

Agency Overview

Colorado State Forest Service



The Colorado State Forest Service is the lead state agency for forestry and wildfire expertise.

Our foresters help landowners and communities accomplish sound forestry practices on their land. We also coordinate with other agencies and fire departments to ensure that Colorado is prepared to suppress dangerous wildfires.

CSFS is proud to be a part of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, headquartered in Fort Collins. We have approximately 130 employees and 19 field offices across the state. CSFS also provides staffing to the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

Every year, CSFS improves the health of more than 20,000 acres of forest land. We also work with the state's 400 fire departments, and assist more than 8,500 landowners.

At least 75 percent of CSFS funding comes from the U.S. Forest Service's State and Private Forestry program. The remainder is either self-generated or from the state's general fund.



Critical Issues

Colorado's forests provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, excellent recreational opportunities, wood products, and beautiful scenery. These benefits contribute to Colorado's quality of life and are vital to our economy. However, without careful management of forest resources, these assets and community safety are at risk.

Wildfire and the Wildland/Urban Interface

Colorado's forests, shrublands, and grasslands are vulnerable to large wildfires that can be dangerous to residents and firefighters. Wildfires in populated areas also are extremely costly to taxpayers.



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.

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Dramatic fire seasons, warming temperatures, and ongoing bark beetle epidemics have raised unprecedented concern about wildfires in our forests. As more homes are built in the woods, more people are at risk.

Currently, more than 1 million Coloradans live in proximity to 6 million acres of forests at high risk to wildfires.

To proactively address these issues, our agency helps residents develop community wildfire protection plans that prioritize fire mitigation actions. We then assist communities in accomplishing this work.

The Colorado State Forest Service also prepares for wildfire by strategically moving firefighting aircraft and fire trucks to where fire danger is greatest.

Forest Conditions

Many of Colorado's forests are in poor condition. Prolonged drought has further stressed the state's trees, making forests even more vulnerable to wildfires and insect epidemics.

By reducing competition and enabling renewal, forest management activities such as cutting trees can improve the resiliency of our forests.

CSFS helps landowners, communities, and other partners properly manage their forests for today and tomorrow. We also work closely with state and federal land



managers to plan and implement forestry projects across ownership boundaries.

Bark Beetles

More trees are dying from the current mountain pine beetle epidemic than ever before in the state's recorded history. Most of this beetle-kill is in watersheds that provide drinking water to Colorado and other western states. Wildfires in these areas could have long-term, detrimental, and costly effects to our water supply.

The Colorado State Forest Service reduces bark beetle impacts by helping landowners mitigate fire

hazards from beetle-killed trees. We work with communities, other agencies, and ski areas to promote healthy and diverse forests for the long term. In addition, our agency provides forestry expertise to lawmakers.

Communities and Education

In addition to fire and forest management, CSFS has core programs that address urban and community forestry, as well as education and outreach.

Citizens in Colorado's cities and towns value the trees that grow in parks and along streets for their beauty, shade, contributions to air and water quality, and urban wildlife habitat. The Colorado State Forest Service helps communities plan and care for these vital resources.



Community forestry is an important part of CSFS' work on the Eastern Plains. Planting trees to provide protection from wind and snow is another priority in this area. Many of the trees for these planting projects are grown in our seedling tree nursery.

Education and outreach efforts are intrinsic to all of our activities. From working with schoolgroups to hosting workshops about forest stewardship, our dedicated staff is committed to an education-based approach.

