



NEWS RELEASE

Contact for Reporters:

Ryan Lockwood
970.491.8970 or 970.491.6303
ryan.lockwood@colostate.edu
csfs.colostate.edu

Genesee Foundation Reaches 15th Year as a Firewise Community/USA®

GENESEEE, Colo. – March 20, 2017 – The Genesee Foundation – one of only nine communities nationally that have been engaged in the Firewise Communities/USA® national program since its inception in 2002 – is being recognized for taking ongoing actions in preparing homes for the threat of wildfire.

The National Fire Protection Association’s Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program is celebrating its 15th anniversary and honoring the nine pilot sites for their continued participation and successes in reducing wildfire risks. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) will present the recognition award to the Foundation on March 23.

“Since the early 1990s, the Genesee Foundation recognized how important it is for neighbors to work together to reduce wildfire risks,” said Allen Gallamore, district forester for the CSFS Golden District. “Through its enduring efforts, this community provides a clear example of what it means to be a successful Firewise Community.”

Since its Firewise Communities/USA recognition in 2002, the Genesee Foundation community has accomplished a significant amount of work to reduce wildfire risk. Accomplishments include:

- investing over \$1 million in forest management and fire mitigation activities
- selectively thinning over 700 acres of Genesee Open Space for fire mitigation and to improve forest health
- implementing defensible space plans on approximately 150 private properties, with approximately 95 percent of residents having done some defensible space work near homes
- hosting 19 community chipping events to help residents remove branches, trees and pine needles to encourage fire mitigation activities
- working to educate residents of their responsibilities when it comes to living in the wildland-urban interface

“Genesee is filled with forward-thinking, responsible and intelligent residents who place a high value on their property and Open Space,” said Ryan Babcock, former Genesee Foundation Open Space Manager and current training chief for Genesee Fire Rescue, who spearheaded the Firewise Communities/USA recognition effort for the Genesee Foundation community. “The fact that we have reached 15 years as a Firewise Community is a reflection of the dedication Genesee has for being responsible stewards of this beautiful, fire-adapted ecosystem where its residents live and recreate.”

The CSFS works with the National Fire Protection Association to implement the Firewise Communities/USA program in Colorado, and provides technical assistance and education to interested

landowners and communities. Steps required for a community to receive the national designation include:

1. Obtain a wildfire risk assessment from the state forestry agency or fire department
2. Form a Firewise board
3. Create an action plan based on the wildfire risk assessment
4. Conduct a “Firewise Day” event
5. Invest a minimum of \$2 per capita in local Firewise actions each year

“Genesee is a community built in the wildland-urban interface and we have come to understand that the overgrowth of trees surrounding our homes leads not only to an unhealthy forest, but also to a risk of wildfire destroying our homes,” said Nancy Balter, Genesee resident and member of the Genesee Fire & Safety Committee. “Our residents also understand that by creating defensible space around their homes, they will help our fire department defend their homes, and those around them, in the face of a wildfire.”

The recognition event will be hosted by the Genesee Ecosystem Management and Genesee Fire and Safety committees at the Genesee Vista Clubhouse, 24425 W. Currant Road, Golden, at 5:30 p.m. March 23. For questions about the event, contact the Genesee Foundation at 303-526-0284.

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.