



Lory State Park

Forest Fuels Mitigation Project

Why are There so Many Cut Trees?

Since 2003, Colorado State Parks and the Colorado State Forest Service have been conducting forest thinning projects to reduce the risk of wildfire. At Lory State Park, work has begun on the most strategic fuel reduction areas that are critical for the safety of park visitors and park neighbors; however there are still many areas we plan to treat to further protect the area over the next few years. This work involves cutting trees to create significant breaks in the continuity of trees.



Current Projects (2007)

Five project areas (140 acres) will be active in 2007:

- These areas will expand upon the already completed treatment area to collectively reduce wildfire hazard to the park and neighboring communities.
- Fuel reduction treatments will include mechanical mastication of dwarf mistletoe-infected trees, which will also reduce tree crowding and increase crown separation.

Why is Forest Thinning Necessary?

With extended drought and mature/dense forest conditions, these fuel mitigation projects are necessary to help protect park resources, facilities, visitors and neighbors in the event of a wildfire. Methods for the fuel treatment are chosen to have the least impact to the ecology and the aesthetics of the park. These projects should also improve resistance to insects and diseases in these forests.

The effectiveness of these projects can be increased if neighbors participate in fuel mitigation on their property. For information and assistance with fuel mitigation on your property, *contact the Colorado State Forest Service at 970-491-8660.*



BEFORE



AFTER

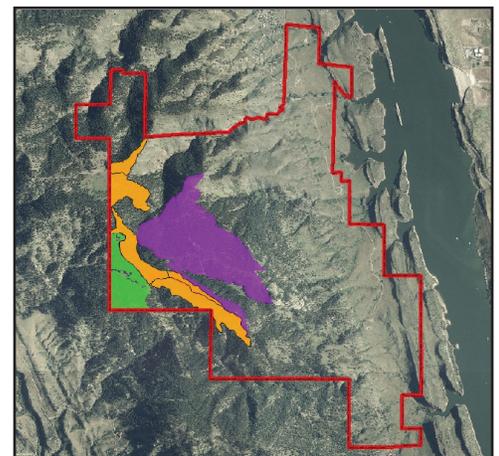
Past Treatments (2006)

- FH1b – 67 acres - Reduced hazardous fuel loading in ponderosa pine with mechanical mastication. (see before/after photos)



Long-term Benefits

These fuel treatments will result in a varied, open ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir woodland that will have an increased resistance to catastrophic wildfire, insects, and diseases. There will be a greater variety of tree ages and forest stand densities than is currently seen. The new generation of trees will be able to grow with fewer dwarf mistletoe infestations and replace aging trees.



- Orange area = current projects
- Green area = completed project
- Purple area = future projects

Forest Fuel Mitigation

What is Fuel Mitigation?

Fuel Mitigation is forest management directed at reducing the risk of large wildfires. This can be done in a number of ways and varies by forest type. The main goal is to slow the spread of fire to protect people and structures. In some cases, fuel mitigation can improve the resistance of trees to disease and pests, protect watersheds or restore historic ecological conditions.



Why is it a Big Deal Now?

Forest fuel mitigation is now in the news for numerous reasons.

Wildland-Urban Interface –

Human development is increasing in forested areas where fire is a natural occurrence, therefore more homes and communities are at risk of large fires.

Drought and Stress – Colorado is experiencing a prolonged drought that has resulted in drier and more flammable fuels. Insect epidemics which are native to Colorado, may be increasing in numbers and severity due to drought.

Fire Suppression – Particularly at lower elevations, fires have been suppressed for many years and smaller trees and denser forests are providing more fuels.

Maturing Forests – Across Colorado, many forests were burned and logged in the late-1800s. Many of these forests are now reaching a mature state that produces more fuels for fire.

As the fires of 2000-2002 brought to people's attention, all of these factors can combine to result in dramatic consequences for homes and communities.

How is Mitigation Being Performed on State Parks?

Projects on State Parks lands are designed to slow the spread and reduce the risk of wildfires, to minimize the impacts to wildlife and natural vegetation, to mimic natural processes to the largest extent possible, and to maintain the aesthetics that visitors expect in State Parks. The types of projects on State Parks lands include:

Defensible Space – clearing and thinning trees and brush back about 200 feet from structures. CSFS Firewise information can provide details for your home (www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natres/06302.html).

Prescribed Burning – reintroducing burning helps to mimic the natural disturbance processes in order to keep down fuel loads and, in some cases, improve understory species.

Thinning in Ponderosa and Oak – at lower elevations, where vegetation has become dense from fire suppression, we can thin to levels that are less likely to carry large fires, and in some cases this process may restore the forests to conditions that resemble those of hundreds of years ago.

Lodgepole Patch Cuts – different forest types require different methods. Lodgepole requires larger cuts because of its unique ecology, so typically patches of 2-10 acres are cut.

Aspen Selection – particularly in mixed conifer forests, selective thinning can be used to promote more aspen regrowth, which provides good habitat for elk and deer.

Funding

These projects are possible because of funding from the Colorado Lottery, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership (FRFTP) and other federal sources. Close coordination between Colorado State Parks, Colorado State Forest Service, and Colorado Division of Emergency Management has resulted in a \$2.5 million pre-disaster mitigation grant from FEMA that will partially fund fuel mitigation projects for the next three years and will assist us in protecting Colorado's watersheds and communities.



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