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NEWS

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Coalition for the Upper South Platte Receives Award from Colorado State Forest Service

WOODLAND PARK, Colo. – The non-profit Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP), a forest and watershed health-oriented NGO based in Lake George, has received a 2014 “Special Recognition Award” from the Colorado State Forest Service.

The award generally recognizes those individuals or entities that help the agency with its efforts on an ongoing basis, rather than assisting on a single project. CUSP accepted the award, which is bestowed to CSFS partners for significant contributions to the agency’s efforts, at the CSFS’s annual meeting and awards ceremony this week in Pueblo.

“CUSP’s partnership helps us reach many more landowners than we could reach alone,” said Dave Root, assistant district forester for the CSFS Woodland Park District, which nominated CUSP for the award. “CUSP is our partner in so many of our endeavors that we can scarcely imagine working without them.”

Formed in 1998 after the Buffalo Creek Fire and dedicated to the health of the Upper South Platte Watershed, CUSP assists the CSFS with forest restoration and wildfire mitigation. CUSP has treated 6,771 acres in the watershed over the last five years, and its “Drive-By Chipping” program has also helped local landowners reduce wildfire risk on an additional 1,739 acres.

The organization offers innovative ways to utilize forest products, such as providing wood chips derived from a local slash collection site to the biomass heating facility at Fairplay High School. CUSP also assists communities in developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) with GIS analysis, writing and mapping, and organizes numerous volunteer projects throughout the watershed. In 2013 alone, CUSP organized more than 6,000 volunteers for various projects to restore healthy forests and watersheds, and over the last five years planted 12,000 CSFS seedlings in the Hayman and Waldo Canyon burn scars.

CUSP also financially supports CSFS educational and outreach efforts, including past offerings of the annual Colorado Fire Ecology Institute.

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