Activities

## January

The Commission's 2025 year started with a leadership loss. CEC Chair Tom Elder passed away in January. Commissioner Leland provided significant leadership during this time and throughout 2025. His knowledge and depth of experience were essential with many new members to the CEC.

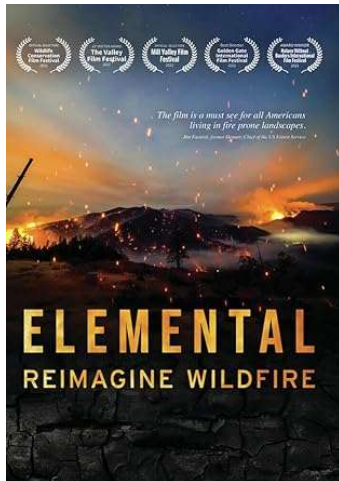
In January, the New Castle Town Council approved the budget and projects to use the bag fee funds (Colorado Plastic Pollution Reduction Act). As part of this process, the CEC submitted a report on recommendations on New Castle bag fee

expenditures: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f5f-BmndXnxBMo4Xb6hOARmTR05ENbNcsRJ-3rVeiGg/edit?usp=sharing>

Election of Commissioner Morris as Commission Chair, Commissioner Candrea as Vice-Chair, and Commissioner Barnes as Secretary for 2025.

## February

### Environmental Film Night



The CEC, in partnership with the Garfield County Library District, hosted the documentary Elemental: Reimagine Wildfire with 41 residents attending. This film raised awareness of wildfire dangers and encouraged mitigation against wildfire and home damage. The event included a panel of experts after the movie who provided resources and answered questions that addressed key issues related to wildfire mitigation, New Castle emergency evacuation procedures, and evacuation preparation. Panelists included Paul Smith (Town of New Castle), Zach Pigatand (Colorado River Fire Protection District, Wildland Division Chief), Kate Collins (Middle Colorado Watershed Council).

## April

### Tom Elder Tree Planting



The CEC and the town recognized Tom Elder's important contributions to New Castle by planting a tree in Tom's honor. This tree and the accompanying plaque are prominent on the Main Street. The flowering crab apple tree was provided and planted by the town's Parks and Recreation Department. Funds for the plaque were acquired through an anonymous donor. Over 70 family members, friends, and town officials attended the tree-planting event. Town Manager Dave Reynolds spoke at the event.

### Earth Day 2025

The CEC expanded Earth Day to Burning Mountain Park with 14 partner agencies exhibiting and over 125 attendees. The CEC gave away 10 subscriptions for 6 months of composting services. Twenty percent renewed their service after the trial six months. Post-event surveys from exhibitors indicate satisfaction with the event location, timeframe, and coordination. The wind, however, was an unwelcome addition to the event. The recommendation was to continue this event at this time next year but without the wind.



*“Such a great event, highly recommend it happening again!”*

Earth Day Exhibitor

## May

### Trash and Trail Clean Up



The CEC partnered with Roaring Folk Outdoor Volunteers to host a trail clean-up day for Alder Park and parts of the Colorow trail. Six volunteers worked to gather trash, create water flow structures on the steep parts of the trail, and develop narrowing strategies to improve native vegetation growth.

## July & August

### New Castle Business Grant

The CEC launched a grant program for New Castle businesses to support new projects that reduce waste or replace single-use plastics. This project was funded by plastic bag fee funds. Allowable activities included composting, recycling, and switching materials to non-plastic and compostable materials.

Two businesses were awarded grants:

**Home Town Real Estate Company** to shred and recycle legacy papers.

**Salon West** to start a compost and recycling service for salon waste. The adjacent image is a report on the first few months of Salon West's participation in the beauty product recovery service funded by this grant. Their continued commitment to this service will include a small recycle/repurpose fee with all salon services.

#### You are recovering:

- Hair
- Metals
- Paper
- Hair Color
- Plastic
- Single Use

Total amount of beauty waste recovered so far this year:

**35.0 LBS**

## September

### CEC Award & Recognition



The CEC was honored to receive the New Castle Volunteer Organization of the Year, awarded at Burning Mountain Festival. The Commission members were honored with a float in the parade, candy to hand out, and wrist bands.

This civic visibility allowed the CEC to soft launch the “Guardians of Nature” campaign. This campaign will encourage sustainable practices and recognize and celebrate those who are taking care of New Castle’s natural resources.

## October

### Trash Pick Up Day

On October 11, CEC hosted a trash pick up day in coordination with the town of New Castle. The key areas for pick up were Bruce Road, near City Market and CR 335, from Grand River Park to Apple Tree Park. Four Commissioners and community members volunteered for over three hours on a rainy day. They were rewarded with lunch together at the New Castle Library. In total, 18 large trash and recycling bags were filled and brought to the New Castle Trash Day.



## November

### Planning

The CEC met in an extended work session to consider updates to their mission, strategic plan, and other initiatives. With newer Commissioners, this work session helped to review the history of the CEC as well as look toward the future. A three-year plan will be solidified by the end of 2025 along with a calendar for 2026 initiatives.

## December

### Post Chili Cook Off

In 2024, the CEC supported the New Castle Recreation Center in using bag fee funds to buy reusable bowls for the annual chili cook off as well as reusable cups and other dishes for regular use at the community center (to reduce plastic use and trash). To come full circle, after the 2025 Chili Cook Off, two Commissioners volunteered to help with cleaning all the reusable bowls, spoons, cups, etc.



## Funds

Town Council allocated \$1,000 in 2025 which was used for promotional materials and giveaway items for events and initiatives.

The New Castle Bag Fees funds were used for the trail day trash clean up with Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, the business grants, the community trash day clean up, and the 10 subscriptions to composting services (Evergreen) for six months.

