

COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

CO-WRAP: Q&A



February 2015

- **What is CO-WRAP, and what is its primary use?**

CO-WRAP is an acronym for the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) created CO-WRAP as an online mapping tool that will help decision makers, community leaders, professional planners and interested citizens determine wildfire risk and where forest management actions can achieve the greatest impact to reduce that risk.

- **Why was CO-WRAP created?**

The CO-WRAP tool was created to display data from the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment and inform the public, community leaders, decision makers and professional planners about wildfire risks so that they can take actions to reduce these risks.

- **Who is CO-WRAP intended for?**

CO-WRAP is intended for two audiences: the general public and decision makers/professional planners, who may include landowners/managers, county planners, community leaders, forestry contractors, fire mitigation professionals and county commissioners. The public viewer provides a simple-to-use tool that allows users to explore wildfire risk and generate maps for specific locations, while the professional viewer provides access to data, tools and detailed risk summary reports for use in wildfire protection and forest stewardship plans.

- **Where does the information in CO-WRAP come from? Does it use recent information?**

CO-WRAP displays data from the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment. It utilizes historic and current datasets, applies scientific methods and modeling, and makes the data available in a format useful to decision makers and private citizens.

- **Is the information provided by CO-WRAP, including wildfire risk, applicable to my own individual homesite?**

The data presented in CO-WRAP are of a broad spatial nature, with a level of detail based on 30-by-30-meter pixels. To put that in context, the smallest area that can be assigned a value using CO-WRAP is an area approximately the size of a quarter-acre lot. Due to this level of detail, CO-WRAP should be used only as the first step toward assessing the wildfire risk for a single property, and an expert should be contacted to assess the property itself. You can locate a forester at your local CSFS district office at www.csfs.colostate.edu.

- **Does CO-WRAP determine exactly where wildfire mitigation/forest management work needs to be completed to protect communities from wildfire?**

CO-WRAP provides a starting point for exploring wildfire risks, but site planning based on CO-WRAP reports should involve interaction with local fire departments, forestry professionals and fuels mitigation specialists who may conduct field surveys and obtain more detailed data to support preparedness planning activities.

- **How often are the data in CO-WRAP updated?**

CO-WRAP uses the best available datasets for each of its map layers. No data are updated automatically or more frequently than once per year. CO-WRAP is not an appropriate tool for determining real-time wildfire or ignition risks for a specific date or season.

- **Is there anything CO-WRAP should not be used for?**

The data presented in CO-WRAP are of a broad spatial nature, with a level of detail based on 30-by-30-meter pixels. Thus CO-WRAP is not intended for homesite-level assessments without the additional input of an expert. Also, CO-WRAP should not be used for “real-time” wildfire risk assessments based on the specific day or time of year a user is logging in.

- **Does CO-WRAP work all over Colorado, or only in some parts of the state?**

CO-WRAP is applicable throughout the entire state, in all vegetation types.

- **Do I need an account/password to use CO-WRAP?**

No password or special access code is required to use the public viewer on CO-WRAP. To use the professional viewer, however, permission must be granted by the CSFS CO-WRAP administrator, per the instructions on the website.

- **What’s the best first step in learning how to use CO-WRAP?**

The CSFS strongly recommends all new users take a short tutorial when first accessing the web portal. This can be done by clicking “Getting Started” on the top of the left navigation bar, and then clicking “Take a Tour.” Additional detail may be found in the CO-WRAP User’s Manual which is accessible from the Support button on the Home Screen tool bar.

- **When I use the “What’s Your Risk?” tool to click on the map, what does this mean?**

This feature examines potential wildfire intensity for a selected point on the map. When determining this risk for a specific location, CO-WRAP takes into account not only conditions at the exact location being selected, but to some degree also includes the surrounding area up to a half-mile away from the chosen point. Thus a home in an urban subdivision may rank as high risk if bordering dense wildland forests, while a home in close proximity to heavy brush may display only a moderate risk if the larger surrounding area is mostly low-risk agricultural or urbanized land.

- **I’m accessing CO-WRAP using Internet Explorer and keep encountering problems. What do you recommend?**

CO-WRAP works best when accessed using the web browsers Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox. Try accessing the site through these browsers instead.

- **CO-WRAP indicates that my mountain community has a low wildfire risk. Does that mean I don't need to worry?**

Every community in Colorado within or adjacent to any area with wildland fuels (i.e., forests, grasslands, shrublands) has some level of risk from wildfire. Although a community may have a low risk rating compared to higher-risk areas in the state, it does not mean wildfire risk should be ignored. You can contact a professional forester to better understand your local wildfire risk, and learn more about what you can do to reduce that risk.

- **When I click on the different map themes, how do I know what the colors mean?**

Below "Explore Map Themes" on the left navigation bar, click the option to "Show Legend." A legend for the current map layer you are viewing will appear in the upper right corner of the screen.

- **Are there explanations for the different map themes in the public viewer? How do I know what "Values at Risk" and "Fire Intensity Scale" mean?**

Under "Explore Map Themes" in the left navigation bar, a brief description of the active map layer appears in a brown box under "Active Layer Description."

- **How do I access CO-WRAP? And who can I talk to for more information about the wildfire risk on my own property?**

To access the CO-WRAP website, go to www.ColoradoWildfireRisk.com. More information about protecting homes and communities from wildfire is available at Colorado State Forest Service district offices or the CSFS website: <http://csfs.colostate.edu>.

- **How has CO-WRAP changed since it was introduced in 2013?**

The CSFS continues to listen to user's comments and suggestions. Since 2013, hydrologic unit boundaries for 6th level watersheds have been added to CO-WRAP that allow management areas to be defined by a click of the mouse; management areas may now be viewed by exporting to Google 3D; and past years forest management activity boundaries have been added as a reference layer. In the spring of 2015, CSFS expects to add reference layers for large fires that occurred in 2013 and 2014; also being added in 2015 will be digitized boundaries for Community Wildfire Protection Plans and Firewise Communities allowing users to define those areas of interest with a click of the mouse.

- **Where can I learn more about how to best use CO-WRAP?**

Technical questions and professional viewer requests should be directed to [CSFS_CO- WRAP@mail.colostate.edu](mailto:CSFS_CO-WRAP@mail.colostate.edu).