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NEWS

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Colorado State Forest Service, Pingree Park Provide Christmas Trees for Local Charity

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – For the third successive year, the Colorado State Forest Service is providing a Fort Collins-based charity with more than 300 Christmas trees for local families in need – all obtained from Pingree Park – Colorado State University’s mountain campus and outdoor classroom for natural resources students.

On Saturday, the CSFS worked with local Boy Scouts, CSU’s Alpha Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters and other volunteers to harvest the young lodgepole pine trees from a 20-year-old burn scar in Pingree Park. The trees were obtained for Gift of a Green Christmas Tree – a program of the broader 501c3 organization Northern Colorado Shares (NOCO Shares) – which each year provides hundreds of free Christmas trees to brighten the holiday season for families, senior citizens and others with limited resources.

“It’s all about providing local families a brighter Christmas,” said Ryan Behm, NOCO Shares president. “We wouldn’t be able to reach out to so many each year without the efforts of the Colorado State Forest Service, and the trees provided by Pingree Park.”

Behm started Gift of a Green Christmas Tree in 2003, delivering 23 trees that year. The charity now obtains most tree recipients’ names from United Way of Larimer County 2-1-1, House of Neighborly Service and similar organizations that support families in need.

For the past three years, the CSFS has joined forces with NOCO Shares to provide Christmas trees from the CSU property. Trees are only cut in designated locations and under specific guidelines to improve forest health.

On Dec. 6, volunteers will deliver the trees to families in Fort Collins, Loveland and other northern Front Range communities. Donated lighting, ornaments and a stand are included with each delivery.

To volunteer with NOCO Shares, make a tax-deductible donation or donate artificial trees, tree stands, Christmas lights or other decorations, contact getinvolved@nocoshares.org, or visit <http://nocoshares.org/> for more information.

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