



Watershed Wildfire Protection Group: Background/Origins & Wildfire Watershed Assessments

Brad Piehl; JW Associates Inc.

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Public Lands Partnership

Monthly Meeting

Thursday 3 November 2016; 1300-1600 MDT

Montrose County Fairgrounds

Montrose, CO

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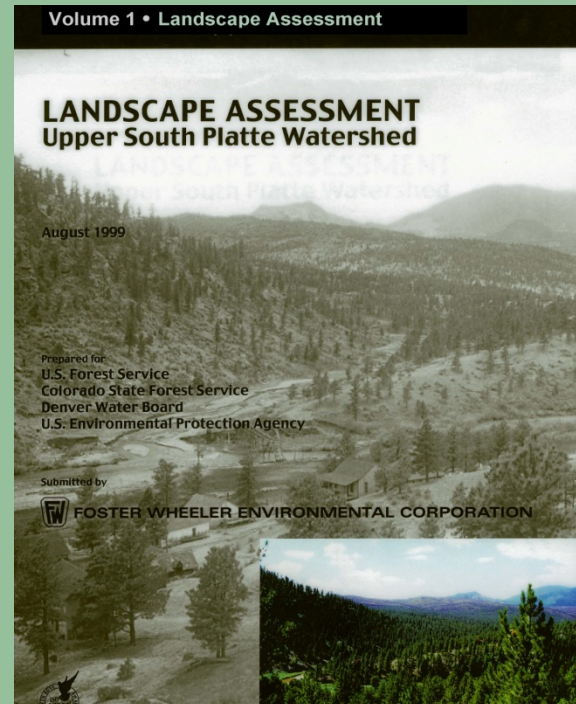
1996 Buffalo Creek Wildfire (≈12,000 acres)



Source: Denver Water



1999 Upper South Platte Watershed Landscape Assessment



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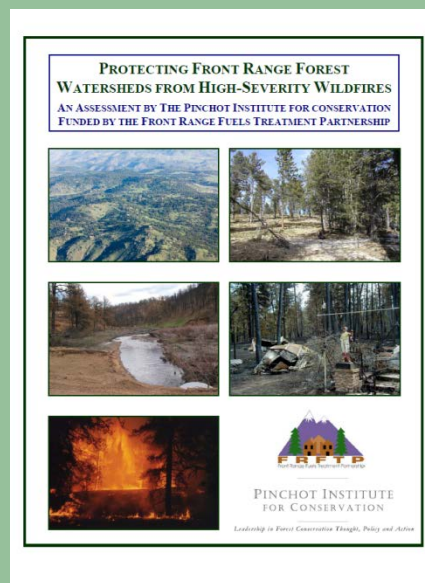
2002 Hayman Wildfire (≈138,000 acres)



Source: Wikipedia



2007 Front Range Fuel Treatment Partnership's Pinchot Institute's Report



Post-Hayman Wildfire Watershed Wildfire Protection Group Chronology to 2009



- Front Range Fuel Treatment Partnership (FRFTP) formed in 2004 covering 10 counties
- May of 2004: the Front Range Roundtable (a place-based forestry collaborative) formed with over 40 participating organizations
- July of 2007: the FRFTP funded the Pinchot Institute for Conservation's "Protecting Front Range Forest Watersheds from High-Severity Wildfires" Report
- September 2007: Colorado State Forest Service, Front Range Water Providers, & US Forest Service form the Front Range Watershed Wildfire Protection Group
- August 2009: Front Range Watershed Protection Data Refinement Work Group publishes final version of "Protecting Critical Watersheds in Colorado From Wildfire: A Technical Approach to Watershed Assessment and Prioritization" (Executive Summary published February 2009)

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group



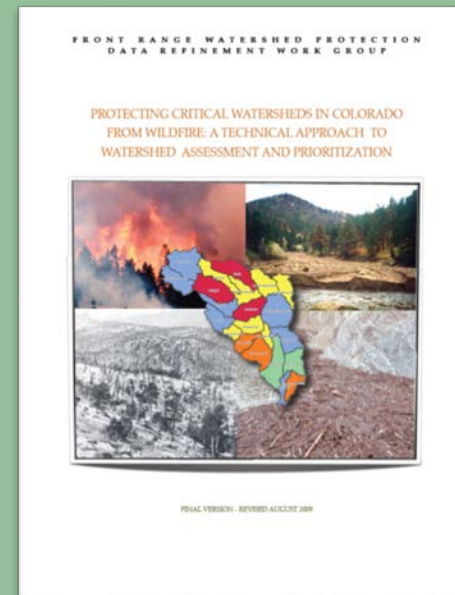
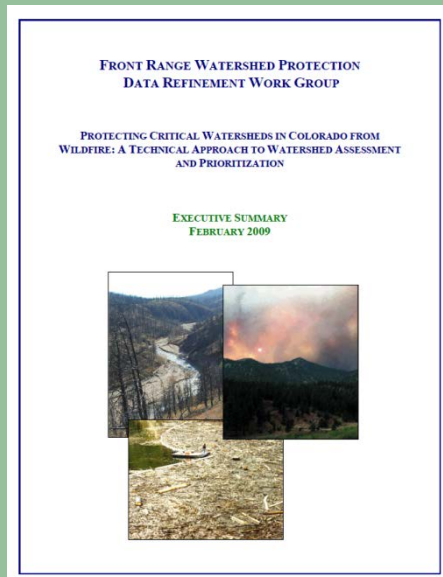
Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment



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Wildfire Watershed Assessment Protocols: (2009 Publications)



Watershed Wildfire Protection Group

Initial Purpose:



- Watershed Assessment Template
- Identify Critical Watersheds for Water Supply
- Prioritize Sixth-Level Watersheds
- Minimize Adverse Effects of Post-Wildfire Hydrologic Changes, including flooding, erosion, and sediment deposition

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group Re-start



- August 2012: Conference call with key former members of 2009 group discussed need to re-start Watershed Wildfire Protection Group due to fire season.
- October 2012: Re-start meeting at US Forest Service Regional Office in Golden.
- Quarterly meeting format concentrating on funding, legislative/policy updates; information & technology transfer between agencies, companies/consultants, and water providers.
- Meetings include one outreach meeting per year in a non-Front Range portion of Colorado. Other meetings have been hosted by the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership in Pagosa Springs (2013), the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Water Quality / Quantity Committee in Frisco (2014), and the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable in Alamosa (2015).
- Agendas, minutes, publications, etc. currently housed at:

<http://www.csfs.colostate.edu/pages/forest-management/watershed-management/>

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Mission, Vision Statements & Goals

WWPG Mission:

We promote healthy watersheds by facilitating education and awareness; and facilitating prioritization, implementation, and monitoring for people and wildlife.

- Fish & Aquatics
- For the West
- Mammals
- Next Generation
- Public
- Recreationists
- Rivers & Streams

WWPG Vision:

Our vision is to protect Colorado water supplies and critical infrastructure from catastrophic wildfire and other threats by maintaining healthy, resilient watersheds through collaboration, implementation, leveraging, and education.

WWPG Goals:

- Connect Implementers with Funders
- Provide Education & Outreach
- Maintain a Statewide Focus

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Colorado River Systems:



- 4 Major River Systems: the Arkansas, Colorado, Platte, & Rio Grande
- Provide water to 19 US & 6 Mexican States
- Fully drain into one-third of the landmass of the lower 48 states
- Mountain snows supply 75% of the water To these river systems
- Approximately 40% of the water comes from the highest 20% of the land, most of which lies in national forests
- The potential for forests to positively and negatively influence the transport of water such immense distances is significant

WE HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO!

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