



# **REDUCING WILDLAND FIRE RISKS THROUGH SUSTAINED FUELS TREATMENT**

## **Partnership Update - August 2004**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The goals of the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership (Partnership) are community sustainability and forest restoration. The Partnership has been working to identify issues and barriers that inhibit progress toward these goals—and to seek solutions to make the Partnership a success, which will lead to improved forest health and safer communities. Thus far in FY 2004, the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland have completed fuels treatment on 9,000 acres; the Pike National Forest has completed fuels treatment on 10,800 acres and 9,360 acres have been treated on the San Isabel National Forest and Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands. In addition, the National Park Service has treated 490 acres, all within one-half mile of adjoining communities, and the Colorado State Forest Service has treated nearly 10,800 acres on state and private land and 226 acres on federal land through the Good Neighbor Agreement. Following are examples of other major Partnership accomplishments.

### **PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPANT MEETINGS—IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS**

One of the challenges of the Partnership is coordinating the work of the agencies, which operate under different rules and regulations, and possess different strengths and resources. To help address these differences, employees who plan and implement Partnership projects met in December 2003. The morning was devoted to the discussion of budgets, expectations, work completed and in progress, and validating the Partnership and its successes. During the afternoon, small-group discussions focused on the identification of issues, barriers, and solutions. A matrix was developed after the meeting and the Steering Group has devoted time at their monthly meetings to address issues and barriers, and identify solutions.

Plans are underway to hold another meeting of Partnership participants in the fall of 2004. The meeting will highlight research on the social and ecological challenges the partners face when implementing forest management projects on the Front Range.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS KEY TO SUCCESS**

Extensive local government and community involvement are key to the success of the Partnership. Local participation is necessary to determine where community assistance grants will be of highest value in implementing the strategy. To that end, the FRFTP–Local Governments Meeting was held in February 2004 and was well-attended by county commissioners and key staff from the Front Range counties. Leaders from the Partnership agencies delivered a strong message about the critical need for local involvement to help prioritize projects, and reiterated their commitment to the Partnership for the long-term. Commissioners highlighted accomplishments that have already occurred in their counties and voiced their willingness to continue working with the Partnership. They also shared concerns about resources and availability of funding, and invited the Partnership to meet with counties individually.

As a follow-up to the FRFTP–Local Governments Meeting, district rangers, district foresters, and park managers held local meetings in June to discuss future action with individual counties. Individual meetings with local governments are underway to further discuss fuels treatment prioritization and community wildfire protection planning.

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### **THE FRFTP ROUNDTABLE—REACHING OUT TO STAKEHOLDERS**

Because fuels treatments and community protection affect a diverse constituency on the Front Range, the Partnership believes these interests should have an opportunity to be involved. As a result, more than 30 stakeholders representing diverse interests were invited to participate in the FRFTP Roundtable to help identify solutions to fuels treatment and healthy forest restoration concerns on the Front Range. Two well-attended meetings have resulted in a mission statement, work groups, and objectives for the Roundtable. The mission calls for a Front Range forest restoration vision that considers the cumulative effects of risk reduction, restoration strategies, and increasing public participation.

### **RESEARCH AND THE PARTNERSHIP—FUELING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING**

The Partnership is working with the Rocky Mountain Research Station and Colorado State University to develop social dimension and ecological information specific to the audiences and ecosystems with which the Partnership works. The following studies are currently underway.

- ❖ **PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF FUELS TREATMENT FOR THE COLORADO FRONT RANGE:** This study addresses the effects of information, knowledge sharing, and fire experience on homeowner and community preparedness and public acceptance of fuel management strategies. It also examines innovative knowledge transfer approaches.
- ❖ **STAND DYNAMICS AND DISTURBANCE HISTORY IN MIXED CONIFER FORESTS OF COLORADO'S NORTHERN FRONT RANGE:** Studies of fire history suggest historical fire regimes and stand structures may have differed from south to north along the Front Range. More intensive sampling may prove these differences.
- ❖ **MECHANICAL FUELS TREATMENTS:** This research will provide critical data about the possible effects of two new on-site biomass disposal techniques—in-the-woods chipping and chunk-mastication of small-diameter thinning products—before they are used extensively on the Front Range.
- ❖ **THE EFFECT OF PROXIMITY TO WILDFIRE RISK ON MITIGATION EFFORTS BY HOMEOWNERS AT THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE:** Continued empirical field research on public attitudes about fuels treatments is planned.

### **THE COLORADO FOREST PRODUCTS MARKETING INITIATIVE**

Finding uses for forest products that result from fuels reduction projects is one of the major barriers to long-term success of the Partnership. In response, the Partnership is collaborating with Colorado State University and the Marketing Division of the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) to launch the Colorado Forest Products (CFP) Marketing Initiative. The goals of the initiative are to help put more products from Colorado forest management efforts into the Colorado wood product stream; to encourage local businesses and entrepreneurs to utilize material being removed from such efforts; and to help raise awareness of the connection between managing Colorado's forests and the wide array of products derived from these management activities. The inclusion of CFP participants on CDA's state-of-the-art website and database will help link consumers to Colorado forest products.

