



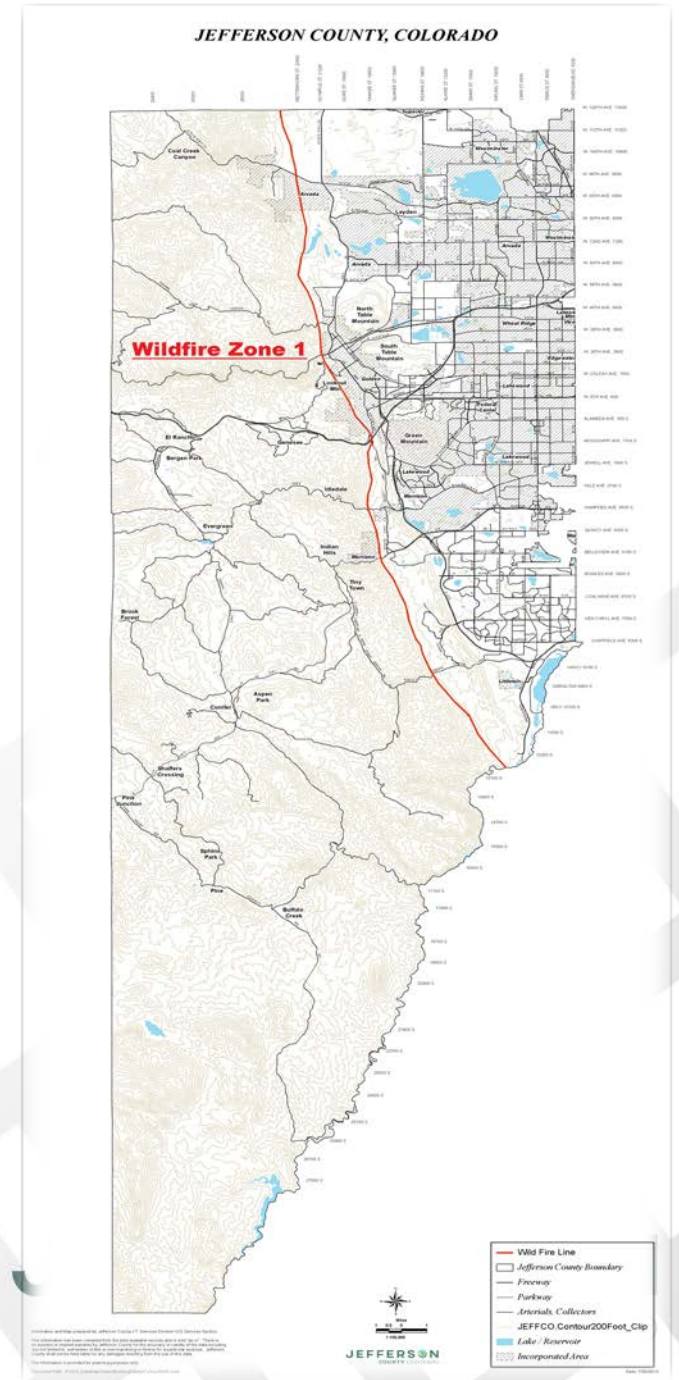
Reducing Wildfire Risk in Jeffco

July 29, 2021

Jefferson County Wildfire Risks

“Wildfire threat is increasing faster than we can mitigate.” – *Elk Creek Fire Chief Jacob Ware*

- **More than two-thirds of Jeffco is in the wildland-urban interface (WUI):**
 - 20,843 single family residential structures
 - 52,315 estimated population
 - 8.97% of total 2019 estimated Jeffco population of 582,881
- **Risk of property loss to wildfire:**
 - Evergreen/Conifer: #1 in Colorado and in the top 10 nationally
 - Paradise, CA, was #1 nationally



Jefferson County Wildfire Risks

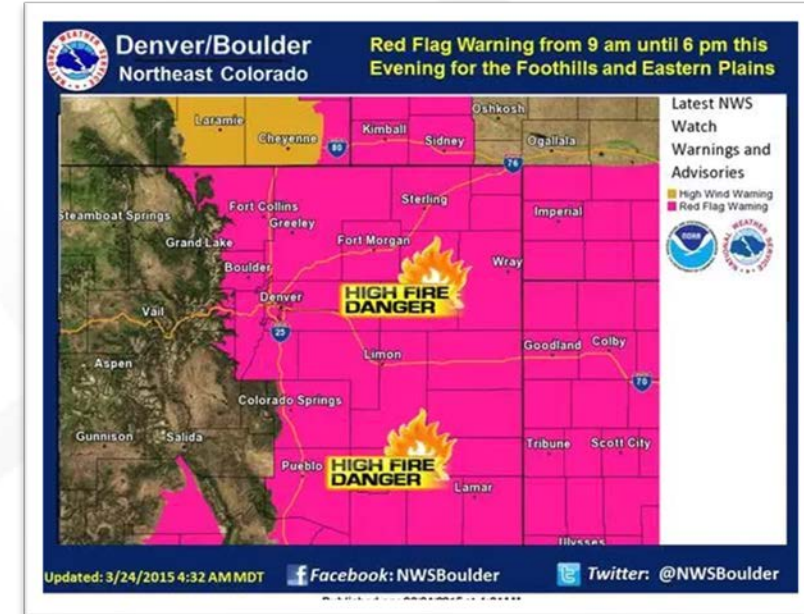
Why here?



Topography: shape of the land; fires burn quickly up hills



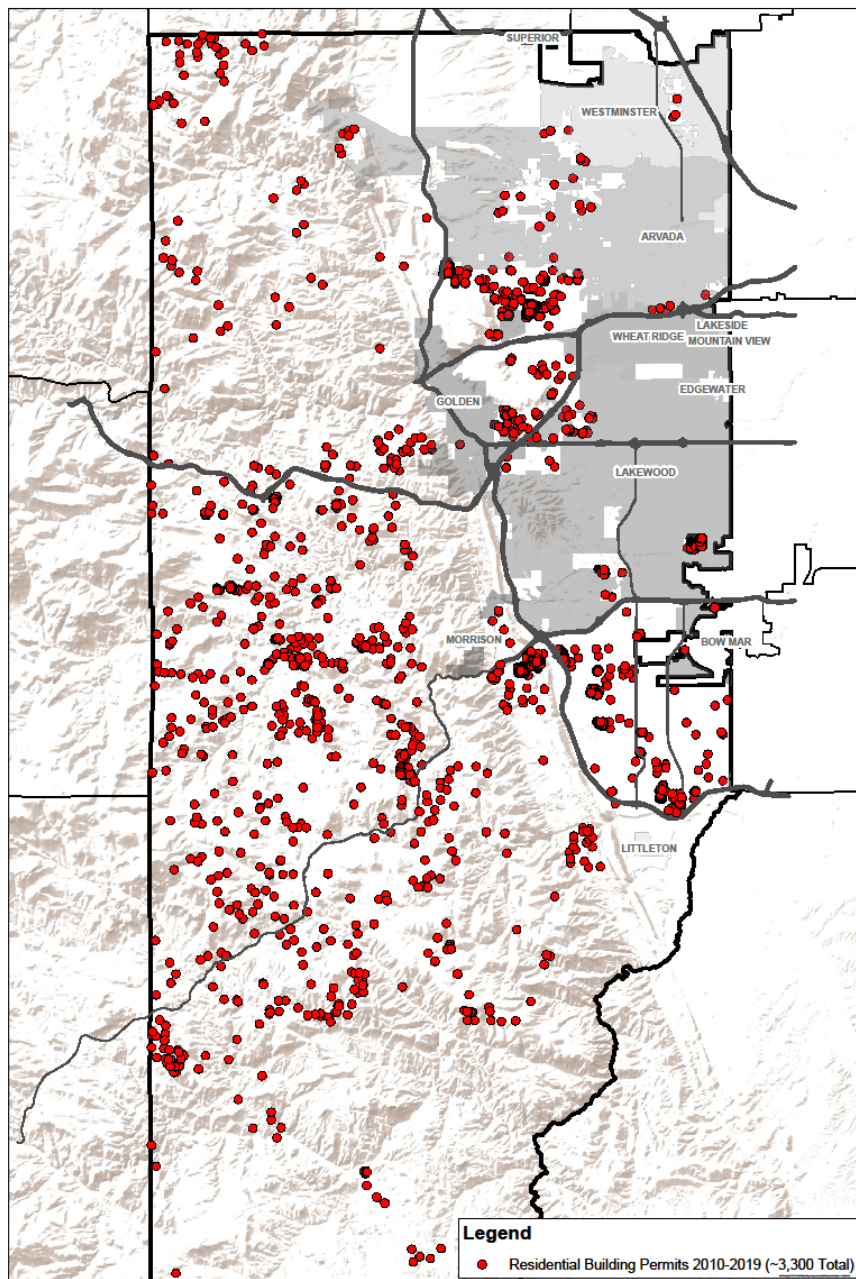
Fuels: significant part of Jeffco is made up of dense Conifer forests; highly flammable



Weather: wind, low humidity and lightning strikes

Jefferson County: Development in WUI

Residential building permits
issued from 2010-2020



Key questions

- How do we **enhance collaboration** between the county and wildfire stakeholders in an environment of finite resources?
- What will **ramping up the pace and scale of wildfire mitigation** efforts cost, and how will we collectively prioritize and pay for those efforts?





Key questions (cont.)

- What is the **role of county government** in this effort? What is Jefferson County doing to reduce wildfire risk and where are the gaps? What can we learn from other counties?
- In what ways can the county work even more effectively with our partners to raise greater **awareness about wildfire risk** and mitigation?

Membership

- Board of County Commissioners' Office
- Jeffco Sheriff
- Jeffco Emergency Management
- County Manager's Office
- Development and Transportation
- Planning and Zoning
- Jeffco Open Space
- Jeffco Public Affairs
- U.S. Forest Services
- Colorado State Forest Service
- Jefferson Conservation District
- Multiple fire rescue districts
- City of Golden
- Community leader appointments
- Denver Water
- Denver Mountain Parks



Priority areas



Community education
Susan Eagle, co-chair

Mitigation
Garrett Stephens, co-chair

Revenue sources
Chief Jacob Ware, co-chair

Task Force: Mitigation Recommendations

- 1) Create a county-wide **clearinghouse** for **past, present and future mitigation efforts** drawing on Geographic Information Systems data – or mapping – to build collective knowledge, prioritize mitigation efforts and enhance collaboration.



Example: Flying J Ranch Park–Before & After 150 acres

Task Force: Mitigation Recommendations

2) Advocate at the county, state and federal level for **increased pace, scale and funding of mitigation** on public and private land in Jefferson County.

3) Address in 2021 the **bottleneck surrounding biomass utilization and forest industry shortages**. This may be done under a current or additional sub-group.



Task Force: Mitigation Recommendations

- 4) **Strengthen county regulations and enforcement on defensible space** that build upon efforts over the last two years by Jefferson County Planning and Zoning.



Task Force: Mitigation Recommendations

5) Encourage the county to more proactively promote and collaborate with fire protection districts implementing defensible space home assessment certification programs to grow these programs county-wide.



NOTE: Evergreen and Elk Creek Fire Districts are implementing home programs, similar to that of Boulder and Summit Counties.

Task Force: Community Education



1) Create, brand, maintain and promote a **one-stop web page on reducing wildfire risk** in Jefferson County that focuses largely on **wildfire mitigation** and **emergency preparedness**.

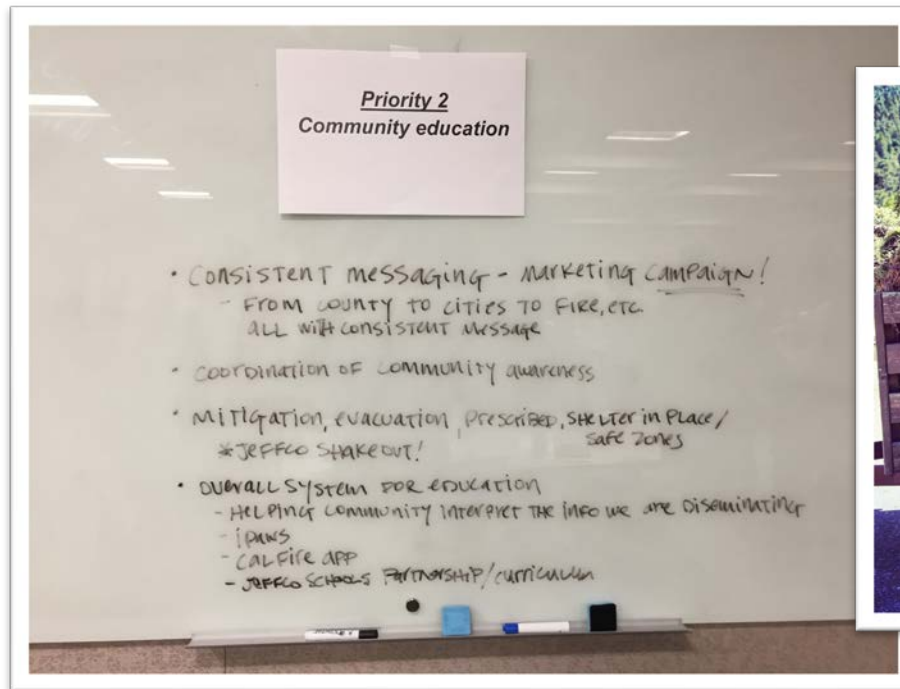
Forest Health and Fire Mitigation

- [Forest Management and Fire Mitigation for Landowners](#)
- [Fire Information](#)
- [Wood Use and Products](#)
- [Tree Care and Planting](#)

View All

Task Force: Community Education

- 2) Create a **communication calendar** for the dissemination of proactive mitigation content targeted at specific audiences for distribution throughout the year.



Task Force: Revenue Streams

- 1) **Define what the wildland-urban interface** is in Jefferson County and a provide a physical description of where it is based on current science and fire behavior to create clear boundaries for mitigation and forest restoration efforts.
- 2) **Update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) at the county level** to address and prioritize risk areas and guide development and growth in those areas of the county.



Credit: Denver Post || Elephant Butte Fire

Task Force: Revenue Streams

- 3) **Hire a full-time grant writer** to research and write grants as well as have grant projects developed ahead of time using county expertise (e.g., Planning & Zoning, fire districts, etc.).
- 4) **Research tax options** for sustainable funding for mitigation (e.g., Summit and Chafee Counties) and whether a tax increase or new tax would be countywide or only in the WUI to support wildfire risk reduction.



Credit: KDVR-TV, Denver

Transitioning to Jeffco Wildfire Commission

Future Work of Commission

- List top 5 in order of priority
 - #1: Mitigation
 - #2 Funding
 - #3 P&Z codes
 - #4 Community Education
 - #5 Information Sharing



Questions?

- Tracy Kraft-Tharp, Commissioner, Dist. 1
- Andy Kerr, Commissioner, Dist. 2
- Lesley Dahlkemper, Board Chair & Commissioner, Dist. 3

Email us: commish@jeffco.us

Board meetings most Tuesdays at 8 a.m. Visit: jeffco.us/meetings