



Crossing Boundaries

Residents and agencies working together to mitigate hazardous fuels, protect communities from wildfire and restore forest health on Colorado's Front Range

GRANT HELPS DOUGLAS COUNTY LANDOWNERS CREATE HEALTHY FORESTS AND REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

Working Together

On the east slope of the Rampart Range in Douglas County, forest residents are working with the Franktown District of the Colorado State Forest Service to improve forest health and fire resiliency. Through the federal Emergency Supplemental Program, five neighboring landowners are using grant funds to treat a total of 275 acres of forest land.

Emergency Supplemental grant funds are made possible through a competitive grant application process administered by the Colorado State Forest Service. These and other grant funds have contributed to the efforts of the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership to reduce wildland fire risks through sustained fuels treatment along Colorado's Front Range. The Partnership was initiated following the record fire season of 2002, and is comprised of the Colorado State Forest Service, U.S. Forest Service National Park Service.

Forest Stewards

Glenn Greene has lived on his property over 15 years. The rolling terrain features ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, and Gambel oak grows like grass under the trees. It is impossible to see far or walk a straight line due to the dense vegetation. Utilizing Shadow Creek, Inc., a local

contractor from Elizabeth, Greene chose to "mow" the oak. The equipment used for the job has a metal cylinder with protruding "teeth" that whirls like the brush on an upright vacuum cleaner. The treatment focused on removing small trees growing under larger trees, as well as poorly formed and unhealthy trees, which will give remaining trees additional breathing room. Greene is pleased with the results, but he knows that he'll need to perform routine work to maintain a healthy forest environment. Greene attended the "After Treatment" workshop hosted by the Franktown District in June 2011, so he knows what to expect over the years.



Greene property after treatment

Literally up the hill from Greene is Chris and Jak Peterson's land. The terrain is steep. One misstep could send a person, vehicle or piece of equipment rolling down an embankment. The property has a maintained road system to allow access to various sections of the property, but most of the terrain is too steep for typical forestry equipment to venture off the road.

While the P&A Tree Services chainsaw crew thins a hillside of sick trees, the subcontractor, All Mountain Construction, works a very steep hillside using a piece of equipment that is uncommon in Colorado. It is an all-terrain excavator with attachments made specifically for doing forestry work. The equipment has four wheels on "arms" that extend and retract, and move independently of one another. The two smaller wheels have a cat-like claw appendage beyond each wheel. The claws provide extra stability. The all-terrain piece of equipment is in high demand these days because it can work on very steep slopes.

The Emergency Supplemental grant has made forest management more affordable, and as a result, more acres have been treated. "Besides being able to treat more acres, the participants have learned a lot about forest management," said Meg Halford, assistant district forester on the CSFS Franktown District, who is managing the project. "Landowners tend to assume there is a market for the trees that need to be cut,

but few Front Range wood products businesses are in operation, so the cost to care for the forest is much higher than it once was."

Halford said that as a result of this project, one landowner will use nearly all of the wood in a wood boiler, while two other landowners will salvage firewood and a few logs for milling. Although there is no monetary profit to reap, the landowners realize money spent today will yield many benefits because the forest will be healthier. The trees will be more resilient to insects and disease, the quantity and quality of wildlife forage will increase, and the risk of a wildfire running through the tree tops will be reduced. Perhaps more noticeable to the landowners will be the greater number of wildflowers, wildlife sightings and the mountain view.



All-terrain excavator with forestry attachment

**For more information about this project, contact:
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