

Colorado State Forest Service

Cañon City District 2008 Report



The Colorado State Forest Service mission 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.

Contact Us!

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The Cañon City District of the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is one of 17 districts located throughout Colorado. We are an agency within the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University (CSU).

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Greetings from the Cañon City District!

The Cañon City District of the Colorado State Forest Service continues to provide technical assistance to private landowners and on lands under state, county or municipal jurisdiction. Occasionally, our activities extend onto public lands managed by one of several federal agencies charged with public land management. 2008 marked significant accomplishments as well as changes within our district staff. While the names and faces of our staff may change, our mission, guiding principles and commitment to our customers remains constant.

Thank you for taking the time to review our newsletter. Here, you will find highlights of our recent activities as well as updates about who helps shape the CSFS Cañon City District. We welcome your questions and feedback. Please contact us.

Cañon City District Staff



(Left to right) John Grieve, district forester; Joe LoBiondo, engine foreman; Lauren Jensen, administrative assistant; Keb Guralski, forester; Dan Burns, forester; and Matt Russell, firefighter.

District Highlights and Recent Accomplishments

Community Wildfire Prevention Plans completed	2
Community Fuels Mitigation Projects completed	3
# Defensible Space's created	15
State Land Acres treated	421
Private Land Acres treated	174
Communities assisted	19
Landowners assisted	277
Tree City USA Communities	3

Firefighters Add to District Capacity

In 2008, the Cañon City District hired full-time firefighters to staff our district's fire engine. Our district has retained a type 6 fire engine (E-461) for several years. The engine, used for wildfire suppression, previously was staffed with a combination of seasonal and full-time foresters as well as firefighters from cooperating fire departments. The availability of engine staff was always a concern because most of our staff and cooperators have conflicting responsibilities. The addition of full-time firefighters to staff our engine assures a timely response when we are requested to assist with wildfire suppression.

2008 Wildfire Responses by E-461 Crew

- 5 local wildfire responses
- 8 state fire responses
- 1 national fire response

The district's new engine crew also adds muscle to our prescribed fire and fuels mitigation efforts. In fact, our crew spends most of their time on controlled burns, or thinning and pruning trees and brush to mitigate wildfire hazards. In addition, they prepare district burn plans, obtain state smoke permits and assist with administrative functions within CSFS fire programs.

In 2008, the E-461 Engine Crew worked on the following projects:

Fuels Mitigation Projects

- Turkey Gulch Fuelbreak
- Red Creek Fuels Reduction
- Cheyenne Mountain State Park
- Motz Fuels Reduction
- Chubb Park Timber Stand Improvement
- Calwood Fuels Reduction

Prescribed Burns

- Mount Evans
- Staunton State Park
- Golden Gate State Park
- White Ranch Open Space
- James Jones Wildlife Area
- Black Mountain US Forest Service Land



Matt Russell assists with a prescribed burn.



Joe LoBiondo, engine foreman with a CSFS engine.

State Lands Management Plan Close to Completion

During the past two years, we have aggressively collected and analyzed field data about forest resources on State Trust Lands with the purpose to prepare a comprehensive management plan for these resources within our district. Previously, our planning was based on individual state sections or parcels. Our new district-wide plan objectives are:

- To create healthy forests, resistant to the damaging effects of insects, disease and wildfire
- To produce sustainable wood products
- To maintain quality habitat for various species of wildlife
- To maintain soil integrity and enhance watershed quality
- To provide for long-term aesthetic quality and recreational opportunities

To date, the district has inventoried 59 sections or parcels of State Trust Land that cover approximately 45,650 acres. We already use the data collected to guide our management of the land. Thus far, the data gathered has helped us manage 470 acres on four separate State Trust Land sections. When all of the data is collected and analyzed, we will use it to help guide both short- and long-term management priorities. By

using computer modeling, we can estimate the growth and changes in the forest over time, and modeling future forest conditions will allow us to anticipate and plan for future management practices. Computer models will not take our foresters out of the woods. They are needed to direct management activities on the land and update the data that the models are based on. The foresters also monitor for harmful insects and diseases and constantly reassess the potential danger for wildfire.

We expect to complete the State Lands Management Plan by early 2010. The plan — mainly a database — can be queried in numerous ways to provide current and projected information about the forest resources on State Trust Lands. The plan also will be available in written- summary format that will illustrate information and current conditions of each State Trust Land parcel. An overall summary of how the plan was prepared and general district-wide information also will be provided.



Keb Guralski, forester, takes measurements as part of an inventory plot.

Timber Sales Fund Forest Management, State School Trust Fund

During the past two years, the district inventoried our State Lands and utilized the information to produce a series of four timber sales. We initiated the sales for the purpose of actively managing forests by harvesting over-mature trees and encouraging healthy, vigorous growth of intermediate and immature trees. Actively managing the forests on the land prevents uncontrolled, catastrophic disturbances such as fire and insect outbreaks. The harvest also generates revenue for the State School Trust Fund. The district also treated 470 acres through timber harvesting. The yield from these sales was 1,375 MBF (thousand board feet), which is the standard of measurement used by local sawmills to manufacture wood products. State revenue generated from the sales averaged more than \$52/MBF and totaled \$72,000. The harvests generated revenue for the State Land Board and met predetermined forest management objectives. These objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Creating healthy and diverse forests that are resistant to insect and disease outbreaks and major wildfires
- Creating forest structural diversity and promoting uneven-aged, productive stands
- Producing sustainable forest products
- Promoting and preserving wildlife habitat and grazing lands

Timber sales on the district are carried out by local loggers, and local markets utilize the forest products from the sales. Following timber sales, firewood is removed from logging slash. Additional trees, unsuitable for saw timber, may be removed depending on the stand density (how many trees in one area) and individual tree health and form. These trees are generally sold as firewood to local residents. Following completion of these activities, future steps may involve prescribed burning to clean up the forest floor and promote seedling regeneration.

Future timber sales are being considered as we obtain more data and information toward completion of the

district-wide State Lands Management Plan. This plan will help us manage forests on each parcel of State Land Board property in an appropriate and sustainable manner.



Equipment used to harvest timber on State Lands.



Logging operations during a timber sale.



John Grieve, district forester, and Keb Guralski, forester, on the Junkins Park timber sale located on State Trust Lands.

Taking Stock of Our Forests

The Cañon City District is fortunate to host Dan Burns, a CSFS inventory forester who works in cooperation with the US Forest Service to carry out the national Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program in southeastern Colorado. The FIA program is a national forest census that started in 1930 to help provide an inventory of the recently-established national forests at that time. Today, the FIA inventory is conducted on all forested land throughout the country, including federal, state, private and tribal lands. The data collected provides forest managers and scientists with information on the status and trends of American forests, including issues such as forest health, insect and disease, and fuel loading. FIA data is targeted to a regional and national level and is used

by government agencies, forest product industries, universities and conservation organizations alike.

FIA field crews consist of two to three members who sample plots across Colorado from roughly March through early December. Approximately 85 percent of the plots in southeastern Colorado are on private lands. The Cañon City inventory forester coordinates with private landowners to obtain permission and access onto their land. It is because of the generosity and cooperation of these private landowners that the FIA survey is able to continue throughout much of Colorado.

Since the FIA program allows us to track forest changes over time, the data provides users with information about critical management concerns. Vital to Colorado, FIA data is used in fire modeling, insect and disease detection, and changing forest structure. By sampling down logs and fine branches on plots, FIA data provides fire managers with information on fuel loads and highlights areas of concern. FIA surveys provide insect and disease information on a regional level, helping local forest managers evaluate current risks and potential outbreaks. And, as more of Colorado's forests and rangelands become fragmented by urban development, FIA data offers a current illustration of the changing landscape.



FIA forester, Dan Burn's scenic office in Las Animas county.



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