

**ONE-YEAR REPORT ON SB-071
THE FOREST RESTORATION PILOT PROGRAM**

**SUBMITTED BY
COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE**



**PRIMARY AUTHOR
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INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly authorized Senate Bill 08-071 (SB-071) to extend the Forest Restoration Pilot Program to demonstrate community-based approaches to forest restoration. The Forest Restoration Pilot Program was originally introduced in 2007 legislation as House Bill 1130. This report, required by the legislation and prepared by the Colorado State Forest Service, describes the successes achieved through projects authorized under the legislation. To be eligible to receive funding, projects were required to:

- ❖ Be located in an area with an approved Community Wildfire Protection Plan as defined by the federal “Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003,” Pub.L.108-148;
- ❖ Address one or more of the following objectives for the purposes of protecting water supplies:
 - Reduce the threat of large, high-intensity wildfires and the negative effects of excessive competition between trees by restoring ecosystem functions, structures, and species composition, including the reduction of nonnative species populations;
 - Preserve old and large trees to the extent consistent with ecological values and science;
 - Replant trees in deforested areas if such areas exist in the proposed project area; and
 - Improve the use of, or add value to, small-diameter trees;
- ❖ Comply with all applicable federal and state environmental laws
- ❖ Include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders, as well as appropriate federal, state, county, and municipal government representatives in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project;
- ❖ Incorporate current scientific forest restoration information;
- ❖ Include an assessment to:
 - Identify both the existing ecological condition of the proposed project area and the desired future condition; and
 - Report, upon completion, to the Colorado State Forest Service on the positive or negative impact, including cost effectiveness of the project; and
- ❖ Leverage state funding through matching contributions, including in-kind, stumpage, or cash.

PROCESS

Jeff Jahnke, Colorado State Forester and Director of the Colorado State Forest Service, worked with Jim Martin, Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, to appoint a Technical Advisory Panel, as required by the legislation. The Technical Advisory Panel was comprised of individuals representing the Department of Natural Resources, federal land management agencies, independent scientists with experience in forest ecosystem restoration, conservation organizations, local communities, and commodity interests.

Grant funds were directed to the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and transferred to the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) through an Interagency Agreement. Once the funding mechanism was in place, the CSFS issued a request for proposals in October 2008 and started to announce the grant recipients in January 2009. The CSFS funded 28 of the 58 proposals that were received. Projects funded by the grant include:

- Boulder Mountain Fire Mitigation, Boulder County, \$50,000
- Carter Lake Forest Restoration Project, Larimer County, \$45,000
- Collaborative Project for South Ridge Preservation, Routt County, \$22,500
- Cook Mountain Fuelbreak, Boulder County, \$60,000
- Dalla Park Fire Mitigation, La Plata County, \$21,211
- Elk Valley Estates HOA, Teller County, \$27,722

- Garden of the Gods Forest Restoration-Buckskin North, El Paso County, \$52,500
- Garden of the Gods Forest Restoration Program-Tag on Project, El Paso County, \$17,586
- Gordon Jackson Foundation, Teller County, \$36,000
- Grand County Hazard Tree Removal Along Road ROW, Grand County, \$214,083
- Homestead East, Jefferson County, \$109,400
- Horsetooth Mountain Open Space Forest Restoration, Larimer County, \$75,000
- Little Vasquez Creek Forest Health Project, Grand County, \$70,000
- Red Cliff Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project, Eagle County, \$20,000
- Rick Colyer Fuel Break, Teller County, \$25,000
- Santa Fe Trail Ranch/Wooton Ranch Shaded Fuelbreak, Las Animas County, \$200,000
- Snow Mountain Ranch Bark Beetle and Fuels Reduction, Grand County, \$67,342
- South Platte CWPP Fuelbreaks, Jefferson and Douglas counties, \$162,825
- Straight Creek Watershed Protection Project, Summit County, \$48,750
- Streamside Forest Restoration Project, Jefferson County, \$36,000
- Summit County Fuels Reduction Project, Summit County, \$200,000
- Swan River Valley Protection Plan, Summit County, \$41,500
- The Meadows at Stagecoach, Routt County, \$48,600
- Tripp Gulch Fuels Treatment Project, La Plata County, \$49,600
- Upper Arkansas Watershed Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Pine Beetle Mitigation, Lake County, \$47,381
- Upper South Platte Forest Health Program, Teller and Park counties, \$60,000
- West Woodland Park Fuel Break, Teller County, \$12,000
- Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative, Teller County, \$150,000

The operational account of the Severance Tax Trust Fund provided \$1 million for the Forest Restoration Pilot Program, as authorized and appropriated by the Colorado General Assembly. Senate Bill 071 leveraged an additional \$1 million of federal funds, which contributed to additional forest management across the state. Thus, \$1.97 million of funds were available to treat an estimated 5,200 acres.

The language in SB-071 required at least a 40-percent contribution in matching funds. Funds provided by SB-071 expect to generate \$2.07 million in matching funds, significantly more than the required amount. All projects are to be completed by September 30, 2010.

Where possible, work commenced on projects at the onset of 2009; others were not initiated until later in the spring when weather conditions were favorable enough to conduct operations. Also, some of the recipients were notified later in May 2009, so work is still occurring. As of July 1, 2010, approximately 50 percent of the total project work was completed.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND BENEFITS

One of the SB-071 projects successfully completed to date is the Snow Mountain Ranch Bark Beetle and Fuels Reduction Project at YMCA of the Rockies in Winter Park. The grant recipient set a standard for a well-implemented project, matching 74 percent of their total project costs. YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch also treated 150 percent more acres than proposed, which resulted in 73 acres of mountain pine beetle and hazard tree removal. Younger trees comprised of spruce, aspen, and other species remain in the treated area. Such species

diversity supports increased heterogeneity and will help establish a healthy, vigorous future forest. To help support Colorado's forest products industry, merchantable products were harvested and utilized in the state.



Snow Mountain Ranch before treatment.



Snow Mountain Ranch after treatment.

The Town of Winter Park continued its forest restoration efforts with the Little Vasquez Creek Forest Health Project to reduce hazards to the community and the watershed through removal of 71 acres of mountain pine beetle-killed lodgepole pine. The project area is located within the Little Vasquez Creek Watershed. The Little Vasquez Creek is a primary local source of water for the Town of Winter Park, and supplies source water to Denver Water's Moffat Collection System and the Grand County Water & Sanitation District #1. This project was successful due to a 70-percent match, which includes contributions from the Denver Water Department, Town of Winter Park, and Grand County Water & Sanitation District #1.



Little Vasquez Creek before treatment.



Little Vasquez Creek after treatment.

The Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) received two SB-071 awards to help protect communities that depend on water resources from the Upper South Platte. The Upper South Platte Forest Health Project has already been completed. CUSP engaged the community to take an active role in forest management, employing Upper South Platte community members and volunteers in Teller and Park counties to treat more than 1,300 acres. Treatment included reforestation on 48 acres in the Hayman Fire burn area. These coordinated efforts resulted in a 70-percent match of the project cost.



CUSP volunteers safely reduce fuels that contribute to fire danger in the watershed.

Other completed projects include: Carter Lake Forest Restoration Project, Collaborative Project for South Ridge Preservation, Elk Valley Estates HOA, both Garden of the Gods Forest Restoration Projects, Genesee Foundation's Streamside Forest Restoration Project, Red Cliff Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project, Santa Fe Trail Ranch/Wooton Ranch Shaded Fuelbreak, Straight Creek Watershed Protection Project, Swan River Valley Protection Plan, and West Woodland Park Project.

These projects exemplify the broad scope of treatments and benefits derived from the funding provided by SB-071. As with most forest management/forest restoration projects, continued maintenance will be necessary to achieve optimum health and function of these forest ecosystems. Future treatments such as rudimentary understory fuels reduction, expansion of the original project area, and other management activities will ensure continued effectiveness of the projects implemented with SB-071 funds.

FOREST MANAGEMENT & RESTORATION CONTINUES

In 2009, legislation authorized House Bill 1199 to extend forest management efforts and to continue demonstrating community-based approaches to forest restoration across Colorado's watersheds. Similar to SB-071, the 17 projects awarded through HB-1199 are funded by the Severance Tax Trust Fund Operational Account. Project grants in the amount of \$970,000 awarded through HB-1199 are expected to leverage an additional \$1.25 million in matching contributions that will result in forest management on an estimated 1,400 acres.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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