



NEWS RELEASE

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Volunteer Forest Stewards Learn About Trees, Wildfire Risk

BLACK FOREST, Colo. – November 1, 2016 – Eighteen students from El Paso County and nearby areas along the southern Front Range recently graduated from the third-ever Colorado Master Volunteer Forest Stewards course, this year held in Black Forest. The 36-hour training offered by the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) incorporated additional instruction provided by partners including the Colorado Springs Fire and City Forestry departments, the Colorado Tree Farmers and private industry.

The five-week training course, which culminated in a field day at the School in the Woods in Black Forest, is designed to acquaint participants with key concepts of individual tree care and general principles of natural resource management. Hands-on training included forestry field measurements, tree pruning and planting methods and wildfire defensible space assessments of homes in the area.

“It’s exciting to see another enthusiastic group of citizens so eager to learn about their forests, and how they can bring this valuable information back to their respective communities,” said Nancy Dadisman, CSFS volunteer coordinator.

After the initial course training, graduates must each now volunteer 36 hours in forestry assistance to the CSFS, CSU Extension, local tree boards or communities, or to other agency partners such as Black Forest Together, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and local conservation districts.

“We already have over 200 hours of volunteer time documented,” said Dave Root, assistant district forester for the CSFS Woodland Park District, who led the coursework this year. “The volunteers are already out in the community thinning trees, removing fuels and teaching neighbors how to safely operate a chainsaw.”

With prior trainings in La Junta and Pueblo, the program has developed trained forestry volunteers in southern Colorado and seeks to develop increased awareness, knowledge and appreciation of forest ecology, wildfire mitigation and trees on the plains and in Colorado communities.

Anyone interested in becoming a trained Master Volunteer Forest Steward is encouraged to contact Nancy Dadisman at 970-491-8167.

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.