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NEWS

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Annual Forest Health Report Focuses on Colorado's Urban, Community Trees

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – In the Metro Denver area alone, trees provide \$551 million in property value increases, energy savings, carbon storage and other benefits each year. But urban and community trees there and throughout Colorado face ongoing threats from exotic insects and other factors, according to a report released today.

The *2014 Report on the Health of Colorado's Forests*, distributed by the Colorado State Forest Service at the annual Joint Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Hearing at the State Capitol, details forest health concerns around the state. The theme of this year's report is "Urban and Community Forests: An Investment in Colorado," featuring issues related to trees found in city parks, public areas, backyards and street rights-of-way.

Highlighted in the report are urban pest concerns that include thousand cankers disease and emerald ash borer (EAB) – a highly destructive, non-native tree pest first detected in the state in 2013, and which has already killed millions of the nation's ash trees. As in previous years, the report also summarizes insect and disease concerns in Colorado's mountain forests, where for the third straight year spruce beetle was the most widespread insect pest, impacting 485,000 acres of Engelmann spruce in 2014.

"Successful forest management in the mountains, on the plains and in our urban or community settings will only be accomplished through the collaborative efforts of government agencies, private landowners, forest product companies, tree-care companies, non-profits and other stakeholders," said Mike Lester, state forester and director of the CSFS. "We all share the responsibility to conserve and enhance our diverse forests."

This is the 14th consecutive year the CSFS has produced a report on the state of Colorado's forests. Each year, the report provides information to the Colorado General Assembly and residents of Colorado about the health and condition of forests across the state, including recent data, figures and maps. The principal source of information for each forest health report is the annual aerial forest health survey, a cooperative project between the CSFS and the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service. Other data sources include field inspections, CSFS contacts with forest landowners and special surveys designed to help ensure early detection of potentially invasive insect species.

Physical copies of the 2014 report are available at all CSFS district offices. Both the report and a special online supplement providing a comprehensive listing of the damaging agents of Colorado's forests – the *2014 Colorado Forest Insect and Disease Update* – also are available at <http://csfs.colostate.edu>.