

Colorado State Forest Service

Golden District 2007 Annual Report

The mission of the Colorado State Forest Service is to provide for the stewardship of forest resources and to reduce related risks to life, property and the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOLDEN DISTRICT FORESTER

Over the past 12 years as Golden District Forester, there have been two constants — change and the great Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) personnel who have dealt with that change. As you will read in this report, the CSFS Golden District has again experienced a lot of change over the past year. The biggest change was the January 2008 retirement of Peggy Hiller, our longtime administrative assistant. Almost all of our landowners and cooperators have spoken with Peggy at some time over the past 20 years, and we will find it hard to replace her expertise and efficient support of our programs.

Other changes include turnover among our district staff, new insect & disease challenges, and new programs with our cooperators. One thing that has never changed on the Golden District is our commitment to serving public and private landowners in Clear Creek, Jefferson and Park counties. We also are committed to working with our local fire departments, county personnel, local communities, forest landowners, Division of Wildlife and Colorado State Parks managers, and numerous others. Without them, we wouldn't be able to accomplish our goals as an agency.

We will continue to look for opportunities to improve our program delivery, and we welcome your feedback, suggestions and comments! ~Allen Gallamore

Address: 1504 Quaker Street, Golden, CO 80401
Office phone: (303) 279-9757
Fax: (303) 278-3899
Email: csfsgo@lamar.colostate.edu

PRESCRIBED FIRE

The CSFS Golden District conducts prescribed fire with state and county agencies every year in the spring and fall. In 2007, a total of 396 acres were treated during 16 different broadcast burns at Staunton State Park, Golden Gate Canyon State Park, White Ranch Open Space Park and Mt. Falcon Open Space Park. Historically, 200 - 300 acres have been treated annually in these areas and on other properties such as the Mt Evans State Wildlife Area and Elk Meadow Open Space Park near Evergreen.



Prescribed fire at Staunton State Park.

Prescribed burning is conducted when appropriate fuels, weather and smoke management conditions are met within the detailed plans for each area. Personnel and equipment are utilized from CSFS, state and county agencies such as the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Jefferson County Open Space, county sheriff's offices, and fire departments from throughout the Denver Metro area and the Front Range of Colorado.

Prescribed fire reduces fuel loading, which may help slow down a wildfire should one occur in these populated areas. Prescribed fire also improves forest health, enhances wildlife habitat and provides great training opportunities for local emergency services personnel to experience fire

in a controlled environment. Firefighters observe fire behavior, learn how incidents are run under the Incident Command System and refine their firefighting techniques. For some, this may be the only “wildfire” they will experience in a given year, and it is critical to keeping their skills honed.

The following CSFS personnel assisted the Golden District with prescribed burns in the fall of 2007:

State Forester Jeff Jahnke, Vaughn Jones, Brenda Wasielewski, Allen Owen, Damon Lange, Jane Lopez, Matt Jedra, Jodi Hohenstein, Ryan Staychock, Andy Pascarella, Denise White, Rich Palestro, Matt Branch, Matt O’Leary and the Canon City State Engine crew. Thanks to CSFS for all of the assistance.



State Forester Jeff Jahnke assists in firing operations on a prescribed fire.

We would especially like to thank our cooperators who assisted the CSFS Golden District on prescribed fires in 2007 on two Jefferson County Open Space Parks and on two Colorado State Parks. Without their help, we could not have accomplished as much as we did.

Following is a list of agencies and organizations that participated on prescribed fires in the CSFS Golden District in 2007:

Arvada Fire Department (FD), Elk Creek Fire Protection District (FPD), Englewood FD, Evergreen FPD, Fairmount FPD, Golden FD, Golden Gate Canyon State Park, Indian Hills FPD, Intercanyon FPD, Jefferson County Amateur Radio Emergency Services, Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, Larkspur FPD, Littleton FPD, Lockheed Martin FD, Parker FPD, Platte Canyon FPD, Red White & Blue FPD, South Metro Fire/Rescue, Staunton State Park, The Nature Conservancy, West Metro Fire/Rescue and Westminster FD.

FRONT RANGE FUELS TREATMENT PARTNERSHIP

Last year was a busy and successful year for the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership on the Golden District. A total of 555 acres of treatment, both mechanical and prescribed fire, took place on a combination of private, state and local government lands. These projects included:

- 147 acres of mechanical treatment on private properties
- 245 acres of mechanical treatment on the State Land Board parcels
- 115 acres of treatment on Denver Mountain Park properties
- 48 acres of prescribed fire at Staunton State Park



Mechanical treatment on private property.

FEMA AND STATE PARKS MANAGEMENT

It also was a busy year for FEMA and Colorado State Parks projects on the Golden District. CSFS districts on the Front Range use funds obtained through a FEMA grant to reduce hazardous fuels on State Parks lands. The district reduced hazardous fuels on a total of 471 acres through mechanical treatment and prescribed fire including:

- 196 acres of mechanical treatment at Staunton State Park
- 212 acres of prescribed fire at Staunton State Park
- 63 acres of prescribed fire at Golden Gate Canyon State Park



Hazardous fuels were mechanically thinned on a unit at Staunton State Park.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS (CWPP)

Community Wildfire Protection Plans are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) passed by Congress on Nov. 21, 2003, and signed into law on Dec. 3, 2003.

The CWPP, as described in HFRA, brings together diverse local interests to discuss their mutual concerns for public safety, community sustainability and natural resources. It offers a positive, solution-oriented environment in which to address challenges such as local firefighting capability, the need for defensible space around homes and subdivisions, and where and how to prioritize land management – on both federal and non-federal land.

Five CWPPs are currently developed for communities on the Golden District. CWPPs currently are being developed for Clear Creek County, Coal Creek FPD, Genesee FPD, and Foothills FPD.

FOREST AG PROGRAM

The Forest Agriculture Tax Classification Program, or Forest Ag Program, is a property tax designation given to lands used for the primary purpose of producing tangible wood products. The program is mandated by state law, managed by CSFS and implemented by the Assessor's Office in each county. To be eligible for Forest Ag Program designation, a landowner must:

- Own at least 40 contiguous, forested acres
- Use the land to produce tangible wood products
- Have legal access to the property
- Obtain and work under a forest management plan

Landowners who participated in the Forest Ag Program on the Golden District in 2007 were dedicated to managing their forests. Following is a brief summary of program accomplishments:

- 143 landowners participated in 2007; 122 in Jefferson County, 11 in Park County and 10 in Clear Creek County
- 8 properties were added and 12 new plans were written
- 15,085 acres are covered under management plans
- 1,032 acres were treated for fuels mitigation, timber stand improvement and insect and disease mitigation
- 1,438 cords of firewood, 460 Christmas trees, 220 cubic feet of chips and mulch, 198 cords of post/poles, 70 saw logs and 30 transplants were removed

The Forest Ag Program has several benefits. Obviously, landowners benefit through lower property taxes and a properly managed forest that generally is healthier and more resilient, productive and attractive than an unmanaged forest. Reduced property taxes help landowners avoid the need to subdivide due to financial pressures and keeps these 40-acre-plus tracts of land intact, which is ecologically important because development and fragmentation makes forest management difficult and expensive to achieve. Finally, producing and selling wood products from Forest Ag properties adds to the economic base of local communities.

FOREST HEALTH NEWS

Forest diseases and endemic and epidemic populations of forest insects continue to affect Colorado's forests. These insects and diseases are natural elements of our forested ecosystems. They serve as cleansing agents because they help remove older, unhealthier trees and usher in younger, more vigorous trees. Change is necessary to maintain diversity within our forests and across the landscape.

The mountain pine beetle epidemic increased dramatically in lodgepole pine forests across northern Colorado within the last year. At current rates of spread, researchers expect that the epidemic has the potential to affect all *mature* lodgepole pine forests on the Front Range.

To learn more about the mountain pine beetle epidemic, stop by our office and request a copy of the "2007 Report on the Health of Colorado's Forests, Special Issue: Forest Challenges Today and Tomorrow."

The Golden District has seen the mountain pine beetle epidemic spread over the divide into the lodgepole pine forests of our Front Range communities. However, mountain pine beetle populations in ponderosa pine forests along the Front Range remain at endemic levels.

Other insect populations of note affecting Front Range forests include the western spruce budworm, the Douglas-fir tussock moth and the ips beetle, a cousin of the mountain pine beetle. Western spruce budworm and the Douglas-fir tussock moth populations have declined from or remained at levels seen over the past few years. The ips beetle remains a pest in our forests, but is not as aggressive as the mountain pine beetle. Ips beetles are attracted to stressed trees and freshly cut wood. It is important for landowners who are managing their forests to treat slash in a timely manner to prevent subsequent ips beetle attacks.

For more information about these and other insects and diseases affecting our forests, please visit our office in Golden or the CSFS website at www.csfs.colostate.edu.

LAND USE PLANNING AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION ON PRIVATE PROPERTIES

Foresters from the Golden District continue to help planners and developers in Jefferson, Clear Creek and Park counties address wildfire mitigation issues. Foresters review Land Use Plans (LUPs) for these counties and recommend the appropriate level of fuels mitigation work, emphasizing the need for defensible space on new and existing properties. In some cases, wildfire mitigation plans are developed and implemented with the help of CSFS foresters.

In addition to assisting county planners and developers, Golden District foresters help private landowners assess their properties for wildfire hazards so they understand the need for defensible space, fuelbreaks and forest management on their property.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP MANAGEMENT PLANS

Foresters on the Golden District develop management plans for landowners to help guide their forest management decisions. In 2007, Golden District foresters wrote plans for the Bear Mountain Vista Homeowners Association, Romer Ranch, Wellington Lake, Conifer High School and the Town of Georgetown.



View of Wellington Lake property.

SEEDLING TREE PROGRAM

Seedling trees grown at the CSFS nursery in Fort Collins are sold for conservation purposes. These seedlings are distributed to the public through CSFS districts and other cooperating agencies. The nursery grows up to 2 million seedlings annually. To qualify for seedling trees, landowners must have 2 acres of land and can only plant seedlings for conservation purposes such as reforestation, wildlife habitat, windbreaks and erosion control. The Jefferson County 4-H Club distributes these seedlings in mid-April each year. For more information about this program, please contact the 4-H Club at 303-271-6620 or the CSFS Golden District.

WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION

Engines 861 and 862 were taken to Georgia, Nevada, Arizona and California for a combined total of more than 14 weeks in 2007. Additionally, Golden District personnel served on the Type 2 Northern Colorado Handcrew for 2 weeks in Idaho and 2 weeks in California.

FOREST INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program had another successful year in Colorado. A nationwide program of the US Forest Service, the FIA Program provides a nationwide inventory of our forests to facilitate a better understanding of forest health issues such as how forests grow, how forests respond to fires and different management strategies, the effects of pollution, etc. Research plots are located nationwide on both public and private lands. CSFS field crews visit these plots and take a variety of measurements to assess forest condition. In 2007, crews visited approximately 500 plots across the state from subalpine forests to forested areas on the plains. For more information about the FIA Program and results from previous years' measurements, please visit www.fia.fs.fed.us.

The Golden District hosts one of the FIA crews and benefits from having an additional forester on the district in the winter when FIA plots are completed for the year.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY

The Golden District has provided technical support and field equipment to “The Tree Project” being conducted by the Institute for Environmental Solutions and the City of Golden.

Communities within the Golden District that have national Tree City USA certification are the City of Golden and the Pleasant View Metropolitan District.

CSFS VOLUNTEERS

More than 600 Christmas trees were removed from Genesee Park during the first weekend in December with the assistance of seasonal and permanent Golden District staff, CSFS Volunteer Coordinator Ryan Staychock and several CSFS volunteers. Thanks to Ryan and the volunteers for helping us make the project a success.

PERSONNEL

The Golden District prioritized its 2007 workload as two longtime employees, Kristy Boscheinen and Brenda Wasielewski, moved on to new positions with the USFS and CSFS, respectively. To fill these vacancies, the Golden District hired two new full-time foresters. Kirk Will, assistant district forester, comes to us from the US Forest Service, and Ben Pfohl, forester, previously was with the FIA Program.

The Golden District has completed its full staffing of the Wildland-Urban Interface Engine Crew.



The Wildland Interface Engine Crew (from left to right): Mike Keil, Adam Rodriguez, Eric Gettenberg and Kevin Michalak

CURRENT STAFF:

Allen Gallamore, District Forester

District administration, Land Use Plans, cooperative relationships, Fire Program administration

Pat McLaughlin, Assistant District Forester

Wildfire & prescribed fire, forest management (Denver Mountain Parks)

Brenda DeHerrera, Accounting Technician II

(not pictured)

Kirk Will, Assistant District Forester

Forest Ag Program,

Andy Perri, Forester

Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership

Ben Pfohl, Forester

Forest stewardship, Land Use Plans, wildfire mitigation

Kevin Michalak, Forestry Technician, Engine Boss

Adam Rodriguez, Forestry Technician, Squad Boss

Mike Keil, Forestry Technician, Squad Boss

Eric Gettenberg, Forestry Technician, FFT2

Megan Sweeney, FIA Forester

(not pictured)

RETIRED IN JANUARY 2008:

Peggy Hiller, Administrative Assistant II

LEFT THE DISTRICT IN 2007:

Brenda Wasielewski, Forester

Kristy Boscheinen, Forester

IN CLOSING...

We would like to thank our many customers and cooperators. It is a pleasure to work with you. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact us.



The CSFS Golden District staff (from left to right): Ben Pfohl, Andy Perri, Kirk Will, Pat McLaughlin and Allen Gallamore



Colorado State Forest Service
Golden District Office
1504 Quaker Street
Golden, Colorado 80401