



Colorado State Forest Service
5060 Campus Delivery
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-5060
970.491.6303; FAX 970.491.7736
<http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

NEWS

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Contacts for Reporters:

Ryan Lockwood or Brian Woodward
970.491.8970

Annual Forest Health Report Details Threats, Opportunities for Colorado Forests

DENVER – The *2013 Report on the Health of Colorado’s Forests*, released today by the Colorado State Forest Service at the annual Joint Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Hearing at the State Capitol, details forest health concerns throughout the state and the opportunities available for landowners to mitigate their effects.

“Colorado land managers continue to face unprecedented challenges in their pursuit to foster healthy, thriving forests,” said Mike Lester, state forester and director of the Colorado State Forest Service. Lester said that insect and disease outbreaks, devastating wildfires, and recent floods have brought to light the necessity of working together to actively manage Colorado forests and as a result, collaboration among public land managers and private landowners has never been stronger.

Each year, the *Report on the Health of Colorado’s Forests* provides information to the Colorado General Assembly and residents of Colorado about the health and condition of forests across the state. The report provides recent data, figures and maps detailing major insect and disease concerns in the state, including the expansion of spruce beetle activity and the detection of emerald ash borer – an invasive pest first discovered in Colorado in 2013, which poses serious risks to the state’s urban forests.

This is the 13th consecutive year the CSFS has produced a report on the state of Colorado’s forests and the actions it is taking to mitigate forest health concerns. The theme of this year’s report is “Today’s Challenges, Tomorrow’s Opportunities,” with an emphasis on the link between the forest health risks of today and the opportunities to attenuate those risks in the future.

The principal source of information for the forest health report is the annual aerial forest health survey, a cooperative project between the CSFS and the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service. Other data sources include field inspections, CSFS contacts with forest landowners and special surveys designed to help ensure early detection of potentially invasive insect species.

The 2013 report also includes a special online supplement, the *2013 Colorado Forest Insect and Disease Update*, which is a comprehensive listing of the damaging agents of Colorado’s forests. This supplement is available, in electronic form only, at <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/2013FHR-InsectDiseaseUpdate.pdf>.

Copies of the 2013 forest health report are available at CSFS district offices or online at <http://csfs.colostate.edu>.