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NEWS

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Now is the time to address wildfire mitigation near homes, communities

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – With Colorado’s snowpack at only 65 percent of average and Red Flag Warnings again in effect throughout much of the state today, the Colorado State Forest Service reminds landowners that there’s no better time than now to prepare homes and communities for wildfire.

“Sometimes the best defense is a good offense,” said Mike Lester, state forester and director of the Colorado State Forest Service. “Long before a fire arrives, landowners should be taking pre-emptive actions to reduce wildfire potential.”

The CSFS offers free guides for protecting property from wildfire, including those that cover FireWise building construction and tips for protecting homes by maintaining wildfire-defensible zones. The agency also offers site visits with homeowners to discuss concerns, and works with communities to address mitigation and wildfire threats on a larger scale through the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).

“Homeowners and communities bear the ultimate responsibility to help protect themselves and their property from the threat of wildfire,” said Courtney Peterson, Colorado’s wildfire mitigation education coordinator. “Taking simple steps now can help make homes more defensible and help protect residents and firefighters.”

Peterson said some of the critical concerns to reduce the risks presented by early season, wind-driven wildfires include cutting and removing dead grasses and weeds; raking up thick beds of pine needles; and keeping gutters, decks and roofs free of pine needles and other combustibles.

State publications, guidelines and other information on wildfire mitigation and developing CWPPs are available at CSFS district offices or online at <http://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/>.

The Colorado State Forest Service is the lead state agency for providing forest stewardship and management, fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners in Colorado. Every year, the CSFS helps treat 20,000 acres of forestland, and assists approximately 6,400 landowners and hundreds of communities to help improve forest health. The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University.