



Colorado State Forest Service

# Five-Year Strategic Plan

2016-2020



**VISION: Healthy and Resilient Forests.**

**MISSION: To achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations.**

## Background on CSFS

In 1955, the Colorado General Assembly established the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) as a division of the Colorado State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, now known as Colorado State University. A decade after the CSFS was established, legislators expanded agency responsibilities and designated the CSFS as the state entity to “provide for the protection of forest resources of the state from fire, insects and disease” and to educate private forest landowners in management techniques.

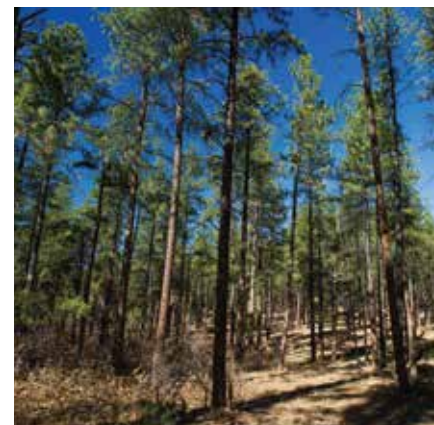
Insect and disease concerns dominated the attention of the CSFS during the 1970s and led to significant increases in personnel and funding. As the CSFS entered the decade of the 1990s, legislative activity at the state and national level resulted in significant program changes, including the Colorado General Assembly passing a tax relief measure for forest landowners actively managing their property, and increased emphasis on federal programs such as Forest Stewardship, Forest Legacy, and Urban and Community Forestry, resulting in an influx of additional funds for state forestry agencies. Also, management related to unprecedented levels of tree mortality from bark beetle epidemics beginning in the late 1990s kept insects and diseases at the forefront of agency concerns.

A dramatic 2000 wildfire season propelled the CSFS into a level of activity previously unknown to the agency. With the development of a National Fire Plan, the CSFS began focusing more attention on the wildland-urban interface. In 2012, the Colorado General Assembly transferred the state's wildfire command and control duties from the CSFS to the state's Department of Public Safety, further focusing CSFS efforts on forest management and forestry outreach objectives.

Although the focus and approach of the CSFS has changed throughout the decades in response to emerging forestry issues, we remain committed to providing timely, relevant forestry information and education to the citizens of Colorado to achieve resilient forests and communities.

For a complete history of the CSFS, go to <http://csfs.colostate.edu/our-service/agency-profile/>.





## How This Document Should Be Used

*This Strategic Plan outlines the Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals of the CSFS for 2016-2020. It is derived from the collective voice of the CSFS and its external partners, and supports the agency moving cohesively toward the same overarching Vision and Strategic Goals. This Plan is designed to be a guiding document that provides clear direction at a high level, which is easy to understand and used regularly internally and externally. This Strategic Plan should be used in conjunction with other internal planning processes that focus on a tactical level to ensure actions taken by the CSFS are aligned with our Vision and have a positive impact on achieving the Strategic Goals that support our Mission.*

*We expect this document to grow and change with the CSFS over time as goals are achieved and/or need to be modified, and as the environment within which we are working also continues to change. We also will review this document annually and revise as necessary.*

## How We Serve the Citizens of Colorado

The Colorado State Forest Service is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, and provides staffing for the Division of Forestry in the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The CSFS serves as the lead state agency for providing forest stewardship and management, fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation assistance to Colorado landowners. The agency also provides forestry education and outreach to the citizens of Colorado. Every year, the CSFS helps treat thousands of acres of forestland, assisting landowners and communities to help improve forest health and ensure related benefits. The CSFS provides a wide range of forestry services through focused programs that deliver measurable, impactful results, using a non-regulatory approach, strategic partnerships and personalized service. The agency also grows and distributes seedling trees and shrubs from its nursery for conservation purposes.



## CSFS OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The CSFS operating environment, visually depicted above, is limited by statutory requirements and constrained by various state and federal funding sources. CSFS annual work plans will be guided by this Strategic Plan, which itself was informed by a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and a Forest Action Plan. As an agile agency, we have the ability to respond effectively to changing conditions in natural and sociopolitical environments. The CSFS constantly strives to gain efficiencies through new management approaches and opportunities, and diverse, stable and new funding sources.

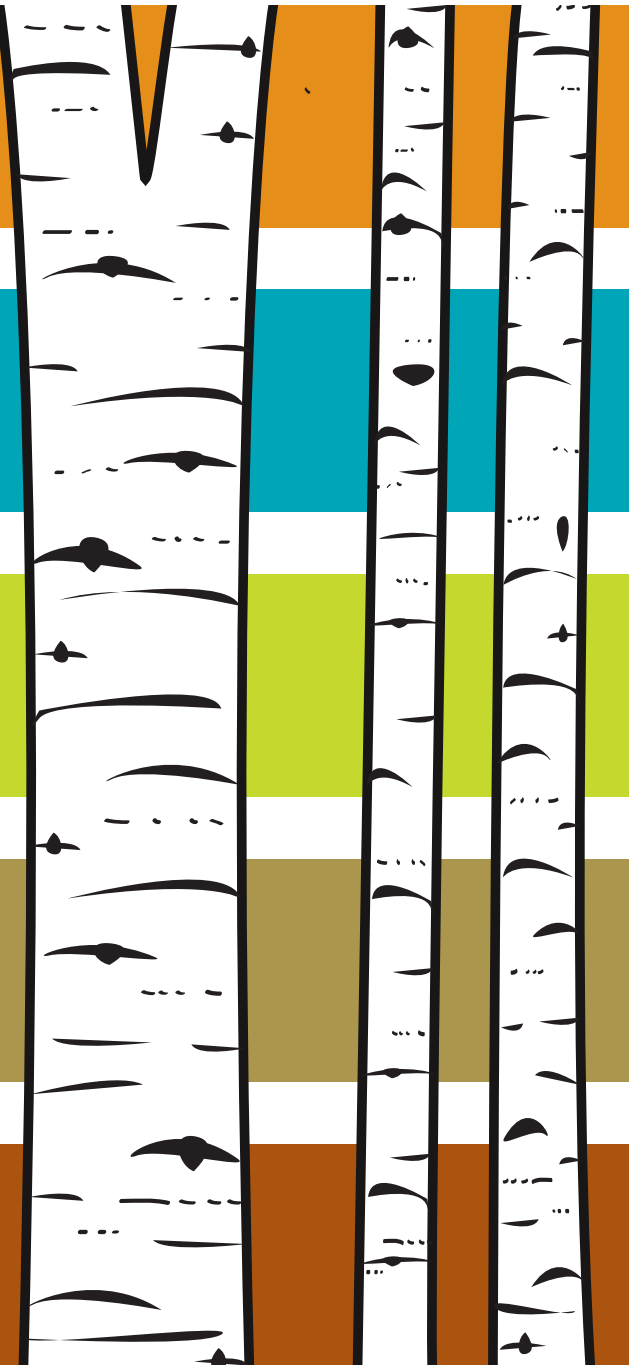
**GOAL 1: Forestry Leadership  
and Expertise**

**GOAL 2: Proactive  
Forest Stewardship**

**GOAL 3: Strategic Partnerships  
and Collaboration**

**GOAL 4: Visibility**

**GOAL 5: Organizational Excellence**



## GOAL 1: Forestry Leadership and Expertise

**DESCRIPTION:** The CSFS serves as the state forestry agency and strives to be the primary source for forestry services, outreach, education, technical assistance and applied research for state and private forest lands in Colorado. The agency's services and outreach efforts are enhanced by its symbiotic ties to the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University.



### STRATEGIES:

- Share our excellence in forestry as Colorado's go-to agency and the conduit for applying research and best management practices on the ground
- Maintain forestry and wildfire expertise through current research and professional development
- Proactively engage and inform research with partners



## GOAL 2: Proactive Forest Stewardship

**DESCRIPTION:** Colorado has 24.4 million acres of native forestland, ranging from high-elevation alpine forests to lower-elevation piñon pine to riparian forests on the plains. Equally important are the hundreds of additional miles of windbreaks, shelterbelts and living snow fences that protect property and people in the state, and the urban and community forests that offer essential benefits and enhanced quality of life. We strive to improve these environments and help protect related watersheds, through increasing public awareness and on-the-ground projects that conserve, improve and enhance the state's diverse forests.

### STRATEGIES:

- Foster resilient, healthy, functioning forests in mountain, riparian, plains and urban landscapes
- Provide opportunities to help Coloradans understand the benefits healthy forests provide
- Promote a strong network within the forest products industry that supports cost-effective land management needs
- Deliver outreach and focused programs with measurable, impactful results



## GOAL 3: Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration

**DESCRIPTION:** Colorado forestlands include a complex pattern of private, federal, state, municipal and other lands. But forests transcend property lines, as do wildfires and forest insects and diseases. Collaboration with partners and diverse landowners to achieve common objectives is a fundamental cornerstone for agency success, with the CSFS leading and supporting a wide array of collaborative groups in Colorado.

### STRATEGIES:

- Collaborate with partners, landowners and stakeholders to achieve common goals to further the agency Mission
- Identify and enhance critical partnerships



## GOAL 4: Visibility

**DESCRIPTION:** The CSFS and the contributions it makes to managing Colorado forests must be clear to communities and stakeholders. We constantly seek to increase recognition and visibility of the agency and the broad array of services we provide to the people and forests of Colorado. By using targeted approaches, we can facilitate a better understanding of each citizen's relationship with Colorado's forests, and the benefits of forest management in the mountains, on the plains and in urban and community settings.

### STRATEGIES:

- Increase visibility and recognition of the CSFS
- Improve branding and target marketing of who we are and the services we provide
- Facilitate understanding of people's relationship with Colorado forests and the benefits of sound forest management
- Provide leadership at all levels as we represent the agency externally



## GOAL 5: Organizational Excellence

**DESCRIPTION:** A well-respected, enduring and responsive organization is necessary to provide the best resources, direction and services to address the needs of Colorado citizens and its forest resources. We promote a motivated, productive and engaged workforce by achieving a positive work environment, with strong leadership throughout the agency that supports employees and values quality and innovation.

### STRATEGIES:

- Create a supportive, cohesive and inclusive work environment where innovative employees work together, think outside the box and are challenged, empowered, recognized and rewarded
- Offer competitive salaries and promote retention, longevity and continued education
- Require engaged, transparent leadership that provides a clear direction and advocates for the agency
- Enhance internal communication
- Seek stable, diverse, sustainable sources of funding



## Acknowledgments

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Colorado State Forest Service contact your local CSFS district office, the CSFS State Office, or visit [www.csfs.colostate.edu](http://www.csfs.colostate.edu).

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