



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Teller County Community, Educator Receive State Forest Service Awards**

**WOODLAND PARK, Colo. – May 5, 2016** – The Colorado State Forest Service this week awarded both a Teller County community and educator with External Partner Special Recognition Awards for their significant support of the agency’s mission and efforts. The awards were officially presented at the agency’s annual meeting and awards ceremony in Glenwood Springs.

The Ridgewood Firewise Community/USA<sup>®</sup>, represented by Jean Blaisdell, became a National Fire Protection Association-recognized community in 2010 and the first FWC in Teller County. Its wildfire mitigation efforts over the last eight years have vastly grown and now the majority of the Ridgewood subdivision is dedicated to participating in annual, collective efforts that reduce the community’s wildfire risk – leading to approximately 200 acres now mitigated within the community. Ridgewood also updated its existing Community Wildfire Protection Plan in November 2015.

“Ridgewood is a community of neighbors helping neighbors, creating connections and networks to help them become more fire-adapted and resilient for when a wildfire does occur within the community,” said Dave Root, CSFS Woodland Park District.

Local outdoor education volunteer Rose Banzhaf also received an award for her efforts with the CSFS-administered Colorado Project Learning Tree Program. In the four years Banzhaf has been involved with PLT, she has facilitated or co-facilitated at least 21 Colorado PLT workshops. She also has assisted with and presented at annual Fire Ecology Institutes, facilitator trainings, and statewide and regional environmental education conferences. She is a member of the Colorado PLT advisory group, representing the group at various meetings and mentoring other facilitators.

Besides assisting the Colorado State Forest Service with the PLT program, Banzhaf is a highly valued volunteer for many environmental and education programs in her community of Woodland Park, teaching summer and after school classes, naturalist-led programs and hikes for nearby state parks, schools, nature centers and open spaces.

“Rose leads by example, and delights in sharing her passion for nature with her children, grandchildren and friends,” said Shawna Crocker, Colorado PLT coordinator. “I can’t imagine Colorado PLT without her.”

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*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.*