



COLORADO

Department of Natural Resources

October 2023 Forest Health Council Update

General Updates:

- **Staffing updates:** Ginny Brannon, the Director of the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, has retired. Kevin Rein, the State Engineer with the Division of Water Resources, has also announced that he will be retiring at the end of the calendar year. With Rebecca Mitchell becoming the State of Colorado's first full time Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission, CWCB Deputy Director Lauren Ris has been promoted to Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Angela Boag, Assistant Director for Climate, Forest Health and Energy, will be moving over to Colorado Parks and Wildlife as their new Climate Resiliency Manager.
- **Source of Wolves Identified:** DNR has secured a source population of gray wolves for CO's initial reintroduction efforts from the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, with up to 10 wolves to be moved between December 2023 and March 2024.
- **Water Plan Grants Awarded:** During its September meeting, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) voted to approve \$7.8 million through 35 Water Plan Grants to transform urban water use, restore watersheds, and reinvigorate agriculture across the state.
- **Mount Evans Now Mount Bluesky:** The U.S. Board of Geographic Names has approved the name change of Mount Evans to Mount Bluesky, with the change initially approved by the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board.
- **Wildfire Matters Review Committee:** The Wildfire Matters Review Committee has requested bill drafts. They will vote on their 5 bills to advance on Oct. 31st, though individual members may continue to advance failed concepts during the legislative session. Concepts include:
 - Biochar study - Comprehensive study on the uses and economics of biochar as method of removing woody biomass from the forest, working with state forest service, CSU
 - Pilot program on slash days
 - CSFS develop standards for wildfire mitigation efforts supported by state funding, requiring that they are based on best available science and ecological restoration strategies
 - Continued funding for SB22-007 - Live Wildfire Ready Campaign
 - Encouraging local jurisdictions to have pet friendly shelters
 - State funded program for first responders for multiple employee health benefit trust
 - Representation in advisory boards and task forces for tribal and disability communities

- Incentives for collaboration between federal, state and local agencies for fire mitigation projects/programs, including NGOs in firewise information
- Incentives to promote timber industry, return of HB22-1166
- Wildfire cameras, return of HB22-1146

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program Updates:

- Projects underway across the state through the workforce Development Program and Landscape Resilience Investment Program.
- Decisions on 2023 Youth Corps and Training Grants within the Workforce Development Program have been made and will be announced within the next month. The Department of Corrections Workforce Development Grants are still open for applications through October 31st.
- Next Landscape Resilience Investment release: Spring 2024.