

20 YEARS AGO today

BY NEL BURKETT

The following stories appeared in this publication 20 years ago this week.

Two presumed dead in Blue Mesa plane crash

By Pete Sharp

Two Denver-area flight instructors are presumed dead following an accident that took place Friday evening, May 11 in which their twin-engine Beechcraft 76 Duchess plane struck power lines crashing into Blue Mesa Reservoir near Elk Creek Marina. Greg Levine, 31 and Daniel Bailey, 30 were confirmed on board the plane. Salvage efforts are not expected to begin until at least Monday, May 21.

National Park Service employees and witnesses rushed to the crash site approximately 100 yards from the marina but found nothing but foam insulation, papers in a plastic bag and pieces of the dashboard. Immediately after the crash at approximately 7:45 p.m., Gunnison County emergency crews were called to the marina. A search for any survivors was fruitless.

According to Curecanti National Recreational Area employee Jim Cory who was at his dwelling on a bluff above the reservoir at the time of the plane accident, the plane was flying from the east fast and low into the rays from the setting

sun as it entered the narrower canyon area by the marina. As the canyon jogs to the right, the plane began a turn accordingly.

"It entered the canyon, banked right and hit the lines with its right wing," recounted Cory.

He continued that the plane lost control at which point the plane went out of sight hearing only the impact of the plane on the water. He added that the sparks from the severed lines started a brush fire which was quickly extinguished. Witnesses on the water told the National Park Service that the plane crashed into the reservoir upside down sinking immediately. The wreckage rests under 130 feet of water.

The four severed heavy gauge lines, suspended 85-90 feet above the water across the ¼ mile wide canyon, supplied the visitors center, park headquarters, Pappy's Restaurant, employee housing and the marina with power. Power was restored Sunday evening. Orange balls were

not on the lines. FAA regulations require that a plane be at an altitude of 500 feet in developed areas. The National Recreational Area is designated a "special use area" according to a NPS press release which asks that pilots observe a 2,000 minimum altitude above ground level.

The four-seat plane built in 1978, has a cruising speed of 173 miles per hour and a range of 850 miles. The plane that crashed reportedly took off from Centennial Airport in Denver at 5 p.m. Friday without filing a flight plan.

According to Curecanti spokesman Phil Zichterman, the recovery efforts will begin this Monday. Due to the reservoir's elevation of 7,500 feet above sea level, the plane's depth and the cold water, special diving equipment must be used to determine if the plane is still in one piece. If it is, body recovery will be conducted simultaneously to wreckage salvage.

National Transportation Safety Board officials are on call and will begin an investigation once the wreckage has been raised from the depths of the reservoir.

Legacy preserves Niccoli family ranch

By Melissa Ruch

One-hundred-and-forty-five acres of ranchland across from Crested Butte South off of Highway 135 were placed in permanent preservation last week. A conservation easement, which prevents any development on the land, was placed on a parcel of the Nic-

coli Ranch.

Since this past spring, the Robert Niccoli family had been working with the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy to place the acreage surrounding their ranch headquarters into perpetual preservation. This property is west of Highway 135 in the East River Valley.

Legacy co-director Joe Milan said of the Legacy's most recent project, "For us, this really embodies both of the main parts of our mission, to conserve ranchland and to preserve ranching."

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust holds the conservation easement. The Gunnison County Land Preservation Board contributed \$120,000 toward easement funding. In addition, Great Outdoors Colorado's open space and legacy program contributed, and a donation from the one percent program. The Niccoli family donated 25 percent of the total easement value.

"We are so pleased to be able to assist the Niccoli family to achieve their land preservation goals. The success of the Legacy program continues to inspire us. We are very grateful for the community support that makes our program possible," said Susan Lohr, a founding director of Legacy and board member.

In addition, Milan pointed out the uniqueness of the property for its actual value. "That's what also makes it so special, is there is so much development pressure there."

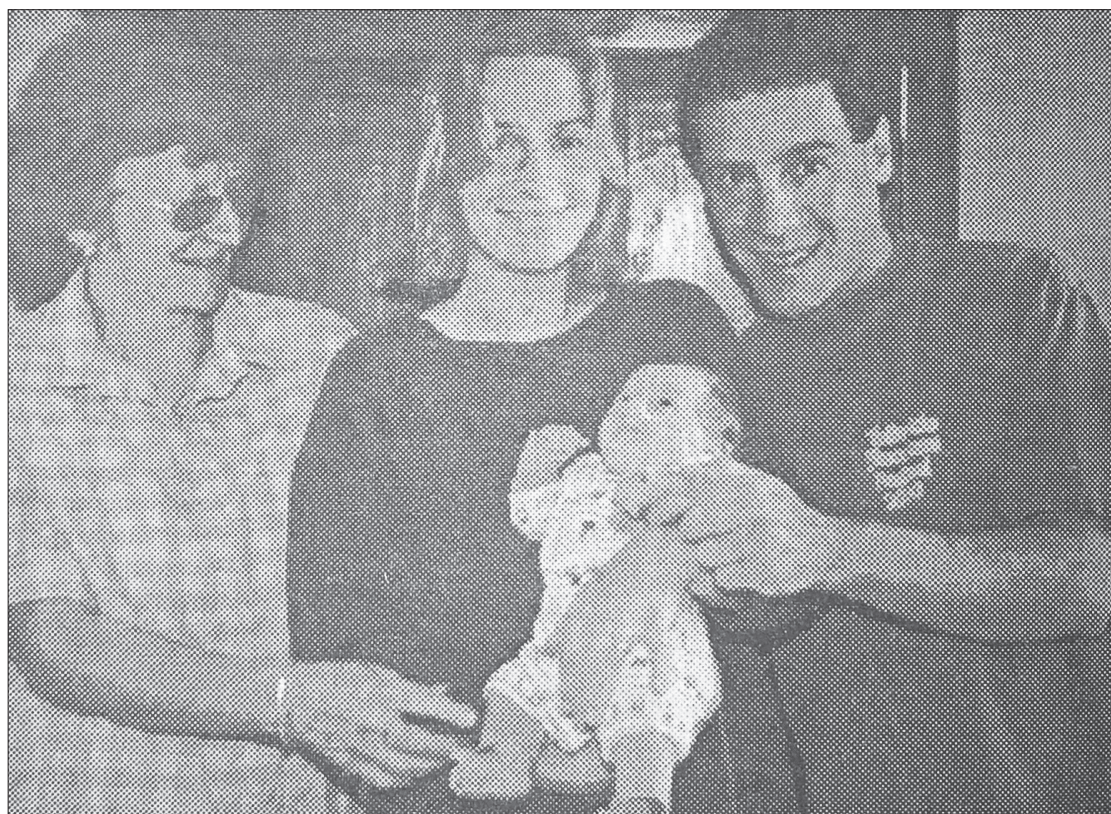
Since 1998, the Legacy group has completed 17 projects that purchased conservation easements, preserving 6,645 acres of Gunnison Country ranchland in perpetuity. *Story edited for space.*

Nel Burkett is a fan of history and enjoys when the present is put in the context of the past.



Krista and PJ Hildebrandt have opened the *Alpengardener Center* in CB South, featuring weekly specials, ceramic pots, tools, perennials, annuals and supplies. They also offer landscaping and maintenance.

COURTESY PHOTO



Luke Tomas Shull was born March 3, 2001 in Denver to Sarka and Eric. Pictured here with grandmother Ingrid Pokorna. PHOTO BY TIFFANY WARDMAN

Legals

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—INVITATION TO BID—
TOWN OF CRESTED BUTTE
PROJECT: SLATE RIVER BOAT LAUNCH
LOCATION: 85 PYRAMID AVE. CRESTED BUTTE, COLORADO

Project Description: The Slate River Boat Launch Project will develop a riverfront park providing recreational river access to the Slate River via Pyramid Avenue. The project will consist of an upper staging area composed of a stabilized decomposed granite surface with adjacent changing areas, portable toilet enclosure, and screen wall made of weathering steel. The staging area will be surrounded by landscape boulder seating and site fixtures including a signage kiosk, bike racks, and paddle board storage. The river is accessed via stone slab steps with a wooden boat slide stabilized by a boulder retaining wall. The beach area will be enhanced with cobble river rock. The project includes enhanced native vegetation with temporary irrigation and the relocation of an infiltration and drainage area.

Submittal Deadline: Sealed bids for the construction of the Project will be received until

11:00a.m. Friday, June 25, 2021. Bids will be received via the following delivery methods:

Hand Delivered, UPS or FedEx:
Janna Hansen
Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Director
Town of Crested Butte
507 Maroon Avenue, Crested Butte Colorado 81224
Mailed via USPS:
Janna Hansen
Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Director
Town of Crested Butte
PO Box 39, Crested Butte Colorado 81224

All bids will be opened and read aloud at the Crested Butte Town Council Chambers immediately following the submittal deadline. Bids received after this deadline will not be considered.
Pre-Bid Meeting: All Bidders are invited to

attend an in-person **pre-bid meeting and site visit at 11:00am, Thursday, June 10, 2021, at Crested Butte Town Hall located at 507 Maroon Ave.**

Contract documents, bid documents, and bid set drawings are available online under Bids/Proposals at <https://www.townofcrestedbutte.com>.

Prospective bidders may contact Janna Hansen, Project Manager, at 970-349-5338 with questions pertaining to the scope of the project and information on this Invitation to Bid. Bids will be received as set forth herein and in the bid documents. No bid may be withdrawn within a period of sixty-five (65) days after the date fixed for opening bids.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to accept bids other than the lowest, and to

waive any informalities and irregularities therein. **Bid security in the amount of not less than 5% of the total bid must accompany each bid in the form of a Bid Bond, certified check, or cashier's check and made payable to the Town of Crested Butte.** The successful bidder will be required to furnish a Performance Bond and a Labor and Material Payment Bond, both in the amount of 100% of the total contract amount, in conformity with the requirements of the Contract Documents and on forms as provided by the Town.

Town of Crested Butte, Colorado (OWNER)
By: Janna Hansen
Title: Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Director

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