



Colorado State Forest Service

Golden District 2010 Annual Report

The CSFS has a new mission statement!

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) mission is to achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations.

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Message from the Golden District Forester

Where have the past few years gone? Despite all the forestry projects, prescribed fire accomplishments and wildfire responses, it is important to stop and take stock of what we have been doing. Our last report was for 2007, so you will note a lot of changes in our personnel since then. We also have changes in the programs that we deliver and support – with a greater emphasis on treating landscape-scale areas.

However, the constant over the past 15 years is our office's commitment to serving our customers, cooperators and agency partners. We work with local fire departments, county personnel, local communities, forest landowners, Colorado Division of Wildlife and State Parks managers, private landowners and others to improve forest health and reduce wildfire hazard in some of the highest risk areas of Colorado's wildland-urban interface.

We will continue to look for opportunities to improve our program delivery, and we welcome your feedback, suggestions and comments!

~Allen Gallamore, Golden District Forester

Prescribed Fire Update

The CSFS Golden District conducts prescribed fire with state and county agencies every year in the spring and fall. In 2010, a total of 271 acres were treated during broadcast burns at Golden Gate Canyon State Park and Mount Evans State Wildlife Area. Historically, 200-300 acres have been treated annually in these areas and on other properties such as White Ranch Open Space Park, Mount Falcon Open Space Park, Elk Meadow Open Space Park and Staunton State Park.



Prescribed fire at Mount Evans State Wildlife Area, December 2010.

Proudly Serving Clear Creek, Jefferson & Northern Park Counties

Additionally, Golden District personnel helped the West Texas Nature Conservancy prescribed fire program complete 1,525 acres of burning.

Prescribed burning is conducted only when appropriate fuels, weather and smoke management conditions are met within the detailed plans for each area. Personnel and equipment are utilized from the CSFS, other state and county agencies such as the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Jefferson County Open Space, county sheriff's offices, and fire departments throughout the Denver Metro area and the Front Range of Colorado.

Prescribed fire reduces fuel loading, which may help slow down a wildfire should one occur near these populated areas. Prescribed fire also improves forest health, enhances wildlife habitat and provides great training opportunities for local emergency services personnel to experience fire in a controlled environment. Firefighters observe fire behavior, learn how incidents are run under the Incident Command System and refine their firefighting techniques.

We would especially like to thank our cooperators who assisted the CSFS Golden District on prescribed fires in 2010 on Golden Gate Canyon State Park and on Mount Evans State Wildlife Area. Without their help, we could not have accomplished as much as we did.



Golden District Engine Boss Kevin Michalak and District Forester Allen Gallamore conduct a pre-fire briefing at Mount Evans State Wildlife Area.

State Parks Management

The Golden District is responsible for forest management work on two state parks: Golden Gate Canyon State Park and Staunton State Park. The Golden District utilized funds from a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant, the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership (FRFTP) and State Parks to complete a combined total of 435 acres of fuels reduction on both parks in 2010. A combination of treatment methods were used, including mechanical means, hand-felling and prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuels. In total, seven projects were completed by the Golden District on the parks in 2010 resulting in:

- 202 acres of fuels reduction treatment at Golden Gate Canyon State Park;
- 110 acres of prescribed fire at Golden Gate Canyon State Park; and
- 123 acres of fuels reduction treatment at Staunton State Park.



Mechanical treatment at Golden Gate Canyon State Park.

Community Forestry

Communities within the Golden District that have national Tree City USA certification are the City of Golden and the Pleasant View Metropolitan District. The Tree City USA program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides direction, technical assistance, public attention and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities that more than 135 million Americans call home. For more information on Tree City USA, call 402-474-5655.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) passed by Congress on Nov. 21, 2003, and signed into law on Dec. 3, 2003.

CWPPs, as described in HFRA, bring together diverse local interests to discuss their mutual concerns for public safety, community sustainability and natural resources as related to wildfires. They offer a positive, solution-oriented environment in which to address challenges such as local firefighting capability, the need for defensible space around homes and subdivisions, and where and how to prioritize land management – on both federal and non-federal land.

The following CWPPs are currently developed for communities on the Golden District: Clear Creek County (entire), Fall River Watershed, Evergreen Fire Protection District (FPD), Coal Creek FPD, Elk Creek FPD, Fairmount FPD, Foothills FPD, Golden Fire Department/City of Golden, Indian Hills FPD, Inter-Canyon FPD, West Metro FPD and Harris Park. CWPPs currently are being developed for North Fork FPD, Elk Creek FPD (revision), Golden Gate FPD (revision) and Jefferson County (entire).

Forest Ag Program

The Forest Agriculture Tax Classification Program, or Forest Ag Program as it's commonly referred to, is a property tax designation given to lands used for the primary purpose of producing tangible wood products. The program is mandated by state law, managed by CSFS and implemented by the assessor's office in each county. To be eligible for Forest Ag Program designation, a landowner must:

- Own at least 40 contiguous, forested acres
- Use the land to produce tangible wood products
- Have legal access to the property
- Obtain and work under a forest management plan

Landowners who participated in the Forest Ag Program on the Golden District in 2010 were dedicated to managing their forests. Following is a brief summary of program accomplishments:

- 164 properties participated in 2010
- 6 new landowners and 15 new forest management plans added
- 1,451 acres added under new management plans
- 17 new tree farmers certified in 2010
- 3,957 acres treated for fuels mitigation, timber stand improvement and insect and disease mitigation
- 2,328 cords of firewood, 771 Christmas trees, 144 cubic feet of chips and mulch, 3,308 post & poles and 93 saw logs yielded
- 924 seedlings planted

The Forest Ag Program has several benefits. Obviously, landowners benefit through lower property taxes and a properly managed forest that generally is healthier and more resilient, productive and attractive than an unmanaged forest. Another benefit is that reduced property taxes help landowners avoid the need to subdivide due to financial pressures. Additionally, the 40-acre-plus tracts of land in the Forest Ag program remain intact, which is ecologically important because development and fragmentation makes forest management difficult and expensive to achieve. Finally, producing and selling wood products from Forest Ag properties adds to the economic base of local communities.

Forest Health News

Forest insects and diseases continue to affect Colorado's forests. Many of these insects and diseases are natural elements of our forested ecosystems. They serve as cleansing agents because they help remove older, unhealthier trees and usher in younger, more vigorous trees. Change is necessary to maintain diversity within our forests and across the landscape.

The mountain pine beetle (MPB) infestation increased by 285,000 acres in 2010, bringing the total number of acres impacted in Colorado to nearly 3.2 million since

37,000 acres in Colorado, primarily on the Western Slope and the Front Range south of Denver. Western balsam bark beetle activity also increased in Colorado, from 184,000 affected acres in 2009 to 265,000 acres in 2010. The forest area defoliated by western spruce budworm dropped from 382,000 acres in 2009 to 213,000 acres in 2010.

To learn more about bark beetles and other forest health concerns, stop by our office and request a copy of the "2010 Report on the Health of Colorado's Forests." This report is also available online at www.coloradoforests.co.

Land Use Planning and Wildfire Mitigation on Private Properties

Foresters from the Golden District continue to help planners and developers in Jefferson, Clear Creek and Park counties address wildfire mitigation issues. Foresters review Land Use Plans (LUPs) for these counties and recommend the appropriate level of fuels mitigation work, emphasizing the need for defensible space on new and existing properties. In some cases, wildfire mitigation plans are developed and implemented with the help of CSFS foresters.

In addition to assisting county planners and developers, Golden District foresters help private landowners assess their properties for wildfire hazards so they understand the need for defensible space, fuelbreaks and forest management on their properties.

Forest Stewardship Management Plans

Foresters on the Golden District continue to develop management plans for landowners to help guide their forest management decisions. In 2010, Golden District foresters wrote a forest management plan for Silver Spruce Springs Ranch and a stewardship plan for a Forest Legacy Program participant.



Mountain pine beetle-infected log showing blue-stain fungus.

the outbreak was first detected in 1996. In 2010, the largest MPB infestations were observed in Larimer and Boulder counties, in terms of all host tree types – lodgepole, ponderosa and five-needle pines. The good news is that the total number of Colorado acres with active MPB infestations dropped below the previous year's levels for the second consecutive year.

Other insect populations of note affecting Front Range forests in 2010 include the spruce beetle, Douglas-fir beetle, western balsam bark beetle and western spruce budworm. Active spruce beetle infestations were detected on 208,000 acres across the state in 2010, an increase of more than 80 percent from 2009. Aerial surveyors observed Douglas-fir beetle activity on

Seedling Tree Program

Seedling trees grown at the CSFS Nursery in Fort Collins are sold for conservation purposes. These seedlings are distributed to the public through CSFS districts and other cooperating agencies. The nursery grows up to 2 million seedlings annually. To qualify to purchase seedlings, you must own 2 acres of land and can only plant seedlings for conservation purposes such as reforestation, wildlife habitat, windbreaks and erosion control. The Jefferson County 4-H club distributes these seedlings in mid-April each year. Additionally, every January the Golden District offers a workshop to potential buyers of seedlings that covers buying seedlings and where and how to plant them. For more information about this program, please contact the 4-H club at 303-271-6620 or the CSFS Golden District.

Wildfire Supression

Engines 841, 861 and 862 (manned by Golden District seasonal employees, permanent staff and cooperators) spent one-and-a-half weeks at the Fourmile Canyon and Reservoir Road fires in early September. The Fourmile Canyon fire burned 6,179 acres and destroyed 169 homes, making it the most destructive fire in Colorado history in terms of property loss.

Additionally, Golden District personnel responded to an interagency fire assignment in Guadalupe National Park in Texas for one week in early June.

Golden District Engine Boss Kevin Michalak served as the Task Force Leader trainee with a Jefferson County engine taskforce that went to the Dome Fire in Boulder County during late October. Additionally, he served as ICT4 on the Dakota Ridge incident in early August after the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office assumed command on day two of the fire. Golden District Forester Allen Gallamore served as FSC3 (TIME) for the Church's Park fire in Grand County in early October. Brenda DeHerrera assisted at Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center as expanded dispatch recorder during the first two weeks of September and participated on the Parkdale Canyon



Helicopter utilization during the Fourmile Canyon Fire.

Fire in late June as personnel time recorder-trainee with Pueblo zone IMT3. Golden personnel also assisted Jefferson County with fire suppression on the Blackhawk and Blue Mountain incidents in May.



Engine 861 at the Fourmile Canyon Fire.

Forest Inventory & Analysis

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program had another successful year. FIA is a nationwide program of the U.S. Forest Service that provides a nationwide inventory of our forests to facilitate a better understanding of forest health issues. Research plots are located on both public and private lands throughout the state. CSFS field crews visit these plots each year and take a variety of measurements to assess forest conditions.

The Golden FIA crew received a new crew leader this spring after the departure of Megan Sweeney. Aaron Wykhuis comes to us from the Texas Forest Service where he also conducted FIA. Two new seasonal employees were also hired this spring in Golden, Lawton Grinter and Brad Lalande, also assisted in conducting this program. In 2010, crews visited approximately 500 plots across the state, and the Golden District successfully completed work on 90 percent of the 70 assigned plots. Furthermore, the Golden crew, along with the other crews in Colorado, went to New Mexico and assisted the U.S. Forest Service in initiating the FIA program there by completing plots in Eddy and Chaves counties. For more information about the FIA program and results from the previous year's measurements, please visit www.fia.fs.fed.us.



The FIA jeep on an inventory plot in southern Colorado.

CSFS Christmas Tree Sale

More than 500 Christmas trees were removed from Chief Hosa Campground and Genesee Park during the first weekend in December with the assistance of seasonal and permanent Golden District staff, Denver Mountain Parks staff and several CSFS volunteers. We always welcome volunteers from Colorado State University and from local communities. Thanks to everyone for helping us make the project a success once again.



View of Golden, Colo., from Lookout Mountain.

In Closing

We would like to thank our many customers and cooperators. It is a pleasure to work with you. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact us.

Golden District Personnel

The Golden District prioritized its 2010 workload as two employees, Megan Sweeney and Andy Perri, moved on to new positions with the CSFS and Denver Mountain Parks, respectively. To fill these vacancies, the Golden District hired two new full-time foresters. Aaron Wykhuis, FIA Forester, previously with the FIA Program in Texas, and Lawton Grinter, forester, previously an FIA seasonal on the Golden District.

Current Staff

Allen Gallamore, District Forester
Brenda DeHerrera, Accounting Technician II
Pat McLaughlin, Assistant District Forester
Kirk Will, Assistant District Forester
Collin Wassink, Forester
Lawton Grinter, Forester
Aaron Wykhuis, FIA Forester
Kevin Michalak, Engine Boss
Adam Rodriguez, Engine Crew Member
Robert Kriegbaum, Engine Crew Member
Eric Gettenberg, Engine Crew Member

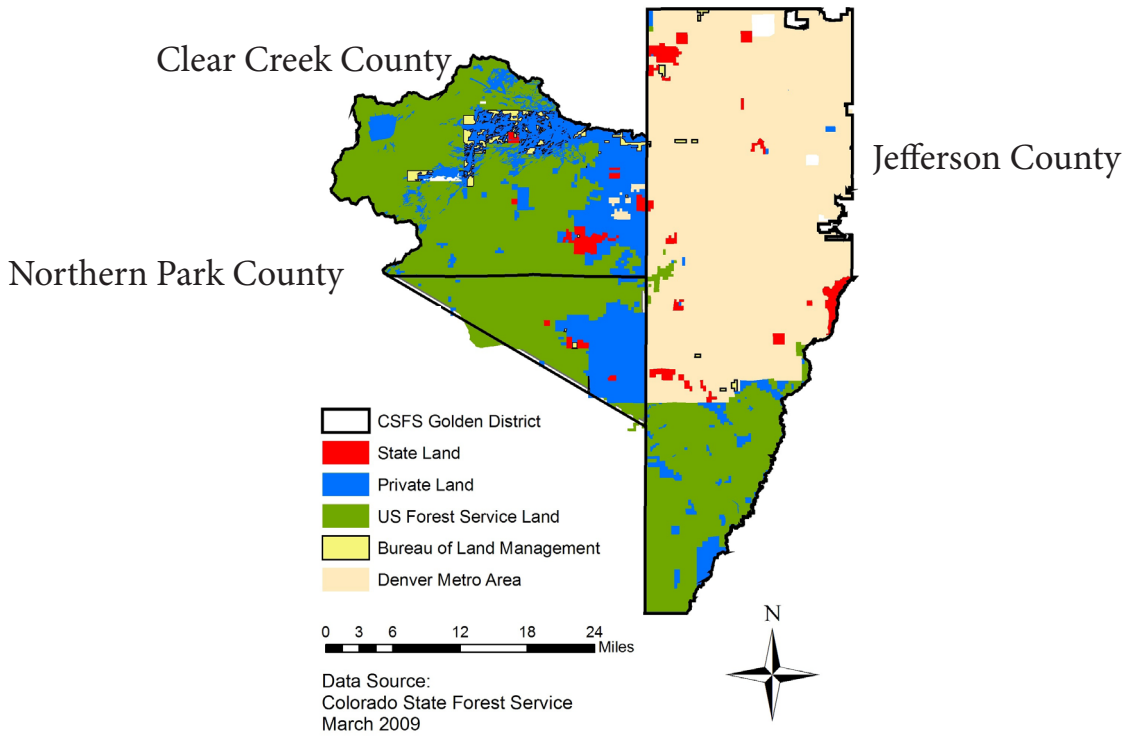
LEFT THE DISTRICT IN 2010:

Andy Perri, Assistant District Forester
Megan Sweeney, FIA Forester



The CSFS Golden District staff (from left to right): Collin Wassink, Robert Kriegbaum, Adam Rodriguez, Kirk Will, Kevin Michalak, Lawton Grinter, Aaron Wykhuis, Brenda DeHerrera, Mandy Reller, Allen Gallamore and Pat McLaughlin. (Eric Gettenberg not pictured).

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