



FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP
2006 Annual Report

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THE FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP

COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE • NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • USDA FOREST SERVICE

Colorado's Front Range includes an explosive mix of homes situated within forest areas. These wildland-urban interface zones place people, homes, communities and natural resources at significant risk from catastrophic wildfires. Impacts to the Front Range from catastrophic wildfires in 2002 were some of the most devastating in the United States.

Increased community sustainability and safety provided through the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Implementation Strategy benefits local landowners, local governments, the State of Colorado and the nation.

The Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership is a dynamic partnership comprised of federal, state and local governments, land-management agencies, private landowners, conservation organizations and other stakeholders. The purpose of the Partnership is to reduce wildland fire risks through sustained fuels treatment along Colorado's Front Range.

The primary goal of the Partnership is to enhance community sustainability and restore fire-adapted ecosystems over a 10-year period. Key to success is extensive participation from local governments; public involvement; collaboration in identifying and supporting specific project areas and types of treatment;

and building on successful projects such as the Upper South Platte Watershed Restoration Project, the Winiger Ridge Project, research at Cheesman Reservoir and the Polhemus prescribed burn.

Partnership agencies conducted a large-scale rapid assessment of hazardous fuel conditions along the Front Range to identify large areas where treatment needs are of greatest concern. As a result of the assessment, maps were developed that delineate areas of low to very high hazard, risk, and values. The most immediate needs are demonstrated where the ratings for hazard, risk and value are all very high. A similar assessment was completed for non-federal lands in the interface where hazardous fuels place communities at risk. The assessments indicate that approximately 510,000 acres are high priority for treatment – 300,000 acres within the Pike National Forest, 140,000 acres within the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests, and 70,000 acres of non-federal land.

The following report discusses the progress that has been made in fostering collaboration, working with communities to develop and implement Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and treating hazardous fuels along the Front Range of Colorado.

Setting the Standard for Collaborative Forest Management

The Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership continues to evolve; from the Roundtable, to treatments on the ground, to the people who play a major role in making things happen in science, in communities and in politics. In 2006, Partnership agencies treated 34,629 acres, bringing our three-year total to 86,515 acres. We also continued working with communities to create and implement Community Wildfire Protection Plans and, through the Roundtable, continued to engage more people in our forest health efforts.

Climate change, war, wildfires, storms and global responsibilities framed the setting for the Partnership this year. When we formed the Partnership five years ago, we could not have imagined how timely our efforts would be. As a group, we believe we have helped people see the future – and helped engage them in finding solutions that will address the effects of bark beetles, drought and Front Range development, and lead to solution-oriented decision-making. More than that, we believe the Partnership is a template for the future of natural resource management. In an age that understands the value of collaboration, our Partnership has taken collaborative action to address national, state and local forest health issues. We would like to thank Roundtable members, state and federal employees, Partnership researchers, elected officials, industry members and citizens as we celebrate another successful year and prepare for additional challenges.

INTRODUCING THE FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP ROUNDTABLE

In the spring of 2006, the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable formally introduced itself to Colorado. In a May 18 ceremony hosted by The Nature Conservancy at the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Roundtable presented its publication “Living with Fire: Protecting Communities and Restoring Forests.” With the introduction of this publication, the Roundtable joined the effort to address forest health and restoration in Colorado. Endorsed by then Gov. Bill Owens, the Roundtable report presented a long-term realistic solution to the undesirable conditions of forests along the Front Range. The report included the following recommendations to help protect communities and restore forest health on Colorado’s Front Range: 1) Identify new



Colorado State Forester Jeff Jabnke, a member of the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Leadership Team discusses the Front Range Roundtable report at a stakeholders meeting.

state and local funding sources that can contribute to treatment costs on state and private land, 2) Increase forest treatment incentives for private landowners, 3) Advocate for additional federal funding for Front Range forest treatments, 4) Increase the appropriate application of prescribed fire and wildland fire use as a management tool, 5) Increase commercial utilization of woody biomass, especially as bioheating fuel for institutional buildings, 6) Increase contract sizes and durations through the use of stewardship contracts on federal lands, 7) Limit the growth of the fire risk in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), 8) Promote the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for Front Range communities at risk, 9) Adopt a clear and common framework for prioritizing treatments, and 10) Convene a follow-up Roundtable of forest stakeholders to ensure implementation of current recommendations and address future challenges.

To develop these recommendations, the Roundtable established five working groups. Facilitated by Roundtable members, these groups worked diligently to combine physical and social science with economic assessments, and provide answers to many questions that formed the foundation of the recommendations. For example, to provide realistic information about the scope of the problem and potential solutions, the Roundtable recom-



mended a 40-year treatment timeframe at an estimated cost of \$10 million per year.

Since the release of its report, the Roundtable has focused on implementing recommendations, and has hired an implementation coordinator to lead the effort.

ACTION BY CITIZENS, ELECTED OFFICIALS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

We knew when we created the Partnership that we had to develop projects and project support from the ground up. In 2006, we not only developed support for Partnership projects, we also witnessed an evolution of action as citizens, elected officials and communities created more Community Wildfire Protection Plans and increased their involvement in projects on private and public lands.

Education, project implementation and citizen involvement provided the foundation for increased interest in forest health and restoration by Front Range homeowners. With a mission “to provide a cooperative framework under which fire management programs are developed and implemented to protect human and natural resource values in an effective and efficient manner,” the Larimer County Cooperative provides a successful template for interagency collaboration and landowner involvement.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Larimer County Cooperative focuses on activities prioritized to meet six management objectives: 1) prevention, 2) preparedness, 3) mitigation, 4) suppression, 5) reclamation and rehabilitation, and 6) fiscal attention.

As a result, the Cooperative has forged a strong working relationship that results in better understanding of agency roles and responsibilities, and increased knowledge of forest health issues by elected officials. The Cooperative also has provided better use of information by creating cross-boundary hazard fuel maps with information on hazard identification, subdivision assessments and needs assessments. Finally, the Cooperative has helped foster greater visibility for Colorado’s FireWise program among Larimer County landowners.

There are many more examples of successful collaboration throughout the Front Range that focus on cooperative education and foster action toward restoring forest health and reducing fire risk.

The Colorado State Legislature passed legislation important to future Partnership and Roundtable activities. House Bill 07-1168 (HB07-1168) provides for the creation of forest improvement districts. House Bill 07-1130 (HB07-1130) is a pilot program that provides incentives for forest restoration projects on state and private lands. And Senate Joint Resolution-006 (SRJ-006) addresses stewardship contracting related to forest health.

These bills will provide many Coloradans with incentives to implement hazardous fuels treatments.

RESEARCH BRINGS IT HOME

The Mixed Conifer Tour, conducted by Laurie Huckaby, Rocky Mountain Research Station, provided an introductory lesson on fire history and effects in lodgepole pine, spruce and fir above 9,000 feet elevation.

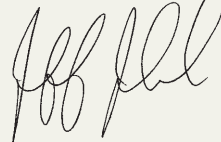
These higher-altitude stands have sparked debate about how they should be managed for forest health. And unlike the ponderosa pine zone, mixed-conifer fire history and effects have not been closely examined along the Front Range. One of the notable discoveries in Huckaby’s mixed conifer study was the history of the trees in her study areas – a tree-ring chronology now exists for ponderosa pine that goes back to 1100 AD. Much remains to be learned, and continued research will lead to helpful, hopeful dialog about how we proceed with forest management efforts in these higher-altitude forests.

Research also has pushed collaboration forward with publications by Jeffrey Brooks, Alexander N. Bujak, Joseph Champ and Daniel Williams on public attitudes about collaboration, problem framing and trust as they relate to forest management on the Front Range.

In 2004, Michael T. Goergen, Jr., with the Society of American Foresters said, “Aside from our colleagues in other disciplines, we will need to work with the people who live in communities that surround at-risk forests to reduce the threat of fire and to address its impacts.” With their annotated reading list, as well as their studies involving publics along the Front Range, Brooks and his colleagues have provided information that will help us meet Mr. Goergen’s concerns by working more effectively with those who will be impacted by the effects of our actions as we continue to address forest health issues throughout Colorado.

THE FUTURE

The challenges related to forest health and fire risk reduction will continue well into 2007 and beyond – as will our endeavors to find solutions. We are confident that the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership will continue to tackle the issues and successfully implement projects that will help protect communities and restore forest health on Colorado’s Front Range.



Jeff Jahnke on behalf of the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Leadership Team



Project Accomplishments: Three-Year Fuels Treatment Total Reaches 86,521 Acres

Partnership agencies treated 34,629 acres in 2006, bringing the three-year total to 86,515 acres (24,908 acres were treated in 2005 and 26,978 in 2004). In addition, planning has been completed for treatment on an additional 17,735 acres of U.S. Forest Service land, 11,711 acres on state and private land and 400 acres on National Park Service land for 2007. Following are highlights of accomplishments from 2006.

COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

In 2006, the Colorado State Forest Service treated a total of 13,846 acres, primarily on state and private land, and participated in the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans covering nearly 100 communities. In 2007, CSFS plans to treat 11,731 acres.



BOULDER DISTRICT

In 2006, the Boulder District treated a total of 1,012 acres in numerous projects throughout Boulder and Gilpin counties. Of the project total, 841 acres were completed on private lands, 109 acres on local government lands and 74 acres on federal lands. Completed Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) led to the implementation of 202 strategic fuels treatment acres. The Partnership funded two of these thinning projects in 2006, and the district started the set-up process for six new Partnership funded projects to be implemented in 2007. Two new CWPPs were completed in 2006, bringing the district total to five. Initial meetings for three additional CWPPs occurred in 2006, with plan completion expected in mid-2007.

BROOMFIELD OFFICE

The Broomfield Office treated 1,243 acres in 2006. Treatments consisted of mastication, timber sale and hand thinning on Denver Water lands.

The Swayback/Jenny Gulch Timber Sale is Phase II of the Swayback/Jenny Gulch Good Neighbor Project. The purpose of the project is to restore ponderosa pine forests to more closely resemble pre-settlement conditions, improve forest health and reduce wildfire hazards. This project involves Denver Water and USFS lands.



Kristin Garrison

The Long Gulch Firebreak Project established a permanent fireline on the Lower North Fork parcel to assist with wildfire suppression efforts and provide holding line for future prescribed burn projects.

The Long Gulch Firebreak Project established a permanent fireline on the Lower North Fork parcel to assist with wildfire suppression efforts and to provide holding line for future prescribed burn projects. Numerous mastication treatments have been completed on this parcel over the past two years. Plans are underway to reintroduce prescribed fire on the treated units.

Implementation of the South Platte CWPP continues and is now underway on the recently completed Lower North Fork CWPP.

FORT COLLINS DISTRICT

In 2006, the Fort Collins District treated a total of 941 acres. Of these acres, 381 were treated with FRFTP funds and 159 with other grant funds; 270 of these acres were on State Land Board properties. Three of the five projects funded by the Partnership in 2006 utilized prescribed burning as part of the treatment; 2 acres were thinned and pile-burned for a demonstration area near the Red Feather Lakes School, 10 acres were thinned and pile-burned at Glacier View, and 87 acres were thinned and pile-burned on the Manhattan State Land Board property.

The East Portal Coalition, Buckskin Heights and the Magic Sky Girl Scout Ranch completed CWPPs in 2006, and the district currently is assisting Loveland, Berthoud, Poudre Canyon Fire District, Rist Canyon Fire District, Red Feather Lakes, the Ben De-





Katherine Timm

Contractors discuss a thinning project in Larimer County. Making use of the timber from fuels mitigation projects is an issue throughout Colorado.

latour Boy Scout Ranch and Glen Haven with their plans. The Fort Collins District also completed or revised seven forest stewardship/management plans this year covering 5,004 acres.

FRANKTOWN DISTRICT

The Franktown District treated a total of 482 acres and completed management plans on 524 acres. The Partnership funded a 63-acre project in Lower Jarre Canyon that was started in December 2006. Due to heavy snow, only 10 acres of the project were completed in 2006; however, the remaining 53 acres are scheduled to be complete in the spring of 2007.

District personnel also were involved in the development of the Roxborough Park CWPP, which will be complete in 2007.

GOLDEN DISTRICT

The Golden District completed treatments on 1,915 acres in 2006, including several hundred acres of land owned by Denver Mountain Parks, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado State Land Board, private citizens and the Jefferson County School District. Treatments focused on reducing wildfire hazards and enhancing big game habitat, improving forest health, reducing insect/disease outbreak potential and restoring forest structure to more historical regimes. Fuels treatment projects were accomplished through a combination of contracted services, seasonal field crews, local fire department personnel and private landowners. Accomplishments include:

- 198 acres of wildfire hazard reduction and big game habitat enhancement work at Mt. Evans State Wildlife Area in Clear Creek County near the town of Evergreen.
- 140 acres of wildfire hazard reduction and forest health treatment work at Windy Peak Outdoor Education Laboratory School near the town of Bailey in Jefferson County. This treatment area provides an opportunity for many young school children to learn the value of forest health and fire mitigation.
- More than 30 acres of fuels reduction/ponderosa pine restoration work at Cub Creek Park, a Denver Mountain Park, in the town of Evergreen. Work was completed in a highly visible park near downtown Evergreen.
- An 8-acre fuelbreak near the town of Pine Junction; work was done in collaboration with a private landowner with funding from a Jefferson County fuels mitigation grant program.
- 5 acres of insect and disease treatments in a stagnant lodgepole pine stand in Staunton State Park near the town of Conifer.



Katherine Timm

Brenda Wasielewski, CSFS Golden District, discusses the fuels mitigation work being done in Golden Gate Canyon State Park.

GRANBY DISTRICT

In 2006, the district completed fuels reduction and forest health treatments on 2,330 acres. The mountain pine beetle (MPB) outbreak continues to expand and has now heavily impacted the Fraser Valley in eastern Grand County. MPB activity has spurred community involvement on development of the Upper Fraser Valley CWPP.

The Green Ridge Fuels Reduction project is moving forward. This highly visible fuels reduction project is occurring under the Good Neighbor Agreement in cooperation with the Sulphur Ranger District of the Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests.

Fuels reduction treatments continue throughout the portions of Grand County that have been most heavily impacted by beetles.

The district also treated 22 acres on Denver Water lands in Summit County in 2006, and will treat an additional 55 acres in 2007.

WOODLAND PARK DISTRICT

The district completed treatment on 5,923 acres in 2006. In addition, the district participated in the development of the Park County CWPP, which encompasses more than 1.4 million acres. The community of Crystal Park also completed a CWPP, and is beginning implementation. The Woodmoor Improvement Association in El Paso County successfully combined a CWPP and Forest Stewardship Plan, and is the first on the district to receive Firewise Communities/USA designation. Eight additional CWPPs currently are in progress and will be completed in 2007. The district completed mitigation on 4,043 acres in 2006, and five projects were funded by the Partnership.



Katherine Timm

Beetle-infested trees are removed near the entrance to Snow Mountain Ranch in Winter Park. Young trees behind the treated area have emerged as a result of earlier thinning projects.



Katherine Timm

Dave Root, Colorado State Forest Service – Woodland Park District, discusses fuels treatment work being done on private land near Divide.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

During 2006, the fire and fuels management crew completed several fuels reduction projects in the wildland-urban interface along the park boundary, including 881 acres on the projects described below. Approximately 400 acres of both thinning and prescribed fire are planned for 2007.



HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS 2006

- **Fall River Entrance to Beaver Meadows Entrance Road Buffer: 235 acres**
190 acres of thinning and hauling were done along the road between the two entrance stations and the equivalent of 45 acres of woody debris was burned.
- **Deer Mountain Urban Interface: 368 acres**
Contractors thinned 248 acres and stacked slash piles in the summer. Park fuels crews burned 120 acres of the resulting piles in the fall and winter of 2006.
- **Fall River Structure Defense: 90 acres**
60 acres around structures in the Fall River corridor were thinned and the debris hauled away. A large pile resulting from 30 acres was also burned in the fall.
- **Grand Lake Boundary: 154 acres**
42 acres of fuels were thinned and stacked; 12 acres of piles were burned.



Courtesy of Rocky Mountain National Park

Crews burn slash piles in Rocky Mountain National Park. The park plans to treat approximately 400 acres through thinning and prescribed fire in 2007.

- **Mill Creek Ranger Station: 4 acres**
4 acres of piles were burned in the fall.
- **Glacier Basin Camp Ground: 18 acres**
12 acres were thinned and the slash was hauled off-site; 6 acres of debris were burned.
- **Leiffer Cabin: 12 acres**
Slash generated from 12 acres of thinning was burned in the fall.

HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS 2007

- **Deer Mountain Urban Interface: 184 acres**
120 acres are to be thinned and the slash stacked in the summer of 2007. The resulting 64 acres of piles will be burned in the winters of 2007 and 2008.
- **Horseshoe Broadcast Burn: 50 acres**
50 acres are scheduled to be burned in 2007, as the weather allows.
- **Bear Lake Road Corridor Buffer 150 acres**
100 acres will be thinned with the slash hauled away; and 50 acres of piles will be burned in 2007.
- **Additional Park Structure Defense 15 acres**
10 acres near park structures are to be thinned and the slash will be hauled away leaving 5 acres of piles to be burned.

RURAL FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Fiscal Year 2006 – \$38,000

- \$15,000 to Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department for implementation of CWPP.
- \$15,000 to the Grand Lake Fire Protection District for implementation of a CWPP.
- \$8,000 to the Allenspark Fire Protection District to complete a CWPP

Fiscal Year 2007 – \$18,000

- \$10,000 to the Glen Haven Volunteer Fire Department for implementation of a CWPP.
- \$4,000 to the Grand Lake Fire Protection District for implementation of a CWPP.
- \$2,000 to the Allenspark Fire Protection District to implement a CWPP.
- \$2,000 to Estes Park Volunteer Fire Department to implement a CWPP.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The park conducts an active fire education program that seeks to raise public awareness and facilitate collaborative efforts with adjoining private landowners and municipal, county and state governments. Community Fire Assistance funding was provided in Fiscal Year 2006 to assist with the development and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Allenspark, Estes Park and Grand Lake.



U.S. FOREST SERVICE

ARAPAHO AND ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FORESTS

In 2006, the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests (ARNF) treated a total of 10,717 acres; 8,455 acres were treated mechanically and 2,262 acres were treated with prescribed fire. More than 7,500 acres are planned for future treatment. Personnel from the ARNF and the Pike National Forest began developing a 10-year Long-term Stewardship Contract request for proposals to enhance efforts to reduce hazardous fuels. Forest personnel continued to assist local communities and the Colorado State Forest Service in developing CWPP.

The ARNF also joined the White River and Routt National Forests and numerous other cooperators to form the Northern Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative to address the mountain pine beetle epidemic occurring in north central Colorado. Treatments on the Sulphur Ranger District are being planned in an integrated manner to support the goals and objectives of both the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership and the Northern Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative.

SOUTH ZONE FUELS PROGRAM (BOULDER & CLEAR CREEK RANGER DISTRICTS)

In 2006, hazardous fuels reduction treatment was accomplished on 2,514 acres within the wildland-urban interface. Of these acres, 2,069 were accomplished through mechanical thinning and 445 through prescribed fire. In addition, decisions were made to reduce hazardous fuels on approximately 500 acres.

Sugarloaf Fuels Reduction Project – The Sugarloaf Fuels Reduction Project covers approximately 5,000 acres. The project decision notice was signed in January of 2004. Located just west of Boulder, the Peak-to-Peak Scenic Byway defines the western boundary of the project area. Crews continued operations in the Sugarloaf Project area in 2006, and 1,696 acres were treated or are under contract to be treated. Treatments include forest thinning, tree pruning, prescribed burning and tree removal. Treatment of more than 900 acres is planned for 2007.

James Creek Fuels Reduction Project – The decision notice for this project was signed in September 2004 and includes 6,402 acres of treatment. In 2006, 544 acres were treated. Treatments include thinning and hand piling slash. Treatment on more than 650 acres is planned in 2007.

St. Vrain Project – This Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) project decision was signed identifying approximately 2,650 acres of proposed treatment. This project gives priority to community/neighborhood protection with some emphasis on



wildlife habitat and forest restoration in specific areas. Treatments are scheduled to begin in 2007.

Yankee Hill Project – This project is an Integrated Landscape Design to Maximize Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Pilot project. The team has formulated broad areas consisting of 1,000-3,000 acres of potential treatment. It will be a neighborhood/community protection project, with special attention given to watershed and recreation resource protection. Completion of this planning effort was delayed until 2007 so that funds could be used for implementation in other project areas.

Evergreen Fuels Project – The project decision notice was signed on this 1,000-acre project in 2004. The project is located in the Yankee Creek area within the Elk Creek Fire Protection District near Evergreen. Project implementation began in 2006; 26 acres were treated. Funding in 2006 was inadequate to complete more areas, but treatment of about 375 acres is planned for 2007.

CANYON LAKES RANGER DISTRICT

In FY 2006, hazardous fuels reduction treatment was completed on 4,300 acres, all within the wildland-urban interface. Of these acres, 3,008 were treated through mechanical thinning and 1,292 through prescribed fire. In addition, decisions were made to reduce hazardous fuels on approximately 2,000 acres.

Crystal Lakes Fuels Reduction Project – Located north and west of the community of Red Feather Lakes, the Crystal Lakes subdivision has received Firewise Community/USA designation. The decision document was signed in 2004, and treatment areas were completely laid out. In 2006, 2,746 acres were treated or under contract for treatment. Treatments include forest thinning, prescribed burning and biomass removal.



Volunteers have done extensive work on private land bordering National Forest land near Crystal Lakes and Red Feather Lakes.

Courtesy of Colorado State Forest Service



Sheep Creek 2 – The project area plan decision notice was signed in 2004. The project includes mechanical treatment and prescribed fire on 4,200 acres. No treatments were accomplished in 2006 due to weather. In 2007, more than 625 acres are scheduled to be treated with prescribed fire.

Stringtown West Fuels Reduction Project – Approximately 4,062 acres, this project was analyzed with a categorical exclusion (CE). The project complements previous projects completed in the area on National Forest land and extends work being done by the Colorado State Forest Service in conjunction with homeowners in the area. A decision on this project was made in 2006. Implementation will begin in 2007 with treatment on more than 400 acres.

Lone Tree Fuels Reduction Project – This project involves approximately 2,400 acres. A decision on this project was made in 2006; 16 acres were treated. Implementation will continue in 2007 with treatment on more than 150 acres.

Estes Valley Fuels Reduction Project – This project, which surrounds the community of Estes Park, is a HFRA project and a decision was made in 2005 to treat more than 7,500 acres to reduce hazardous fuels. This is a wildland-urban interface project that includes numerous acres of private land. Many private landowners are currently engaged in fuels reduction activities guided by the Colorado State Forest Service. Treatment on private land is being integrated into the planning of this project on National Forest lands. In 2006, 998 acres were treated. Implementation will continue in 2007 with treatment on approximately 1,400 acres.

SULPHUR RANGER DISTRICT

In 2006, hazardous fuels reduction treatment was accomplished on 3,903 acres; 99 percent within the wildland-urban interface. Of these acres, 900 were accomplished through mechanical treatments, 2,478 acres through timber sales, and 525 through prescribed fire. Decisions were also made to reduce hazardous fuels on nearly 5,000 acres. The on-going mountain pine beetle epidemic continues to increase the hazardous fuels workload.

Arapaho National Recreation Area Forest Health Project – Located within the Arapaho National Recreation Area, the project will reduce hazardous fuels and treat the effects of an ongoing mountain pine beetle epidemic. A record of decision (ROD) addressing areas outside of inventoried roadless areas was signed in 2004. In 2005, a ROD addressing treatment within inventoried roadless areas was signed. A Stewardship Contract to

treat more than 1,600 acres was awarded in the fall of 2005. In addition, another 573 acres were treated in 2006.

Upper Fraser Valley Forest Health Project – The project area is located west of the Winter Park ski area and includes portions of the Fraser Experimental Forest. This project was completed under HFRA authorities. The project will reduce hazardous fuels and treat the effects of an ongoing mountain pine beetle epidemic. A decision was made in fall 2005 to treat almost 3,700 acres. In 2006, a timber sale was awarded that will treat 1,083 acres. In 2007, treatments will be accomplished on approximately 1,100 acres.

Blue Ridge Salvage and Fuels Reduction Project – The project area is located west of Granby and south of Hot Sulphur Springs. The project will reduce hazardous fuels and treat the effects of an ongoing mountain pine beetle epidemic. The project, which analyzed the need for treatment on 30,000 acres, was initiated in 2006 and decision is anticipated in 2007.

PIKE NATIONAL FOREST

The Pike National Forest is collaborating among land managers, fire managers, emergency managers, community groups and private landowners throughout the Front Range. The administrative unit encourages strategic planning to identify the most appropriate methods for reducing wildfire risk and engaging diverse stakeholders within the planning process. In 2006, 9,191 acres were treated on the forest, a 16-percent increase over the previous year. Planning for an additional 10,235 acres also was completed and forest personnel participated extensively in the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

PIKES PEAK RANGER DISTRICT

In 2006, the Pikes Peak Ranger District treated 591 acres through prescribed burning and 1,470 acres through mechanical treatment for a total of 2,061 acres. The district completed work in the Teller County CWPP Priority Zone #1 and in the urban interface/intermix; completed 475 acres of pile burning on Trout Creek and 820 acres of force account thinning with the fire crews; piled 465 acres of residual slash with dozer 10; and implemented two 150-acre mastication contracts, one each at Skelton Ridge and Long John. Following is a summary of the percentage of acres treated on projects within the district: Trout Creek, 90 percent; Ridgewood, 50 percent; Long John, 35 percent; Ryan Quinlan, 10 percent; Skelton Ridge; 15 percent; and Rampart, 5 percent.



SOUTH PARK RANGER DISTRICT

The South Park Ranger District treated 2,874 acres in 2006 – 1,096 acres of prescribed fire and 1,778 mechanically. All work was completed in the Sledgehammer Project area southwest of Lake George. This project includes a critical South Platte River watershed, one of only two remaining areas in the montane zone on the South Platte River that hasn't been burned over, a heavily used recreation area (Elevenmile Canyon) and numerous subdivisions located throughout the area. Work consisted of force account burning, force account thinning and piling, and service contracts with product removal.

In addition, the district laid out 707 acres for treatment by future stewardship contracts and force account work in the Rocky Messenger Project Area just outside Lake George, and on the opposite side of the South Platte River from the Sledgehammer Project.

The district also played a critical role in the development of the Park County CWPP, which should be finalized in January 2007.



Chuck Dennis

Openings in ponderosa pine in the Upper South Platte project area encourages native grasses to grow.

SOUTH PLATTE RANGER DISTRICT

In 2006, the South Platte Ranger District completed 4,256 acres of hazardous fuels treatment. Work occurred primarily within the wildland-urban interface. Prescribed burning accounted for 796 acres, while mechanical treatment occurred on 3,460 acres. Mechanical treatment included contracts awarded with fiscal year 2006 funds. The 796 acres of prescribed fire were accomplished with Forest Service employees and cooperators such as the West Douglas Fire Department. The 30,000-acre Harris Park fuels management Decision Notice and the Finding of No Significant Impact were approved in March 2006. Furthermore, planning was completed on a 1,000-acre project for recreational residences and Forest Service administrative sites. A Categorical Exclusion Decision Notice on this project was issued on February 9, 2006. On-ground treatment for these sites is expected to begin in 2007. Planning also proceeded for 9,448 acres of prescribed fire; plans for these acres were approved in 2006.



Mike Elson

Native vegetation provides food and habitat for wildlife, including the threatened Pawnee montane skipper butterfly. Pawnee montane skipper butterfly populations have increased 14-fold in a treated area near Deckers.

Community Connections: Capitalizing on Local Assets

THE GOLD HILL CWPP – FROM CONVERSATION TO COMPLETION IN A YEAR

Surrounded by forests, sitting on the mountainside in seeming isolation, it is hard to imagine that this collection of old buildings used to be a booming gold rush town with 1,500 residents. But Gold Hill is now home to about 300 year-round residents and the oldest continuously operating public school in the state. At an elevation of 8,300 feet and bordered by National Forest, BLM and Boulder County open space land, the views from Main Street are striking. But with this storied past, isolation and beauty comes a very real risk – wildfire. In fact, much of the town was destroyed by two fires during the gold rush years.

In 2005, the community of Gold Hill, along with the other smaller communities that make up the Gold Hill Fire Protection District (GHFPD), clearly saw the risk and decided to do something about it. With no financial backing, and little government infrastructure, the challenges were formidable. But with the support of government representatives and the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance (SRCA), residents of the GHFPD developed a comprehensive Community Wildfire Protection Plan including a detailed risk assessment.

THE CONVERSATION

The CWPP began with a conversation in 2005 between long-time town resident Edie Eilender, a former forester and teacher at the Gold Hill School, and Bob Bundy, Partnership forester with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). Eilender is chair of Gold Hill's Forest Management Committee. After her conversation with Bundy, Eilender met with Kevin O'Dea who is with the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance. O'Dea offered to help with a CWPP and convinced Eilender that the Forest Management Committee could undertake the project. The Committee organized a community meeting in December 2005 to gauge community interest. They called everyone they could and posted flyers on mailboxes. Their efforts paid off when more than 50 people attended to hear the U.S. Forest Service, CSFS, Boulder County, the local fire chief, the SRCA and town officers discuss fire hazard, fuels reduction and the community's role in these efforts. The community voted to develop a CWPP.



Courtesy of Gold Hill

Surrounded by forests and sitting on the mountainside, Gold Hill residents clearly saw the risk associated with wildfires and decided to do something about it. Within a year, the community developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which they are in the process of implementing.

While the GHFPD's CWPP resulted from the work of many Gold Hill residents, Jennie Rice and Kris Gibson led the effort. Rice is town Mayor and a natural resource economist, and she has a technical mind and experience in meeting facilitation and working with stakeholders. She also has 20 years of consulting experience. Gibson, a Gold Hill native and member of the volunteer fire department, has a master's degree in social work. She is skilled at collaboration and has professional experience in working with rural constituencies. And both have an incredible commitment to their neighbors.

Although Gold Hill is sometimes referred to as a town, it is not incorporated. The "Gold Hill Town Meeting" is a registered non-profit entity with elected town officers, but no bureaucracy that remains dependent on Boulder County for all public services – except fire. Fire and emergency services are provided by Gold Hill Fire Protection District, a volunteer fire organization supported through a tax district.

So, how did the "Gold Hill Town Meeting" produce such an impressive CWPP supported by the entire community in just one year?



IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Energized by the great turnout in 2005, community meetings were planned to begin work on the CWPP during 2006. O’Dea led the effort and Rice and Gibson were in the background with no intention of getting heavily involved. But when O’Dea had to leave Colorado due to a family emergency, Rice and Gibson volunteered to co-chair the effort. Gibson led community outreach efforts while Rice facilitated the monthly meetings and led the technical development of the report.

The Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance, a member of the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable (Roundtable), was heavily involved with Gold Hill’s efforts and they helped the Forest Management Committee stay on track. As part of its Roundtable commitment, SRCA assigned a staff member to help communities with the CWPP process, and Gold Hill was SRCA’s first effort.

Using tools like mailing lists, phone calls and e-mails, and with the support of Fire Chiefs Chris Finn and Assistant Donal Maloney (Gold Hill), Brett Gibson (Four Mile) and Steve Stratton (Sunshine), Gibson communicated with the eight identifiable communities within GHFPD. This improved meeting attendance and helped keep people informed about resources and decisions. The initial mailing included the meeting schedule for all subsequent CWPP meetings and a timetable for results to help people plan and keep the process on track.

Rice’s main goal as chair of the process was to keep things moving. “I wanted to be goal-oriented and used the Society of American Foresters handbook as a guide. We pushed through to achieve each step and had clear due dates for information,” Rice said. But if they hit a topic that warranted more discussion, they reprioritized.

Rice and Gibson expressed appreciation for the support they received from forestry professionals like Lara Duran with the U.S. Forest Service. Representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, Boulder County, CSFS and the SRCA drove up the mountain on cold, dark nights and sat through long meetings to help keep the community’s spirits up when things got complicated or bogged down.

CAPITALIZING ON LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

“Every community has a wealth of expertise within its ranks. The trick is to identify those people and pull them in,” said John Chapman with SRCA. A case in point is Rice who gathered historical and ecological values at risk from people in the community with an interest in these topics. This kind of outreach involved different people at various stages during the planning process, no matter what their feelings on fuels treatments. As a result, no one person had to shoulder the burden, and support for the project was broadened.

Rice’s background in consulting was invaluable, especially when it was time to put the report together and help interpret the data. Rice and Gibson both noted that communities lacking this expertise should consider hiring a technical writer.

Another key component to Gold Hill’s success was the core group’s belief that they were doing the right thing for the land and their community. Without this vision and conviction, they doubt they could have sustained the energy to complete the plan. This core group, or the “CWPP Task Force,” which included federal, state and county representatives, met once a month for 2-3 hours. They also took on assignments to create and analyze maps, and gather structural vulnerability data. The core group was sensitive and respectful of property owners within the district who held different beliefs about forest health and the CWPP process, which helped make the project voluntary and not “a forced government thing.”

Community education also was a huge goal. Rice and Gibson, as well as the Forest Management Committee, talked about the effects of fire exclusion, mining and logging, roads and human encroachment in an effort to correct the perception that the surrounding forest was “natural.” Photos of thinning treatments provided by the Colorado State Forest Service also were helpful when discussing fuels reduction and forest restoration.

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO

In fall 2006, the core group produced two drafts of the CWPP. The first draft was for review by the Task Force; the second draft incorporated Task Force comments and was posted on the website and distributed in hard copy to interested members of the community. A comment period was followed by a community meeting in November, during which draft CWPP results were presented. The meeting, which was attended by nearly 40 community



Courtesy of Gold Hill

Kris Gibson and Jennie Rice spearheaded the development of the Gold Hill Community Wildfire Protection Plan.



members, focused on results regarding the prioritization of treatment areas. The CWPP website, created by volunteer John Daspit, features this downloadable CWPP and a comment form with links to forest-related information.

Gibson believes in the importance of remembering the community during the development of a vision and a schedule to produce the report to avoid damaging relationships. Rice believes that the time between the first CWPP community meeting in late 2005 and the publication of the CWPP in late 2006 was a huge learning experience. As Rice said about the experience, “We all learned that a small community can pull it off, and that a true working partnership can be created between government and the community. Because, really, at the heart of it, we all care about the land and had the same conservation goals in mind.”

Look for the GHFPD CWPP at <http://goldhillfire.org/cwpp>

SWEAT EQUITY FOR GRASSROOTS WILDFIRE PROTECTION

COLD MOUNTAIN CWPP

Chopping, piling and hauling sound like the work of strong young men and women. In some places, like Teller County’s Cold Mountain Estates (Cold Mountain), this back-breaking task also has become the work of local residents who are making a huge contribution in community wildfire protection.

Jean Smith is one of those adults putting sweat equity into clearing the land she co-owns with her daughter. Of the grueling work Smith says, “Pulling a wagonload of slash is a half-day job. I have no great interest in being a lumberjack at my age!”

Rather than be stymied by discouragement, Smith attacked the overgrown lot with its mixed conifer, grass, ponderosa pine, aspen and spruce. She has a 3- to 4-year plan to finish the thinning because she understands what is at risk. Not only from a financial standpoint, but the psychological investment of her home and the deer, wild turkey and birds that could be devastated by a wildfire.

Smith is working in two ways to reduce the risk of wildfire that could take her home and property. With fellow homeowner association partners, a core group of planners recently completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Cold Mountain, located at the southeast corner adjacent to Florissant Fossil Beds. Their effort tiered off of the Teller County Wildfire Protection Plan, the first to be completed in Colorado.

MOTIVATION IS THE KEY TO ACTION

“The value of my home and the added protection motivates me to thin. We have a hazard risk and we have to protect what we have invested,” Smith said. Motivation seems to be the key to action, but many of the 1,600 Cold Mountain lots are owned by absentee landowners who don’t feel the threat.

Smith is inspired by the dedication of fellow planners who have invested many hours and proven that a lot can be accomplished when subdivisions work together. Their local plan is supported by the Colorado State Forest Service, local fire chief and the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CSUP). All have supplied access to grants or people-power to help with the huge thinning job. CUSP’s “giant chipper” was greatly appreciated because it easily removed the slash.

What motivates homeowners to action? Smith believes there are three key components – education, co-workers and grant opportunities. Through education, people can understand the magnitude of the wildfire risk they face. Through planning, the community has a way to work together and to be inspired by each other. Through grants, funding assistance helps off-set the labor costs that keep some folks from even starting.

Hard working and dedicated homeowners like Smith are clearing a path for others to follow – literally.



Research: Linking Biological and Social Sciences to Address Forest Health

STAND DYNAMICS IN MIXED CONIFER FORESTS OF THE NORTHERN FRONT RANGE

The Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership contributed funding for a landscape-scale study of stand structure and historical fire regimes in mixed conifer forests in Larimer County by scientists from the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station. Mixed conifer forests on the Colorado Front Range occur between 7,500 and 9,000 feet elevation, and may include ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, limber pine, Douglas-fir, aspen, blue spruce, and occasional Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir. These landscapes are characterized by complex mosaics of vegetation created by topography, climate and disturbances at varying scales in space and time. At times, they behave as dynamic ecotones, with species composition shifting up or down in elevation with changes in climate; at other times, they appear to be stable ecosystems.



With Euro-American settlement in the mid-19th century, the mixed conifer zone was logged, grazed and mined, like much of the Front Range. During the latter part of the 20th century, with exurban expansion along the Front Range, mixed conifer forests became the subject of wildland-urban interface issues, potential need for restoration/fuels mitigation, risk of wildfire, loss of old growth and uncertain effects of climate change. Yet for all the human use it has received, the mixed conifer zone and the processes that shape it are poorly understood. The mixed conifer study sought to address three basic ecological questions:

- What were the historical spatial and temporal scales of disturbance and stand structure?
- Are mixed conifer forests within their natural range of variability after a century of human land use?
- How are the forests and disturbance processes likely to change in a changing climate?

The study area encompasses approximately 300 square miles in Larimer County between 7,500 and 9,000 feet elevation, divided nearly evenly north and south of the Poudre Canyon. After three field seasons and four winters of lab work, scientists have

developed a 1,000-year tree-ring chronology and cross-dated nearly 1,600 cores and 1,000 sections to develop age structure and disturbance history in all 58 plots. Composite fire histories were completed for seven of the eleven areas.

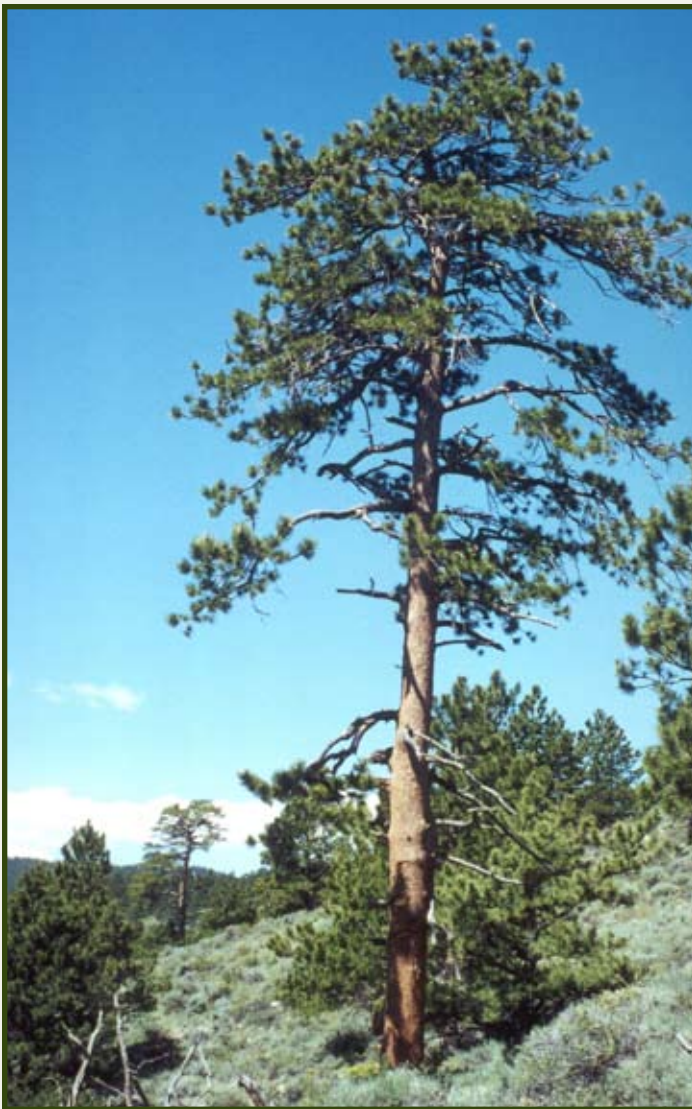
In some of the plots, scientists saw evidence that the species composition had changed over time. At upper elevations around 9,000 feet, some of the plots presently dominated by lodgepole pine appear to have been dominated by ponderosa pine before the last stand-replacing disturbance. In some cases, a few of the old ponderosa pines are still living; in other cases, the old buried and charred logs are preserved for centuries in the cool, dry climate. Many of these trees established between 1100 and 1400, during the Medieval Warm Period. They were able to survive when the climate shifted in the 1400s to the cool, wet Little Ice Age. But when they were killed by disturbance, they were replaced by lodgepole pines, which are better adapted to cold conditions and persistent winter snowpack. A tree-ring chronology now exists for ponderosa pine that goes back to 1082 AD – a few years longer than the Cheesman Lake chronology. Some remnants of limber pine date into the 900s. As climate warms again, fire behavior and stand structure may be more like that of the Medieval Warm Period than the Little Ice Age that was ending during the settlement era.



Laurie Huckaby

The Mixed Conifer Study area encompasses approximately 300 square miles in Larimer County between 7,500 and 9,500 feet elevation and divided nearly evenly north and south of the Poudre Canyon.





Laurie Huckaby

The Mixed Conifer Study revealed that some old ponderosa pines in Larimer County are still living because they survived the climate shift that occurred in the 1400s. However, when they were killed by disturbance, they were replaced by lodgepole pines, which are better adapted to cold conditions and persistent winter snowpack.

Based on findings from the Mixed Conifer Study, scientists recommended managers:

- Expect fire with drought and heat – Pre-settlement fires were strongly driven by climate.
- Consider scale in both space and time – Pre-settlement fires were highly variable in space and time, and time between widespread fires was relatively long (60 to 120 years).
- Save the old trees – Many trees survived even large, intense fires and were important to regeneration success and landscape heterogeneity.

- Expect change – Species dominance shifted with past disturbance and climate change and likely will shift again with future disturbance and climate change.
- Recognize that dense is natural in higher elevations – Overall stand density has not increased substantially in the 20th century, as it has below 7,500 feet elevation. Younger stands are more dense and usually more diverse.
- Maintain the mosaic – Landscape complexity is the key to mitigating fire behavior.



Laurie Huckaby

Prescribed burning helps maintain landscape complexity, a desirable characteristic in mixed conifer forests.

INTEGRATING COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY, PROBLEM FRAMING AND MUTUAL TRUST

Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) scientists conducted an annotated literature review of recently published social science articles and papers that examined *collaborative capacity*, *problem framing* and *mutual trust* in addressing the wildland fire problem. Based on the literature review, scientists suggest that an integration of these factors is prerequisite to collective management of today's wildland fire social problem.

Understanding the relationships and interactions between these factors is important to **collaborative partnerships**, on-the-ground forest managers and practitioners working in

the wildland-urban interface, and to social science researchers who are planning new research projects to better understand the wildland fire social problem.

From an organizational perspective, collaborative capacity means having a clear vision and strategy to enable relationship building, collective thinking, adaptive planning and implementation beyond money, personnel, skills and equipment, although these are important aspects of overall capacity to collaborate. A collaborative entity or partnership, with self-organization, an attitude of confidence and a coherent frame of reference may have the capacity to act in ways to improve problem situations related to wildland fire management.

Problem framing involves the different ways that stakeholders see or define the problem – framing accounts for public understandings *plural*. Forest ecologists studying the wildland-urban interface most likely would frame the problem differently than residents.

Mutual trust leads to positive public relations and respect for different frames of reference. Mutual trust develops through inclusive, interactive communication and co-learning processes, not top-down, one-way persuasion strategies.

Scientists organized these inter-related factors using a schematic model, or framework that illustrates interactions and relationships between collaborative capacity, problem framing and mutual trust. The central area of overlap is the goal – collective action. Collective action requires partnerships, a common goal and a common language. The interplay of mutual trust and collaborative capacity enables partnerships to be forged. The interplay of problem-framing and collaborative capacity facilitates

the development of common goals. The interplay of mutual trust and problem framing can enable a common language.

When these factors are acknowledged, developed and sufficiently integrated, collective action can occur that results in Community Wildfire Protection Plans, reduction of vegetative fuels, enhanced public safety and preparedness and/or defensible space. In other words, the complex human dimensions of wildland fire can be managed through the creation of partnerships, common goals and a common language – the prerequisites of collective action.

THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF SLASH-BURN AND SLASH-MASTICATION TREATMENTS

Thinning forest stands is frequently used to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, but thinning requires that the slash be removed from the site, which can be done either by burning or mastication and dispersal. Either method has long-term consequences for forest soils and on soil moisture and soil carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels.

The impact of masticated and dispersed residue on soil varies significantly depending on whether the residue is left as a mulch, burned or tilled into the soil. Generally, the mulch (wood chips) tends to act as a barrier to moisture and heat depending on the depth of the mulch and rainfall amounts and patterns at a specific site.

A 2.3-year study by Rocky Mountain Research Station scientists examined the effects of mulch treatments through measurements of soil moisture and CO₂ at two experimental slash treatment sites at the Manitou Experimental Forest. One site was a controlled slash-burn site; the other was a site at which the slash was masticated and dispersed to form a layer of wood chips. Because the instrumentation was installed before treatment, the burn data include observations obtained before and during the fire, as well as after.

Research results indicate that:

- Wood chips insulate the soil, so that most of the time it remains cooler than it would without the chips. There are periods, notably during the fall, when the chips keep the soil warmer than the untreated soil by impeding heat loss.
- Wood chips can impede both infiltration of water into the soil and evaporation of moisture from the soil, but the effects on soil moisture depend on the amounts and patterns of rainfall.
- Wood chips impede the efflux of CO₂ from the soil so that soil CO₂ amounts under the chips exceed the amounts within treated areas. Because the mastication experiment did not specifically examine microbial responses to the chip treatment or seek any associations with the measured soil CO₂, no conclusions can be made about the microbial or root aspiration response to the chip treatments.



Katherine Timm

Homeowners association representatives, volunteer firefighters and American Red Cross volunteers in Larimer County attend an educational program to learn how they can work together to prepare and protect their communities from wildfires.

- For more than 18 months after the experimental burn, soil temperatures tend to be systematically higher than those in the control plots.
- Long-term soil moisture at 0.15 m depth tends to be higher in the burn area than in the unburned control areas.
- Within the burned areas, soil CO₂ amounts can vary significantly from those in the control plots. For much of the year follow-

ing the burn, CO₂ amounts in the burned area were well below those within the control area. However, during the dry summer of 2005, the additional soil moisture in the deeper levels of the burn plot allowed microbial activity to remain high enough so that the CO₂ amounts within the burn area exceeded those within the control for about 2 months.



Katherine Timm

Scientists with the Rocky Mountain Research Station conducted research on masticated, dispersed slash generated through fuels treatment projects. Whether slash is burned or masticated and dispersed, there are long-term consequences for soil, soil moisture and soil carbon dioxide levels.

Roundtable Update – The Year in Review

The Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable, a precedent-setting coalition of individuals from state and federal agencies, local governments, environmental and conservation organizations, academic and scientific communities, and industry and user groups – all with a commitment to forest health and fire risk mitigation – came together for the first time in spring 2004.

After two years of work, the Roundtable released *Living with Fire: Protecting Communities and Restoring Forests, Findings and Recommendations of the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable*. The May 2006 report identified approximately 1.5 million forested acres along the Front Range that require treatment to protect communities or restore forest health. At current treatment costs, achieving these goals could cost approximately \$15 million annually over a 40-year period, which vastly exceeds the approximately \$6 million currently available each year for forest treatments.



Although the challenge is daunting, the Roundtable's combined goals of fire risk reduction and forest treatment are achievable if Front Range communities and local, state and federal governments provide leadership and take the necessary action.

In its report the Roundtable identified a specific set of initiatives designed to provide additional resources for forest treatments, reduce treatment costs, drive local leadership and planning, and establish common priorities for forest treatments.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Since the release of the report, Roundtable members have worked with federal, state, and local decision-makers to advance these initiatives and help catalyze the changes needed to protect and restore Colorado's Front Range Forests.

Significant progress has been made in the area of legislation at the state level that addresses forest health issues, including a bill that enables counties to form forest improvement districts to achieve forest improvement work. Other state legislation authorizes funding for a community-based forest health improvement



Bill Cotton

The May 2006 Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable report identified approximately 1.5 million forested acres along the Front Range that require treatment to protect communities or restore forest health.



pilot program that establishes \$1 million in grants to fund forest health projects, and supports federal stewardship contracts to encourage the federal government and stakeholders to identify and obtain the necessary funding to implement three-year stewardship contracts.

Several activities also are underway to increase forest-treatment incentives for private landowners, including the development of community biomass collection programs, development of a centralized grants and foundations database to help landowners and communities more effectively search and compete for funds, and expanding the understanding and use of Good Neighbor Authorities.

Roundtable members also have been advocating for additional federal funding for Front Range forest treatments. Several Roundtable members traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with Colorado's congressional delegation and staff, and the Washington Office of the U.S. Forest Service. The Roundtable also endorsed a national effort to raise the profile of and encourage increased funding for the State Fire Assistance program, one of only a few programs that channels federal monies directly to non-federal stakeholders to reduce fire risk and restore forest health.

Recognizing the need to reduce treatment costs, Roundtable members also have been working to identify opportunities to increase the use of prescribed burning. As a result, a major prescribed burning program has been developed and is in the process of being implemented on Colorado State Parks land. Plans also are underway to develop a charter and the necessary process to establish a prescribed fire council at the state level.



Rocco Stuart

Slash is dropped off at one of 14 slash sites in Jefferson County. The county's slash program has been in operation for 13 years. Increasing the use of woody biomass is critical to reducing treatment costs and Roundtable members are taking steps to foster interest.

Increasing the commercial use of woody biomass also is critical to reducing treatment costs, and Roundtable members are taking steps to foster interest. For example, the Roundtable participated in several educational events to help inform stakeholders about options for utilizing woody biomass at the community level, and is working with Colorado Wood to help establish and market wood-based businesses in Colorado.

To encourage local leadership and planning, Roundtable members have been meeting regularly with county commissioners, insurance industry representatives, and other key stakeholders to explore ways to incorporate specific forest health and fire risk mitigation language into core programs and strategic communications activities. Roundtable members also have been engaged in the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Since the release of the Roundtable report, 11 Front Range communities have completed their plans; an additional 31 are in the process of being developed and many will be completed by 2008.

Adopting a clear and common framework for prioritizing treatments is a shared goal of the Partnership and the Roundtable. To track the percent of acres treated that adhere to Roundtable priorities, Partnership agencies are assembling baseline data, which will allow projects to be reviewed as they are implemented.

The Roundtable recognizes that protecting communities from the risks of severe wildfires and restoring Front Range forests to good health will require a sustained, long-term effort by all Front Range stakeholders. Since the release of its report in May 2006, a Roundtable Implementation Team has convened to further the work of the Roundtable. This collaborative group includes senior representatives from state and federal agencies, scientific community, conservation interests, user groups, and local communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2008, the Roundtable will continue to work collaboratively and productively, advancing its recommendations through a variety of channels to help counties succeed in their efforts to more effectively integrate wildfire components in land-use plans, include stakeholder groups such as small-scale forest industries and insurance companies in the work of the Roundtable, work with communities to increase the number of completed CWPPs, work with state legislators to include bio-heating language in state legislation, foster broad support for an increase in State & Private Forestry funding in the federal budget, and track new federal and state fuels reduction and ecosystem restoration projects to monitor the extent to which these projects reflect ecological priorities developed by the Roundtable.

FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Vaughn Baker, Park Superintendent
Rocky Mountain National Park

Glenn Casamassa, Forest Supervisor
Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland

Dave Cleaves, Station Director
Rocky Mountain Research Station

Jeff Jahnke, Colorado State Forester
Colorado State Forest Service

Bob Leaverton, Forest Supervisor
Pike & San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron & Comanche National Grasslands

Reggie Tiller, Park Superintendent
Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
ON THE FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP,
VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT WWW.FRFTP.ORG

