

Department of Natural Resources

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**Wildfire Matters Review Committee
July 2, 2024**

Agenda

Department Overview: DNR and
Wildfire

Organizational Analysis

Shared Stewardship

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action
Program

Wildfire Ready Watersheds

Questions

Department Mission & Role

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is:

To develop, preserve, and enhance Colorado's natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of people today and tomorrow.



Interagency Collaboration

- Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) staffs DNR's Division of Forestry. CSFS is the lead state agency providing **forest stewardship and fuels reduction assistance** to private landowners.
- SB21-258 MOU between DNR, CSFS and the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC); framework of the National Cohesive Wildfire Management Strategy and the Wildfire Mitigation Capacity Development Fund

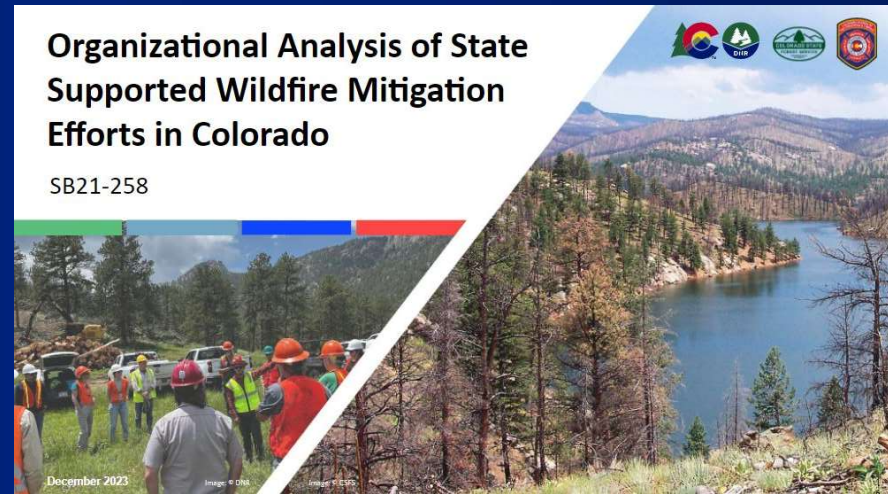


Organizational Analysis Update

SB21-258 Organizational Analysis: CSFS, DFPC, DNR completed an assessment of state supported wildfire mitigation programs in December 2023

Recommendation highlights:

1. Short: Promote a greater understanding of the interconnected relationship between suppression and mitigation efforts among stakeholders
2. Medium: Establish a statewide strategic approach to strengthen alignment with Shared Stewardship and related initiatives
3. Long term: Develop a strategic plan across DNR, CSFS and DFPC to guide wildfire mitigation efforts, and collectively define and track strategic performance measures across statewide efforts.



Shared Stewardship

- The U.S. Forest Service Region 2 and DNR entered into an MOU in 2019
 - Right work, right place, right location
 - Set priorities together
 - Use all available tools for active management
- A 10-year extension was signed in May 2024



Wildfire-related Program Updates

- Colorado Forest Health Council (DNR EDO): 26 members; 4 meetings in 2023/24; presenting legislative recommendations this afternoon.



Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) SB21-258

- Funding strategic on-the-ground work on fuels reduction projects
- Workforce development and training through youth conservation corps and the Department of Corrections SWIFT crews
- Support landscape-scale projects to protect **life, property** and **infrastructure**



COSWAP Update

2024 Updates

- Permanent program with \$6M annual budget: \$5M ongoing severance tax funding; \$1M ongoing General Fund.
- Colorado Forest Restoration Institute is monitoring the Landscape Resilience Investment programs for project effectiveness
- Working with DNR's Assistant Director for Tribal Affairs on workforce development and landscape opportunities with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Southern Ute Indian Tribe to better support their tribal priorities



COSWAP Update

Since 2022, the Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program has supported:

- 90 grants
- 16,000 contracted acres
- \$30.8 milion investment

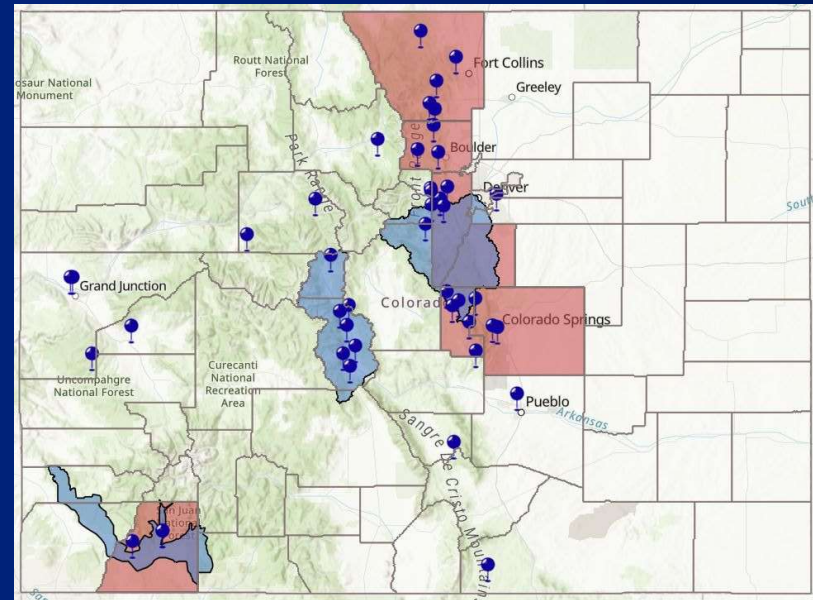


COSWAP Update

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) SB21-258

Workforce Development Grant (Statewide): \$10.3 million

- 72 Projects
 - 38 Conservation corps
 - 15 State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT)
 - 5 Cash transition grants
 - 12 Mitigation training grants (>150 trained)
- 564 weeks of work awarded
- 4,510 acres planned



COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

City of Pueblo Wildfire Mitigation- Phase 2
Grantee: City of Pueblo
El Paso County

Department of Corrections SWIFT

- Second phase of COSWAP work with the City of Pueblo
- Reducing wildfire risk within the city limits along riparian areas, drainages and neighborhoods
- 16 weeks SWIFT crew time
- 48 acres



COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

Button Rock Watershed Protection

Grantee: City of Longmont

Location: Boulder County

CYCA- Larimer County Conservation Corps

- Reducing risk to critical water infrastructure including Ralph Price Reservoir, a virtual storage reservoir for Boulder County
- 18 weeks of crew time
- 35 acres



COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

Protecting Critical Infrastructure in Riparian WUI- Grand Junction

Grantee: City of Grand Junction

Location: Mesa County

Cash grant for mitigation

- Mosaic fuel thinning & removal of ladder fuels along the Colorado River.
- Frequent fires in the area posed great risk to watersheds, businesses and infrastructure
- \$185,000
- 68 acres



COSWAP Update

Landscape Resilience Investment:

TOTAL INVESTMENT TO DATE: \$20.5 million

Three rounds of investment to date:

- 2022- \$8.4 million to 10 3-year projects
- 2023- American Rescue Plan Act Release
 - \$1.96 million to 2 3-year projects
 - Projects located in Wildfire Ready Watershed Planning Footprints
- 2024- \$10.1 million to 11 projects 3-year projects

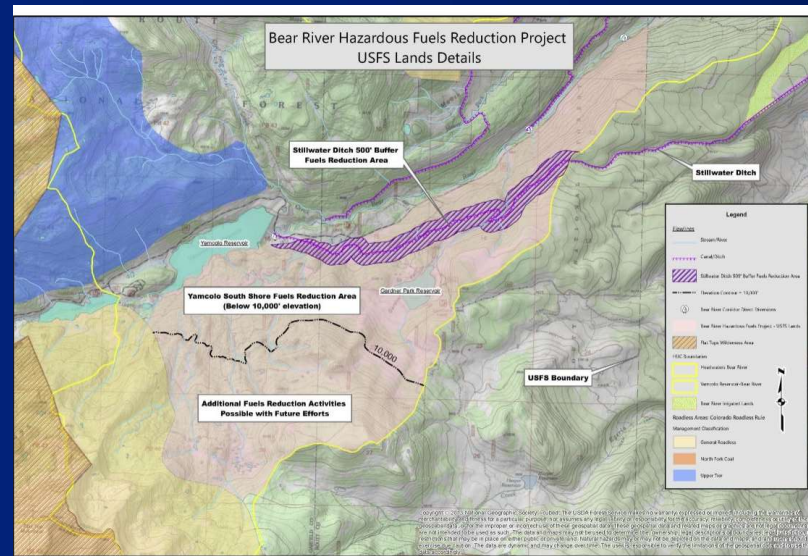


COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

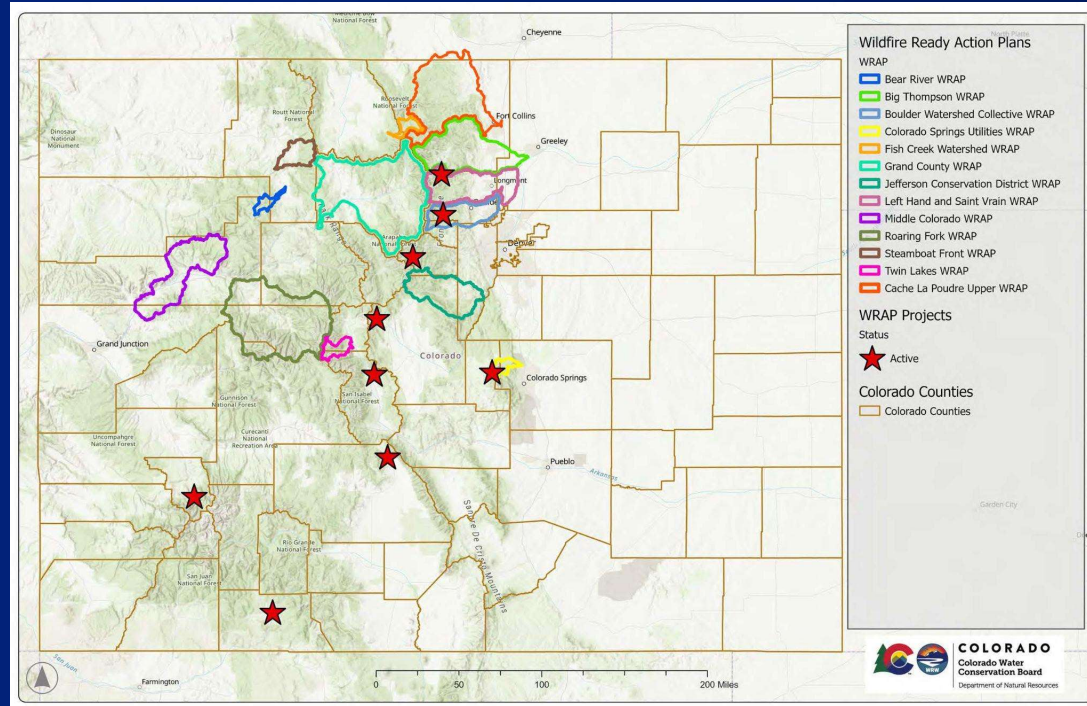
Bear River Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

- Wildfire Ready Watershed Planning is taking place in the Bear River Watershed
- This project will reduce hazardous fuel loading in the Bear River Watershed on federal and private lands
- Furthers the goals and objectives of the Routt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
- 730 acres

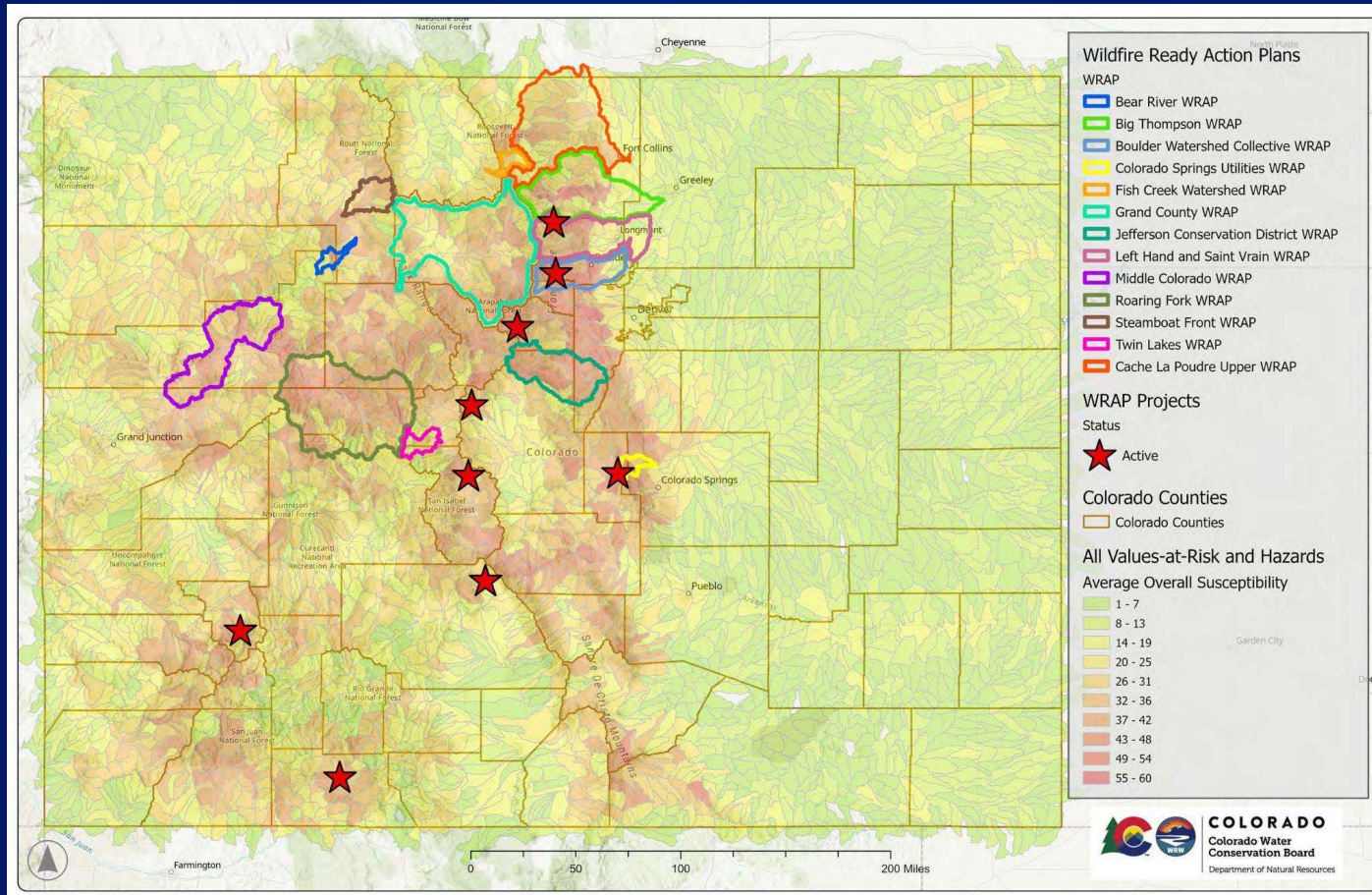


Wildfire Ready Watersheds

- Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) Wildfire Ready Watersheds (WRW) statewide susceptibility analysis is complete
- CWCB's Wildfire Ready Action Plan (WRAP) template for local communities also complete.
 - 13 WRAPs currently in progress
 - 9 Pre-fire mitigation projects in progress
 - 2 studies to support WRAPs in progress



Wildfire Ready Watersheds



Watershed Restoration Update

- SB23-270 - Projects to Restore Natural Stream Systems: Intact stream and wetland systems can reduce wildfire severity and create fire breaks.

