

Department of Natural Resources

**Angela Boag, Assistant Director for Climate and Forest Health
Alison Lerch, Wildfire Mitigation Program Administrator**

**Wildfire Matters Review Committee
July 18, 2023**

Agenda

Department Overview: DNR and
Wildfire

Climate-Smart Natural and Working
Lands

Colorado Forest Health Council

COSWAP Update

Watershed Restoration

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.



Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed



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 Organizational Assessment: CSFS, DFPC, DNR working with consultants. Report complete in Fall 2023.



2018 Buffalo Mountain Fire



2016 Cold Springs Fire

Forests, Wildfire and Climate Change

- Colorado Strategy for Climate-Smart Natural and Working Lands:
Colorado's first statewide plan for reducing emissions and sequestering more carbon in our grasslands, agricultural lands, forests, wetlands and riparian areas, and urban greenspaces.


Colorado's Strategic Plan for Climate-Smart Natural and Working Lands
2 0 2 3

The cover of the report features a large landscape photograph of a forested mountain range. Below this are three smaller photographs: a group of chickens, people working in a field, and a row of corn plants. At the bottom are logos for the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

Forests, Wildfire and Climate Change

- Support reforestation efforts through capacity building and research.
- Foster innovative uses for forest biomass to make forest management more economical and scalable.
- Increase the pace and scale of climate adaptive forest management.
 - Increase funding to grant programs that focus on reducing risk to the wildland urban interface and priority infrastructure (e.g. water supplies).
 - Increase the use of managed and prescribed fire to reduce fuels and increase forest resilience to wildfires.

Colorado's Strategic Plan for Climate-Smart Natural and Working Lands
2023



COLORADO Department of Natural Resources

COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

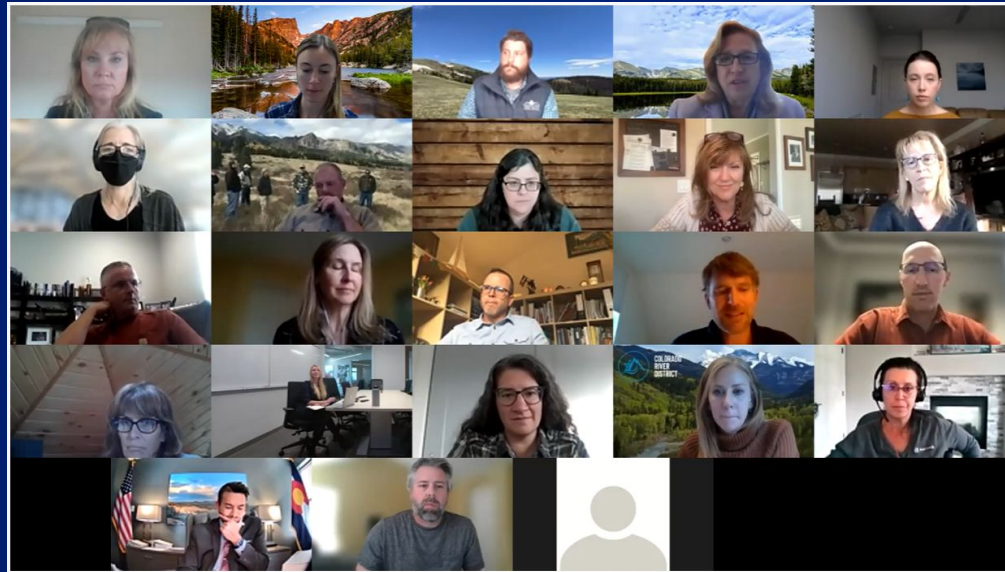
COLORADO Department of Agriculture

COLORADO NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

COLORADO Colorado Water Conservation Board (Department of Natural Resources)

Wildfire-related Program Updates

- Colorado Forest Health Council (DNR EDO): 26 members; 4 meetings in 2022/23; legislative recommendations presented at August meeting.



COSWAP Update

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) SB21-258

- Funding strategic on-the-ground work on fuels reduction projects
- Workforce development and training
- Support landscape-scale projects to protect **life, property** and **infrastructure**
- **\$17.5 million investment from 2021 legislative session**



COSWAP Update

2023 Updates

- ALL NEW FUNDING:
 - 2022 Legislative session: \$4M additional funds secured (HB22-1379 & HB22-1012)
 - 2023 Legislative session: \$5M ongoing severance tax funding; \$1M ongoing General Fund; \$5M one-time severance tax funding
- Colorado Forest Restoration Institute will monitor the Landscape Resilience Investment program for effectiveness

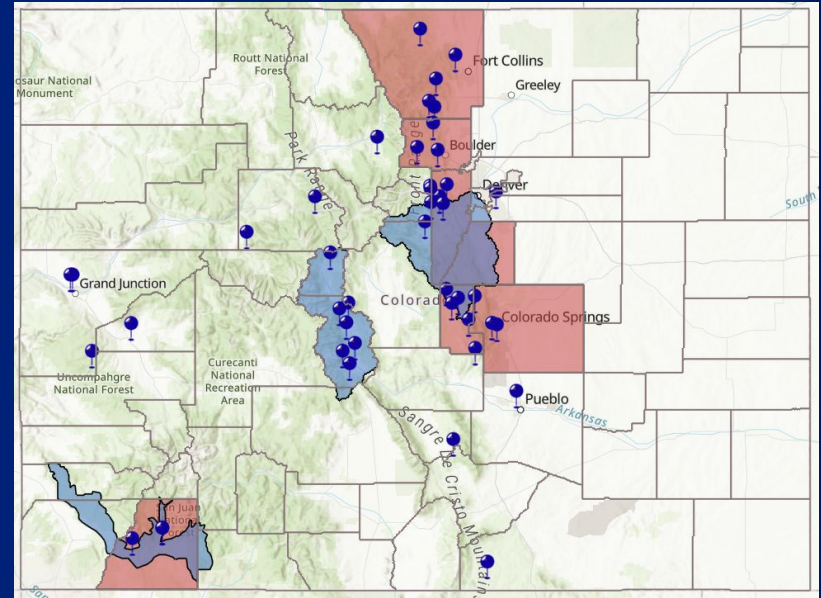


COSWAP Update

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) SB21-258

Workforce Development Grant (Statewide): \$7.9 million

- 44 Projects
 - 23 Conservation corps
 - 13 State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT)
 - 5 Cash transition grants
 - 3 Mitigation training grants (>150 trained)
- 333 weeks of work awarded
- 3,830 acres planned

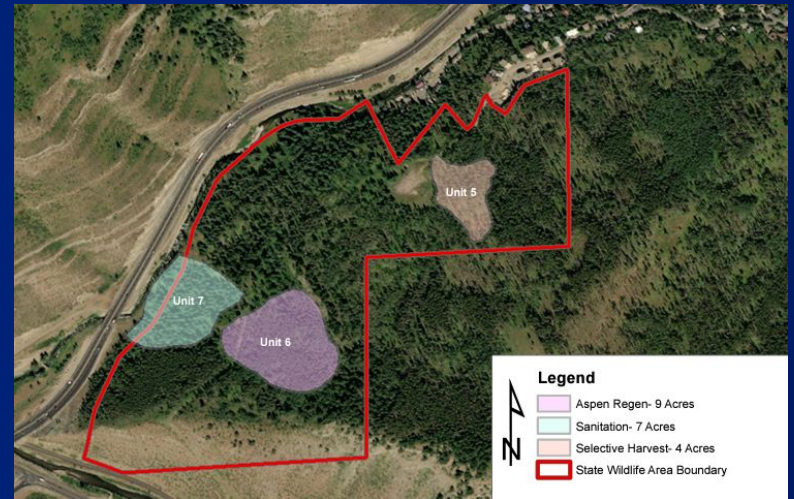


COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

Vail Deer Underpass Eagle County

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Reducing wildfire risk next to I-70 in a State Wildlife Area
- 4 weeks SWIFT crew time
- Protects wildlife habitat, Gore Creek watershed, railroad, power and wastewater infrastructure



COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

Healthy Forest Project in Green Mountain Falls, CYCA- Mile High Youth Corps

- Steep slopes with dense forests, ark beetles and dwarf mistletoe
- 15 weeks Mile High Youth Corps
- Town leveraged COSWAP to secure \$82,200 from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to continue work with MHYC



COSWAP Update

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) SB21-258

*Landscape Resilience Investment:
\$8.4 million*

Cross boundary landscape planning and wildfire mitigation through shared stewardship

- 10 Projects in Strategic Focus Areas
 - Boulder, Larimer, Teller, Jefferson, La Plata, El Paso
 - RMRI Focal Areas: Montezuma, Chaffee, Lake, Jefferson
- 4,304 acres planned
- 54 personnel supported



COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

Boulder County, Phase 1: St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership Project

- Multi component project- shaded fuel break, forest thinning and project planning for risk reduction in St. Vrain Watershed
- 350 + acres of treatments
- Partnerships- Boulder County, City of Longmont, Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation District, Left Hand Watershed Center, and other members of the Saint Vrain Forest Health Partnership
- \$1.2 million in matching funds



COSWAP Update

Project Snapshot

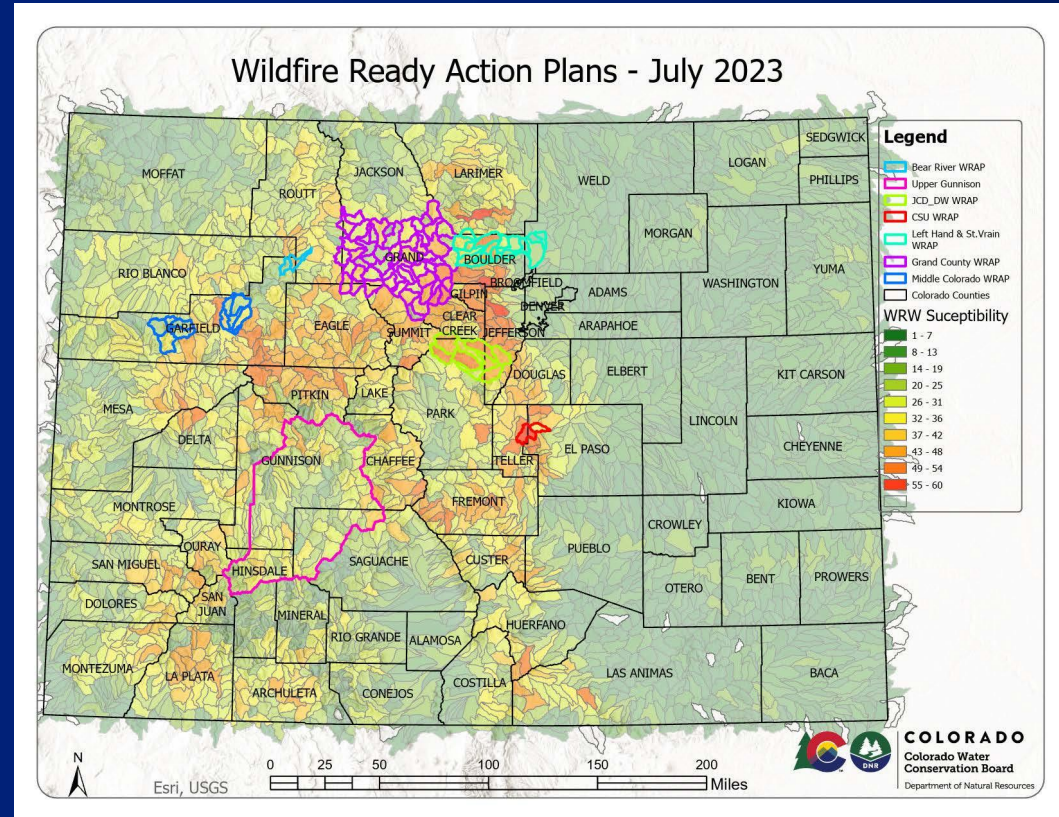
El Paso County, El Paso County Forest Health and Resilience Project (ECFHRP)

- Fuels thinning on rugged, hard to mitigate terrain along Ruxton Creek.
- Priority watershed for Colorado Springs Utilities
- 300+ acres
- Partnerships- Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Springs Utilities, Colorado Springs Fire Department, Manitou Springs, Manitou Springs Fire Department, El Paso County OEM, COG Railway, USDA National Forest Pikes Peak Ranger District



Watershed Restoration Update

- 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.
 - 7 WRAPs currently in progress
 - 5 funded by CWCB
 - 2 under review for funding by CWCB



Watershed Restoration Update

- SB23-270 - Projects to Restore Natural Stream Systems: Intact stream and wetland systems can reduce wildfire severity and create fire breaks.
 - Opportunity in 2024 to facilitate larger restoration projects

