

Ute Pass Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

Welcome to our first edition of the newsletter, providing information about the CWPP and gathering information from our communities to further define our goals.

You will find articles to assist homeowners in protecting and preserving the landscape we love so much with thinning and planting trees. We have included a survey for input into our ideas for CWPP goal-setting process. Read how neighbors helped neighbors by coming together to obtain a grant for six adjoining properties/homes to further fire mitigation. A calendar is provided to describe the events taking place for our communities, and we can do more. Enclosed is the Tax Revenue Document that explains how you can deduct expenses incurred off the top of your income when you file your taxes.

“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

-Aldo Leopold

As shown in our goals for this year, we are in the fourth year of implementing our CWPP. We offer our fourth annual Education Forum in conjunction with a pancake breakfast so that speakers and experts are better able to converse with community members. If you have questions you would like addressed on an individual basis, please contact a committee member or the Colorado State Forest Service.

This year we are partnering with the Chipita Park Association (CPA) in getting this newsletter to everyone in zip code areas 80809 and 80819 to further invite your participation in both the CWPP and CPA. You will find enclosed the newsletter from CPA along with an application to participate in the events at Marcroft Hall. The CPA provided the impetus for the CWPP as it stands today. More participation assures greater work being accomplished and communities that care and act as good neighbors.

A special thank you goes to our two Fire Districts for their going above and beyond their volunteer work to keep us active and safe! Thank you for your continued support and participation in protecting our communities.

Current CWPP Committee:

Kathrine Backe & Jinnie Will—Co-Chairs
Green Mountain Falls/Chipita Park Fire District
Cascade/Chipita Park Fire District
Dave Root—CO State Forest Service
Chris Frandena—Green Mountain Falls
Randall Backe—Chipita Park
Bert Stewart—Chipita Park
Robert Ayotte—US Forest Service
Rex Ageton—Chipita Park
Richard Toth—Chipita Park
John Chapman—Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance

Always looking for new membership!

Replanting After Fire Mitigation

By Dave Root, Colorado State Forest Service

That brilliant and accomplished thinker, W. C. Fields, once observed that, “For every action there is an equal and opposite government program”. He was surely trying to describe a peculiar type of schizophrenia that affects foresters. Half the time we are running around telling you to cut trees, and the other half we are trying to sell you seedlings to re-plant.

The fact is that there are many good reasons to plant new trees after you have invested lots of sweat in cutting the old ones. It is also true that poorly planned replanting can undo everything you’ve accomplished by thinning in the first place. It is just this sort of contradictory advice that leads landowners to sic the dog on foresters whenever they come messing around. Remembering some common sense rules can help you avoid the pitfalls when replanting.

Trees are commonly replanted in areas where there is dwarf mistletoe in the existing stand. There isn’t sufficient space here to write everything a person needs to know about controlling mistletoe, so you should start by consulting a qualified forester. Thinning the trees does not eliminate the mistletoe, but merely reduces the amount of mistletoe so that the trees live longer. Mistletoe trees may live for many years. The theory of replanting in dwarf mistletoe infected stands is that you replant with trees that are immune to the mistletoe, and the seedlings will have time to grow to a respectable size before the mistletoe kills the old trees.

The new seedlings will need room to grow, so thinning is the necessary first step. The most common error is that landowners plant so many seedlings they soon have the same hazardous fire conditions they were trying to eliminate in the first place. Even though the seedlings are tiny when you plant them, think about the room they will need in fifty years.

Another good reason for replanting in thinned stands is to increase forest diversity. A variety of species and ages ensures that all your trees aren’t susceptible to the same insects and diseases. In diverse stands, one bug or disease won’t be able to wipe out all your trees. Again, be sure that the new trees have plenty of room to grow. After you have gone to all the effort to remove dangerous ladder fuels and create proper spacing don’t put in more work just to recreate the problem you set out to solve!

Another common mistake is selecting the wrong species for the site. Different species have specific tolerances for sunlight and moisture. Sunlight is particularly important. Trees like aspen and most pines like lots of sun when they are young, so planting them in shaded areas is a waste of effort. Trees like Douglas-fir, true firs, and spruce like shade when young, and they will bake if planted in direct sunlight.

If you have done thinning to mitigate wildfire hazard and must replant, consider replanting with aspen. Deciduous trees like aspen are not prone to dangerous crown fires, so they are excellent trees for fuel break areas. Because they are intolerant of shade, we are losing many of our older aspen stands as they are shaded out by conifers. Replacing conifers with aspen helps return our forests to a more natural condition. In fact, if you have remnant aspen trees within conifer stands, thinning the conifers and letting sunlight reach the forest floor will encourage the aspen to resprout without replanting. Wildlife—especially deer and elk—love aspen. Sometimes the hardest thing about growing aspen is to keep the animals from mowing them down. The trick is to get your neighbors involved in thinning so that there are so many aspen sprouts that the animals move around and leave enough trees to grow. That is a win-win situation for everyone.

Obviously replanting after thinning is a complicated. Success depends on your particular objectives, your current forest, and the site itself. Consulting with a forester is the best starting place, but you have to promise not to sic the dog on us.

Mountain Pine Beetle

The mountain pine beetle (MPB) has attacked over 800,000 acres of forest in Northern Colorado. While not yet at the epidemic level in our area, the MPB has changed the health of our local forests. To make a difference on this issue, it will take a collaborative approach by all landowners.

What you need to know about the MPB: The flight season is mid-July (or earlier in warmer years) through mid-September. It is during this time period that the beetles are emerging and seeking new live green trees to attack. They will attack heavily wooded areas and lone pine trees. During the emergence time, beetle pairs (male and female) will attempt to bore into the bark through one hole, form an egg gallery, and lay approximately 75 eggs. If you see bored holes, please call someone to assess your tree(s) immediately to prevent spreading. Trees die very quickly when attacked by MPB.

Cell Phone/Reverse 911 early warning notification is designed to call your cell phone and provides you with a recording when you Press “1”. Please do not hang up until you have heard the entire message or you will repeatedly get a return call. **Do not dial 911** unless directed to do so.

For more information or to register your cell phone for 911 Early Warning Notification:

www.elpasoteller911.org

Property Owner Survey

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan Committee appreciates constructive ideas to further meet our community goals toward fire mitigation. Please complete this survey/input form and drop it in the survey box, June 5th, at the Education Forum/Pancake Breakfast at Marcroft Hall, or mail to Kathrine Backe, Ute Pass CWPP, 8885 Chipita Park Rd., Chipita Park, CO 80809.

Yes, I am aware of the Ute Pass CWPP implemented in 2007, so we are in year four.

No, I am not aware of the CWPP.

Review the current goals. Add your comments below these goals to determine if we are meeting the goals in your community – Add new ideas for fire mitigation.

	Fuel Reduction	Reduce Structural Ignitability	Improve Emergency Preparedness
Sept., 2010 First Monday	End of year review.	CWPP Committee, Fire Districts, USFS, CO State Forest Service, County Forest Service	Review, revise plan.
Year Four	1) CWPP, Fire Districts, Forest Services plan fuel breaks where necessary. Clean previous fuel break acres. 2) Write grants for community projects. 3) Plan for mulch site.	1) Plan information fair & training around creating defensible space – 2% over previous year in the spring (2) April, May or June. Have a checklist and reporting mechanism for homeowners. 2) Write grants.	1) Fire Districts assess needs with CWPP Committee. Review project needs. February 2) Develop grants as available.

Comments: _____

I would be interested in partnering with neighbors to apply for a grant in our neighborhood. Name/Phone and Address _____

List things that you have done to protect your property/home from fire. Approximately how many acres do you have yet to mitigate?

- 1.
- 2.

Yes, I would like to know how to become more involved as part of the CWPP committee.

Name, address and phone number: _____

Neighbors Working Together for Fire Mitigation

Last year, at the suggestion of Jinnie Will, Rex Ageton and several neighbors in Chipita Park applied for and received a homeowner’s grant for fire mitigation. The adjoining properties, like many properties in the Ute Pass area, were heavily wooded. The properties in this instance were bounded by Timpa Road, Mountain Road, Picabo Road, and Timpa Place.

Jinnie Will and Rex Ageton made the initial contacts of the neighbors and Ms. Will assisted them in filling out individual applications. The applications were submitted as a group to David Root, the state forester responsible for administering grants in our area. Mr. Root conducted a preliminary inspection of the properties included and approved the grants. Permission also was obtained from El Paso County to trim and undeveloped road (Ogo) running the length of the area from Picabo Road to Mountain Road.

Mr. Ageton and his neighbors contracted with a commercial tree company and were able to get a reduced rate for a crew with a chipper. Each property owner also had the opportunity to conduct in-kind mitigation work and charge it to the grant at \$17.00 per hour toward matching funds.

Six property owners, Rex Ageton/Cheryl DeWitt, Allen Cox, Mike Bowley & Barbara Haas, John & Theresa Myers, Rob & Dana Smith and John & Christie Cuddihy committed to and completed the fire mitigation work as specified in the grant. This illustrates how neighbors in our community can work together to obtain grant funding for fire mitigation work, which included thinning of trees and removal of ladder fuels. Not only did these neighbors reduce the danger of wildfire on their individual properties, but they also improved the effectiveness of fire mitigation in their community as a whole.

Wildfire Mitigation Measures Subtraction-Department of Revenue

GENERAL INFORMATION

As authorized by §39-22-104(4)(n), C.R.S., for income tax years 2009 through 2013 individuals, estates and trusts may subtract from federal taxable income 50% of the costs incurred in performing wildfire mitigation measures that meet the following qualifications and limitations:

- The taxpayer must own the property upon which the wildfire mitigation measures are performed.
- The property upon which the wildfire mitigation measures are performed must be located in Colorado.
- The property upon which the wildfire mitigation measures are performed must be located in a wildland-urban interface area.
- The wildfire mitigation measures must be authorized by a community wildfire protection plan adopted by a local government within the interface area.
- The total amount of the subtraction may not exceed \$2,500.

MARRIED TAXPAYERS

In the case of two individuals filing a joint return, the amount subtracted from federal taxable income shall not exceed \$2,500 in any taxable year. In the case of two married individuals who file separate returns, only one of the individuals may take a subtraction for wildfire mitigation expenses.

Costs

Costs means any actual out-of-pocket expense incurred and paid by the landowner and documented by receipt for performing wildfire mitigation measures. The following expenses are specifically excluded within statute and do not qualify for this subtraction:

- Inspection or certification fees;
- In-kind contributions;
- Donations;
- Incentives;
- Cost sharing;
- Expenses paid by the landowner from any grants awarded to the landowner for performing wildfire mitigation measures.

Additional information regarding wildfire mitigation measures can be found online at <http://www.csfs.colostate.edu/>

TENANTS IN COMMON

In the case of real property owned by tenants in common, the subtraction may only be taken by one of the individuals in the ownership group.

DEFINITIONS

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Community wildfire protection plan means a plan that meets the following requirements:

- It must be approved by a local government entity, local fire department and the Colorado State Forest Service in accordance with guidance established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.
- It must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatments.
- It must recommend measures to reduce structural ignitability.

Additional information regarding community wildfire protection plans can be found online at <http://www.csfs.colostate.edu/>

Landowner

Landowner means any owner of record of private land located within the state, including any easement, right-of-way or estate in the land and includes the heirs, successors and assignees of such land and shall not include any partnership, S-corporation or other similar entity that owns private land as an entity.

Wildfire Mitigation Measures

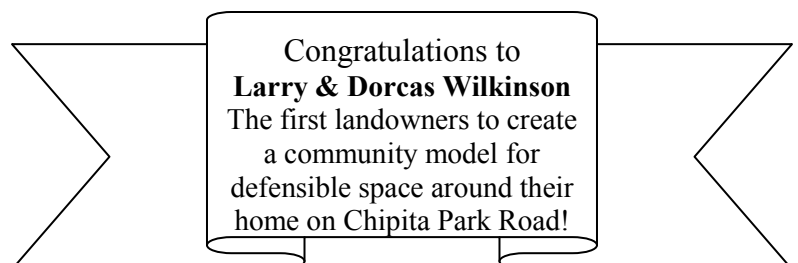
Wildfire mitigation measures mean the following activities to the extent that they meet or exceed any Colorado State Forest Service standards or any other applicable state rules:

- Creating and maintaining a defensible space around structures;
- Establishing fuel breaks;
- Thinning of woody vegetation for the primary purpose of reducing risk to structures from wildland fire;
- Secondary treatment of woody fuels by lopping and scattering, piling, chipping, removing from the site or prescribed burning.

FURTHER INFORMATION

FYIs and commonly used forms are available on the Web at www.taxcolorado.com

For additional income tax information visit the "Tax Information Index" which covers a variety of topics including links to forms, publications, regulations, statutes and general questions and answers. The "Tax Information Index" is located at www.taxcolorado.com



Calendar of Events—2010

June 5, Saturday—Education Forum and Pancake Breakfast at Marcroft Hall

7:30—11:00 a.m. Guest speakers at this event include: **8:00-**Dave Root, Colorado State Forest Service; **8:30-**Fireman's Perspective, GMF & Cascade Fire Districts; **9:00-** Robert Ayotte, USFS discussing the Catamount Fuels Reduction Project; **10:00 a.m.-**Andre Brackin, El Paso County to discuss local issues.

June 11,12,13—Slash/Mulch Site: Location behind Ute Pass Elementary School bus barn

Friday: 10-2

Saturday: 10-4

Sunday: 10-2

Will accept material that is a maximum of 6' length and up to 8" in diameter. Will NOT accept stumps (root balls), dirt, lumber, trash, yard rakings or rocks! Loads will be checked. For more information call GMF at 684-9414 or Jinnie Will at 684-2336.

Mid-September TBD—Slash/Mulch Site: Location behind Ute Pass Elementary School bus barn

Friday: 10-2

Saturday: 10-4

Sunday: 10-2

Same information as June site applies. We will put up signs if chemical collection is available.

Donations at all events makes it possible to continue our work! Thank You.

There is always a pile of mulch following the chipping at these two events. Talk to Jinnie Will if you want to leave the site with a load of mulch. Mulch is a material that provides protection and improves the soil when applied to the soil surface. There are two types: organic and inorganic. This mulch is organic and long lasting. Best if used as a mulch around plants needing protection in the winter. Rustic, but usually attractive, and will not compact readily.