

Forest Health Council

Colorado State Forest Service – 2023 Q3 Update

Administration Division Updates

- The CSFS filled a total of 14 positions last quarter (July to September 2023). Of those, 11 were new employees, and three were internally filled.
- The CSFS hired the following key new administrative positions:
 - Adam Keating, Manager of Safety and Risk, Facilities and Fleet: This position administers, develops and implements safety and risk management policies and programs for the CSFS. This manager also assesses facility needs and develops facility maintenance policies as well as coordinates the acquisition, operation and maintenance of fleet vehicles for the agency.
 - Audrey McElwain, Grants Manager: This position provides assistance and guidance to all agency personnel regarding grant administration. The Grants Manager also coordinates the timely completion and closeout of all sponsored agreements and grants, ensuring all cost-share and fiscal requirements are met.
 - Lindsay Wade, HR Talent Coordinator: This position is focused on recruitment, hiring and onboarding, and will help the CSFS expand some of our other HR program areas.

Communications and Communities Division Updates

SB22-007: Wildfire Mitigation Outreach

The CSFS continued the Live Wildfire Ready campaign alongside the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, U.S. Forest Service and Colorado State Fire Chiefs. The campaign included billboards along the Front Range, public radio sponsorships, an outreach booth at community events, social media posts and ads, and other tools and tactics. The campaign garnered nearly 6 million impressions across all tools tracked in its first year. Reporting and planning for the campaign in 2024 is ongoing.

Additionally, as part of implementing SB22-007, the CSFS convened a working group of partners to provide recommendations for improving outreach about wildfire mitigation in Colorado. The working group met in late September in Eagle early October in Evergreen.

Urban and Community Forestry (UCF)

- The CSFS conducted or assisted with tree inventories in Mancos, Pagosa Springs and Telluride.
- In June, experts from Colorado State University confirmed the presence of emerald ash borer (EAB) in two new towns in Colorado: Carbondale and Littleton. The detection in Carbondale marks the first time EAB was confirmed in western Colorado. The CSFS now is working with municipal and private arborists on the West Slope to share EAB resources from the CSFS, CSU Extension and other partners.
- The CSFS received \$4.875M in IRA UCF funds to create a competitive grant program to support urban forests in disproportionately impact communities in Colorado. After the National Forest Foundation's co-proposal was not funded during the second round of IRA UCF funding, announced in September, the CSFS will now run the grant program internally.

Communications

The CSFS produced a [video about Golden West Pine Mills](#) in Ault to promote forest products, share info about the industry and EGAR technology, and celebrate the agency's 2022 Partner of the Year.

Outreach and Education

Three CSU interns crisscrossed the state this summer, hosting booths at community events, providing Project Learning Tree lessons to youths and assisting with tree inventories.

Forest Planning & Implementation Division Updates

Seedling Tree Nursery

- An architecture firm was selected for the Nursery renovation project and the contract is being finalized. Design work will begin in Quarter 4.
- CSFS received \$320,000 through the USFS Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Revegetation Program for shadehouse renovations.

Inflation Reduction Act Underserved Landowner Assistance Program

The CSFS has applied for a federal funding opportunity through the US Forest Service to support the development and implementation of a state program to encourage participation of underserved forest landowners in forest resilience. The goal is to increase on-the-ground capacity to support outreach, technical and planning assistance to underserved landowners. If successful in receiving funding, the CSFS will develop a program and strategy to provide targeted outreach and assistance to underserved forest landowners in the state.

Wood Utilization and Marketing

MK High Country Firewood in Leadville is the newest recipient of a loan from the CSFS' Wildfire Risk Mitigation loan fund. The CSFS was able to secure two additional lending partners for the half-million dollars of financing that MK High Country Firewood will use to construct its new manufacturing facility and acquire equipment to increase its firewood collection and processing.

Community Assistance Grant Bureau of Land Management

The CSFS received a \$671,000 award through the BLM Community Assistance Grant program to implement fuels reduction, forest health resiliency and watershed protection activities on private and state-owned lands adjacent to existing and planned Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) activities on BLM ownership. Project activities include mechanical treatments on 1,387 acres resulting in reduced fuel loading; forest health improvement; community, critical infrastructure and watershed protection; improved wildlife habitat and expansion of adjacent BLM treatment footprint.

Forestry Services Division Updates

Staff

We continue to add staff to meet the needs associated with the new federal and state funding levels. Filling in vacancies and new positions, we have added 29 foresters and forestry technicians in the past year.

New Supervisory Foresters

Supervisory Foresters manage the operations and staff out of our Field Offices and are the primary go-to individuals in those locations

- J.T. Shaver in Salida, Colo. This is a new position, formerly the CSFS Salida staff was managed out of Alamosa.
- John White in Golden, Colo. John, a long-time employee in Golden, replaces the former supervisory forester who moved to FEMA.

- Matt Schiltz in Rifle, Colo. The new position will manage foresters out of both Rifle and Grand Junction field offices.

Forester Boot Camp

We held two different week-long training sessions for new foresters in the agency. We have hired some great individuals, but many of them are coming from different states. The first session was held in Fort Collins and focused on team building and agency-specific training. The second session was held at our State Forest facility in Gould, Colo., and focused on working with Colorado contractors and best management practices for operations in Colorado.

Forester Capacity

In the last quarter, we took action on two initiatives designed to support increased forester capacity in Colorado. The first is our career path program. We have offered 3 of our outstanding student interns, who worked with us last summer, full-time permanent positions with CSFS when they graduate. They will fill openings in Durango, Granby and the State Forest in Gould. We also hired a student as part of our Transition to CSU program. This Front Range Community College graduate will work half-time for the CSFS as a forestry technician, receiving full benefits, including academic privileges, while she is going to CSU and finishing her four-year Forestry degree.

Policy and Legislative Affairs Division Updates

We continued to establish communications with all federal delegation staff as well as National Association of State Foresters and Council of Western State Foresters policy staff for future collaboration on policy formulation related to the CSFS mission and programs.

With the Communications & Communities Division, we updated the Wildfire Matters Review Committee on SB22-007, the Live Wildfire Ready campaign.

We facilitated submission of fiscal analysis requests to the General Assembly and the Legislative Council on four bill drafts that came out of the Wildfire Matter Review Committee. We also began tracking other legislation important to the CSFS but have no fiscal impacts.

On Oct. 20, the Woodland Park Field Office hosted several legislators and legislative aides on a site visit and tour of the work they've been conducting.

Science and Data Division Updates

Forest Health

- The Forest Health team hired one additional Research Associate in October, David Rubin. David recently completed his undergraduate program at Yale, where he conducted an independent senior research project on the effects of forest management on native pollinators.
- Dr. Dan West, the CSFS entomologist, completed the annual statewide aerial survey for forest insects and disease in collaboration with the USFS.

Experiential Learning Specialist

Kristen Switzer went above and beyond her duties at CSFS and served as a lead contributor to the 571 Applied Forest Ecology course refresh at CSU this summer. This course is part of the Advanced Silviculture for the Practicing Forester Certificate.

Forest Monitoring

- Hired a new Forest Monitoring Measurement Specialist, Tori Hunter. Tori graduated from CSU with bachelor's degrees in Natural Resource Management and Forestry, a concentration in Forest Fire Science, and a minor in Spatial Information Management. For the past several years she has been collecting, analyzing, and reporting on monitoring data from forest treatments along the Front Range as a field crew leader with the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute.
- Actively collecting pre- and post- treatment data in FRWRM and HFVC projects.

FIA

The FIA Team completed all yearly targets in Wyoming for field data collection to contribute to the National FIA Program, including the annual inventory of Yellowstone National Park.

GIS

- The GIS Team launched a statewide call for data contributions to the Forest Tracker, in collaboration with the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute.
- Chad Julian and Nic Kotlinski led webinars in July and September concerning the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Update, hosted by the Southern Rockies Fire Science Network.
- The GIS Team presented the Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Update at GIS in The Rockies Sept. 20.

Other

Matt McCombs, Amanda West Fordham, Kurt Mackes and Tim Reader attended the Colorado Mass Timber Coalition Convening on Sept. 11 at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.