



NEWS RELEASE

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Wildfire Activity Highlights Need for Mitigation to Protect Homes

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – June 30, 2016 – With large fires causing evacuations and structure losses over the past few weeks in northwest Colorado and around the West, the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) wants to remind homeowners living in the wildland-urban interface to prepare for wildfires before they arrive.

While there is no guarantee firefighters will be able to save a home from a wildfire, the odds increase if landowners create defensible space, says Kristin Garrison, CSFS fire and fuels management specialist.

Defensible space is the area around homes or other structures that has been modified to reduce fire hazard. Addressing defensible space not only reduces the risk of home loss, but also improves safety for residents if they have to evacuate and for emergency crews responding to a wildfire.

"Fire mitigation efforts are more effective when homeowners work together to reduce hazardous fuels around homes and throughout communities," Garrison said.

The CSFS offers numerous resources to help private landowners create defensible space, with recommendations including:

- Remove all flammable vegetation within at least 15 feet of any part of a home or other structure, including decks.
- Reduce the density of standing trees within 100-200 feet of all structures.
- Prune off tree branches to a height of at least 10 feet from the ground.
- Keep grasses and weeds surrounding the home mowed to a height of less than six inches.
- Stack firewood and locate propane tanks at least 30 feet from and uphill of structures.
- Clear pine needles and leaves from gutters and decks, and trim overhanging branches.

CSFS online resources include free publications about defensible space, FireWise design and construction, Community Wildfire Protection Plans and the Firewise Communities/USA® program.

For comprehensive guidance on protecting homes and communities from wildfire, visit www.csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation or call a local CSFS district office.

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) provides technical forestry assistance, wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities achieve their forest management goals. The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University and provides staffing for the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.