



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet Colorado 2021



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

| Program | FY 2020 Final |
|--|---------------------|
| Community Forestry and Open Space | \$0 |
| Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management | \$641,480 |
| Forest Legacy | \$7,193,000 |
| Forest Stewardship | \$409,989 |
| Landscape Scale Restoration | \$0 |
| State Fire Assistance | \$3,807,088 |
| Urban and Community Forestry | \$431,795 |
| Volunteer Fire Assistance | \$535,406 |
| Total | \$13,018,758 |

NOTE: This funding is for all entities within the state, not just the State Forester's office.

The mission of the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is to achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations.

Cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of Colorado, USDA Forest Service and many other private and government entities. These programs promote the health, protection and productivity of Colorado's forestlands and rural economies, emphasizing reduction of risk to people, property and resources; management for timber and other forest products; wildlife; water resources; and conservation practices.

Program Goals

- Maintain and improve the health of Colorado's urban and rural forests and related economies
- Increase cost effectiveness and efficiencies through the use of partnerships in delivery
- Increase values through sustained productivity of forests
- Deliver programs that are voluntary using non-regulatory approaches

Key Issues

- Fragmentation of forest landscapes
- Loss of forest products manufacturing capacity
- Unprecedented levels of forest insect and disease activity
- Threat of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface
- Threat of wildfire outside the wildland-urban interface
- Community forests at risk to invasive insects and disease
- Risk of diminished forest resiliency and adaptability due to changing climate conditions
- Declining forest watershed health
- Declining riparian ecosystems
- Air quality issues associated with forest conditions

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

| Selected Facts | Value | FY 2020 Accomplishments | Value |
|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| Population | 5,029,196 | Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance | 2,945 |
| Acres of Forest Land | 22,920,131 | Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans | 10,486 |
| Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land | 5,360,000 | Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans | 9,994 |
| Number of NIPF Landowners | 186,000 | Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted | 60 |
| Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection | 24,240,000 | State Fire Communities Assisted | 235 |
| Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection | 41,432,979 | Coop Forest Health Acres Protected | 16,660 |
| Number of Rural Fire Departments | 424 | Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions | 16,723 |
| Cities and Towns | 271 | Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance | 82 |
| Forest Based Employment | 4,000 | Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance | 3,122,163 |
| Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank) | 0 | Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance | 18,937 |
| State Forestry Budget (All Sources) | 36,254,000 | | |

Program Highlights

Colorado Forest Action Plan

The CSFS completed the 2020 Colorado Forest Action Plan (CFAP) and submitted to the USFS at the end of October 2020, after approval from USFS Region 2.

To develop the plan, the CSFS assembled an internal team of theme leads, who outlined goals, strategies, and approaches for each theme falling within the national priorities CONSERVE, PROTECT, ENHANCE. The CSFS travelled across the state to engage stakeholders and natural resource experts in a participatory priority mapping process with more than 90 participants. Additionally, the USFS R2, the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute and Forest and Rangeland Stewardship departments of Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, and the Forest Health Advisory Council provide draft reviews of the Plan and their feedback was incorporated. An estimated \$350,000 in CSFS staff time was spent completing the CFAP.

To increase the utility of the Forest Action Plan, an application for the maps of the Plan was launched in the CO Forest Atlas. This application is publicly available and users can generate a county-level report that highlights the contribution of the various datasets to the priority map and theme maps for an individual county. This application was largely funded by a LSR grant.

In November 2020, the CSFS worked with Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University to host a Forest Action Plan workshop for CSFS staff. This workshop served to provide an introduction to the contents of the plan, communication guidelines, and strategies for using the plan in forest management planning and implementation. There were more than 100 CSFS staff in attendance from all five divisions of the CSFS.

Colorado Forest Atlas

The Colorado Forest Atlas was launched on May 7th, 2020. The Colorado Forest Atlas is the one-stop shop for the CSFS, the public and partners to access this geospatial data and information when developing new projects, writing forestry plans or assessing wildfire risk for communities. The Colorado Forest Atlas offers a user-friendly interface for access to web applications that can be used to make informed decisions and develop plans that will make the greatest, positive impact on the health of our forests.

The first two apps included in the launch of the Colorado Forest Atlas are the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Public viewer and the Risk Reduction Planner (formerly called the Professional Viewer). The

CSFS developed these apps several years ago to offer access to data and reports concerning wildland fire risk in Colorado. The agency previously offered these apps on a stand-alone website (CO-WRAP), but with new apps in development, it opted to develop a sole website for all its apps that do or will provide access to its data. The Public Viewer is an app that can be used to learn more about wildfire risk, local fire history and additional resources that can be accessed to reduce risk.

From May 7th, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020, Google Analytics reports 8,016 unique users of the CO Forest Atlas website. This project is supported through state funds, as well as USFS and USDA NIFA grants. To date, over 900,000 has been invested in the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Update and CO Forest Atlas.

Cooperative Fire Protection

The CSFS role is to provide statewide service in fire ecology, natural resource management, wildfire risk assessment, community protection planning, and fuels mitigation. The CSFS has the responsibility for forestry and fuels mitigation while the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) has the responsibility of wildland fire preparedness and response. Together the CSFS and DFPC provide a complete package of wildland fire management programs to the state.

CSFS staff interactions with landowners, communities and local governments have yielded 242 Community Wildfire Protection Plans and 186 Firewise USA® Communities, 3rd among states in the nation that have an active Firewise USA® program. Cooperative Fire Funding received by CSFS is instrumental to: achieve stewardship and resiliency of diverse forest environments, mitigate the negative effects of fire across landscapes, and protect people and property through assessment, collaboration, planning, and implementation for individuals and communities. In 2020, Community Assistance Funds Adjacent to National Forest Lands (CAFA) were awarded to three projects affecting the Front Range and southwest Colorado with over 260 acres planned for treatment. State Fire Assistance WUI Competitive Funds were awarded to eight projects affecting the Front Range, the Western Slope, south-central, and southwest, regions with 1,750 acres planned for treatment.

The 10-year update to the CSFS Forest Action Plan also occurred in 2020 along with a transition of the wildfire risk assessment portal (CO-WRAP) into the new Forest Atlas information portal. These advances will improve efficiency for treatment planning and implementation efforts and will support collaboration across boundaries.

Economic Action

In 2020, virtual programming delivery dominated CSFS involvement in Economic Actions due to ongoing pandemic restrictions. The CSFS continued providing biomass utilization and marketing assistance to five forest collaboratives and several existing businesses and startups. Additionally, the CSFS continued to provide small business financing through the CSFS Forest Business Loan Fund. The CSFS took a leading role in the Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI), initiating key efforts with stakeholders in timber industry workforce development and biomass utilization. Timber industry data and capacity was developed and integrated into to the 2020 update of the CSFS Forest Action Plan. A supplemental grant to design a mill capacity and treatment cost application in the CSFS Forest Atlas was prepared and submitted to the 2021 USFS Landscape Western Landscape Scale Restoration Grant program.

In response to the 2020 large fire season, the CSFS contributed post-fire rehabilitation opportunities to the Colorado Governor's office on wood-based erosion and site rehabilitation products and assisted several businesses in receiving orders for their erosion control products in post-fire applications. Planning was completed in the final quarter of 2020 for four extension workshops to be held in first quarter of 2021. The CSFS provided further outreach and technical assistance in support of the 2021 USDA (USFS) Wood Innovations grant program. The CSFS also began serving as the Council of Western State Foresters Forest Utilization Network chair.

Forest Health Protection

The CSFS, in collaboration with the USFS, conducts annual aerial detection surveys to map and quantify insect and disease activity in forested areas of Colorado. Due to pandemic safety protocols, in 2020, the aerial survey only focused over priority areas where there was a likelihood of forest pests causing widespread tree mortality. In total, they monitored 16.3 million acres in 2020 compared to 30.2 million acres in 2019.

For the ninth consecutive year, spruce beetle was the predominant destructive pest in the state causing significant mortality in high elevation Englemann spruce-fir forests. Other insect pests in the state include

the Douglas-fire beetle, which continues to cause mortality in Douglas-fir in the central and southern forests, western spruce budworm which has repeatedly impacted forests in south-central Colorado, roundheaded pine beetle impacting ponderosa pine in the southwest and piñon Ips beetle affecting piñon-juniper forests in the northwest.

The emerald ash borer (EAB) further spread with new detections in 2020 in new locations outside of a former quarantine area. The Colorado Department of Agriculture repealed the quarantine encompassing in 2020. About 15% of all trees in Colorado's urban forests are ash and to address the needs in the state, the CSFS implemented the "Your Ash is on the Line" project to help small and mid-sized communities along the Front Range prepare for EAB.

The CSFS worked with the USFS, National Forest Foundation and private landowners to proactively treat 260 acres of lodgepole pine forests in the Taylor River and Taylor park areas in central Colorado in order to slow a mountain pine beetle outbreak.

In 2020, winter and spring had average precipitation amounts. In the summer and fall, severe and extreme drought conditions occurred across most of the state. These drought conditions compounded forest disturbance and further set the stage for bark beetles and tree defoliating insects to build populations in 2021.

Forest Legacy

The CSFS works with local groups and NGOs to identify potential projects for the Forest Legacy Program (FLP). In 2019, the CSFS was awarded \$7 million for the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Navajo Headwaters Phase 3 – Banded Peaks Ranch. The conservation easement closed in July 2020. This ranch is the last critical piece of private property in the Navajo River watershed conservation effort, which includes many partners and has been ongoing for 15 years. With the completion of the over 16,000 acre Banded Peaks Ranch in 2020, an area of 60,000 contiguous acres of private forested properties in the Navajo River watershed will be protected permanently.

During 2019 and 2020, the CSFS worked with Western Environment & Ecology, LLC. to prepare an updated Assessment of Need (AON) for the Forest Legacy Program in Colorado. This report was finalized during the summer of 2020 and now is in use for the FLP. A new map of eligible forest legacy areas is included in the report. The AON is being completed in conjunction with the updated 2020 Colorado Forest Action Plan.

Forest Stewardship

The Forest Stewardship Program provides landowners technical assistance with the development and implementation of comprehensive resource management plans. The CSFS provided assistance and education to 2,945 landowners and developed/revised plans covering 10,486 acres in 2020. The newly updated Colorado State Forest Action Plan guides the priority of fuels and forest health treatments and is used extensively to help identify future outreach and education efforts on private lands. In addition, the CSFS developed a Forest Stewardship Priority area map, as directed by the USFS, based on the completed Forest Action Plan composite priority map.

Colorado continues to lead in stewardship training efforts. The American Forest Foundation and the CSFS continue to provide various types of management plans and to help provide implementation of landowner assistance programs through their shared agreement. The CSFS has hired three foresters in high priority areas through this agreement.

The Restoring Colorado's Forest Fund distributed 6,240 seedlings to landowners in 2020 to help restore private forestlands affected by wildfire. The Forest Stewardship Program Specialist will continue to engage landowners and partners through Forest Ag Newsletters. These newsletters are distributed to landowners, consultants and partners twice a year to keep them current with program updates, forest health issues, and forestry assistance opportunities. The Colorado Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee continues to meet and provide guidance on State and private forestry issues.

Good Neighbor Authority

In 2020 the CSFS developed 5 new Supplemental Project Agreements (SPAs) under the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) master agreement between Colorado and the USFS for over 2,145 acres of timber sales, timber salvage and fuels treatments on federal lands. The CSFS also signed a new expanded agreement

with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for similar treatments on BLM lands.

Accomplishments of current and ongoing SPA (12 in progress) projects achieved in 2020 include; stream crossing restoration, seeding, stream bank stabilization, pre-sale reconnaissance, sale preparation, project planning, sale layout, timber sale administration, and hazard fuel project administration. Completed acres of timber sales and fuels treatments on USFS lands totaled over 1,500 acres in 2020.

Benefits from the GNA program include landscape-scale management over combined ownerships, leveraged fuels treatments and defensible spaces, removal of impediments to cross-boundary watershed restoration, and cooperation between county, federal, state, and tribal agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders.

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative

The CSFS has been engaged and provided leadership to the rapidly developing and critically important Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI). This collaborative model is important in supporting the mission of CSFS and all partners by; providing forums for information exchange, identifying shared values, integrating the Colorado Forest Action Plan into comprehensive planning, further developing approaches that promote joint work planning and facilitating the pursuit of focused funding to leverage opportunities for maximum landscape impact.

CSFS has staff members leading or participating in the leadership team, all three RMRI priority landscapes and the seven associated subcommittees. This high level of involvement provides overall focus and continuity to the group that links to the pinnacle goal of increasing the pace and scale of treatments in high priority landscapes. The CSFS will continue to engage in this effort and fully recognizes its importance as a model, which includes the goal for transferability to support effective and efficient multi-partner approaches across the nation.

CSFS is integrating existing funding sources such as the state-managed Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) and USFS sponsored grant programs to drive project development and implementation with focus on cross-boundary, multi-stakeholder benefits. Continued pursuit for new and additional funding will be an on-going effort to grow overall RMRI capacity and drive success.

Shared Stewardship

The CSFS continues to collaborate with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and USFS in the implementation of the Shared Stewardship MOU. Efforts include developing a priority map to focus efforts using the Colorado Forest Action Plan as the baseline of the analysis.

CSFS will continue to engage in the development and implementation of the Shared Stewardship concept moving forward. The development of projects under approaches such as the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) will continue as a state driver in implementing Shared Stewardship.

Urban and Community Forestry

The CSFS Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program provided technical and educational assistance to 88 communities in Federal FY 2020, which represents 3,275,347 people or 58% of the state's population based on estimates from the State of Colorado Demography Office (July 1, 2018). Ninety-five Tree City USA's were certified at the end of CY 2019 in Colorado with seven Growth Awards among those communities reporting 14,438 trees planted under this program. Six colleges were certified as a Tree Campus USA.

Colorado's statewide urban tree inventory web-tool (<https://cotreeview.com/coto/>) contains 586,750 trees in the database at the end of CY 2020. These trees have been uploaded to the web-tool by 108 organizations most of which are Colorado communities but also include HOAs, colleges and others. The Tree Collections program (<https://treecollections.com/ctc/>) launched in 2017 continues to promote a state-wide network of diverse tree collections for public education.

The Front Range Urban Forestry Council met five times in 2020, and continues to play a key role in shaping and coordinating UCF efforts along the Front Range. Educational efforts at CSFS and community partner conferences around the State helped keep stakeholders on the cutting edge of UCF in 2020, including the virtual Colorado Community Forestry Conference. Key personnel from the CSFS UCF

Program continue to be a part of the interagency Colorado Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Response Team. The Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) awarded \$11,213 to eight organizations in 2020. The CTC also administered the Xcel Vegetation Management Grants totaling \$7,585 in awards to three communities with the Xcel service area. With this grant funding, the CTC was able to plant 817 trees in communities across Colorado. Each of these projects allowed residents the opportunity to make a difference in their communities.

Watershed Initiatives

The CSFS continues to be involved in several collaborative efforts to protect our state's forested watersheds. Threats include uncharacteristic wildfire, widespread insect and disease outbreaks and an increase in population resulting in additional demands on our limited water resources. The From Forests to Faucets 2 program is a partnership between Denver Water, the USFS and the CSFS. This forest restoration partnership focuses on treating both public and private land with the goal mitigating the potentially negative effect of large-scale disturbance on key Denver Water Reservoirs and infrastructure. So far, the CSFS has identified, planned and began to implement treatment on approximately 2,500 acres of non-federal land within Denver Water's Zones of Concern. This includes continuing assessment of potential GNA projects to increase treatment effectiveness across land ownership boundaries on the landscape.

Since 1987, the CSFS has partnered with Colorado Springs Utilities to implement the Pikes Peak Watershed Management Plan, which guides forest management in the 13,000-acre watershed. Recently, the CSFS signed a new MOU that includes the USFS and Colorado Springs Utilities and will help facilitate work across boundaries through use of the GNA.

The 2020 Colorado Forest Action Plan will help to guide CSFS efforts to protect our watersheds into the future. With the goals of improving and maintaining water quality and quantity, improving the resiliency of critical water infrastructure and sustaining or restoring fundamental ecological functions for watershed health, the CSFS and partners will be working to align management strategies that support the synergy between forests and water.

Finally, CSFS continues to be active in various watershed collaborative groups to engage with partners in strategic planning and funding activities throughout the state.

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