



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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**WILDFIRE CRISIS**

Implementation Plan

# CONFRONTING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS

A 10-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Wildfires in the West have been growing in size and severity, placing homes, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources at grave and growing risk. Growing wildfire risk is due to past fire exclusion and accumulating fuels, a warming climate, and expanding development in the wildland-urban interface. Impacts have far-reaching effects on human health, the economy, community well-being, and the environment, including to areas important for water, carbon, and wildlife. This is a national emergency, and it calls for decisive action.

In response, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, we have released a 10-year strategy, and are now developing a comprehensive implementation plan for working with partners across jurisdictions to reduce wildfire risk to people, communities, and natural resources while sustaining and restoring healthy, resilient fire-adapted forests. This implementation plan will focus on changing the trajectory of risk by:

- Identifying the right locations and tools for fuels and forest health treatments that are science-based and equitable.
- Developing needed workforce capacity and investing in the enabling conditions required for success.
- Working with partners across jurisdictions to develop and implement projects that are landscape scale, outcome-driven, and community ready.
- Supporting planning and investments in fire-adapted communities and on partnerships to restore and reforest areas already impacted by fire and mitigate risks associated with postfire disaster events.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided an essential down payment on the resources we need to perform this work. Funds will help accomplish the hazardous fuels and forest health, ecosystem restoration, community preparedness, and postfire recovery and reforestation work called for in the 10-year strategy and described in this implementation plan. We will coordinate with the U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies as we engage partners and work together to implement this historic legislation.

This implementation plan is grounded in the recognition that this is shared work that will take cooperation and coordination across jurisdictions and with many partners. This includes continued close coordination and work with our sister land management agencies at the U.S. Department of the Interior and with other Federal partners to bring an all-of-Government approach to this challenge, especially as we work together to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It includes close coordination and work with States, Tribes, local communities, private landowners and partners in the public and private sector, including conservation organizations, forest industry, utilities, and academia. It will also require continued focus and work with partners to ensure equity and environmental justice are built into the design and implementation of this plan.

**This is intended to be a living document: it will be informed by engagement and will be updated periodically based on coordination with other Federal agencies; consultation with Tribes; engagement with States, communities, and public and private sector partners; new information about values at risk; and new information about available resources. We look forward to engaging with partners to meet this challenge together.**





# NATIONAL STRATEGY TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

This implementation plan builds on a national strategy for confronting the wildfire crisis facing the Nation. The strategy calls for an unprecedented paradigm shift in land management to increase fuels and forest health treatments across jurisdictions to match the actual scale of wildfire risk to people, communities, and natural resources, especially in the Western United States.

Over a period of 10 years, the proposed strategy calls for:

- (1) Treating up to an additional 20 million acres on the National Forest System in the West, over and above current treatment levels;
- (2) Treating up to an additional 30 million acres on other Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands in the West; and
- (3) Developing a plan for long-term maintenance beyond the 10 years.

In recent years, at the Forest Service, we have treated 2-3 million acres per year for fuels and forest health across the Nation. Treatments typically involve thinning fuels and removing vegetation to reduce heavy fuel loads that can increase the risk of extreme wildfire events and using a risk-based approach to restore healthy fire to fire-adapted ecosystems. We will work with partners using a science-based approach to determine where to prioritize treatments and identify the appropriate tools, including prescribed fire and mechanical thinning to reduce hazardous fuels, change fire behavior, accomplish restoration objectives, and create healthier and more fire-resilient forests. These treatments work in concert with community, infrastructure, watershed, and other investments to protect values at risk

Under the 10-year strategy, we will fully sustain—and slightly increase—current treatment levels in the South, Midwest, and Northeast. But most additional investments will be in the West, where the wildfire risk to homes and communities is highest.

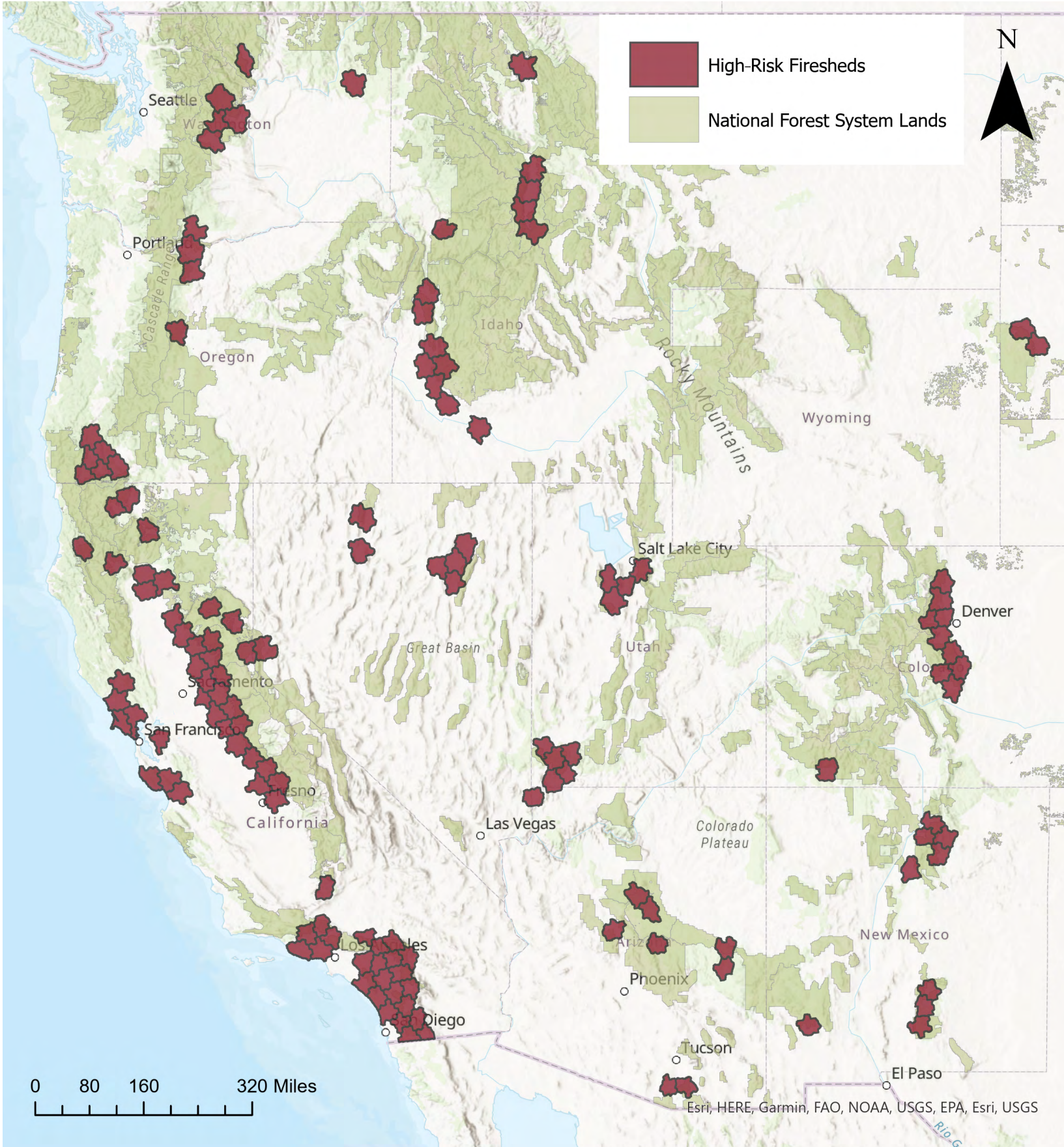
The map on the following page shows the firesheds with the highest risk of community exposure to wildfire from ignitions on all lands. It shows that a small number of firesheds present the largest risk to communities, based on historic fire behavior: in fact, less than 10 percent of fire-prone forests in the West account for roughly 80 percent of the fire risk to communities. Using this map, we can engage with Tribes, States, local communities, private landowners, and other partners to identify shared priorities for hazardous fuels treatments within these firesheds so that we can meaningfully reduce risk to communities. We can also work together to identify priorities for treatments in additional firesheds based on other values at risk and maintain prior investments in fuels and forest health.

We are currently working to develop additional information about risks to water, carbon, and wildlife, including old-growth forests, as well as risks to socially disadvantaged and underserved communities. Work with partners to identify risks to critical infrastructure, social, cultural, and economic values, and the incorporation of Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge will be important to inform shared priorities and project design.

Building on the 10-year strategy, this implementation plan outlines a blueprint for developing and carrying out this work through partnerships and collaboration. The Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, other Federal agencies, Tribes, States, local communities, landowners, and other partners have an unprecedented opportunity for investment in this work through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Those investments help to provide the resources needed to implement this plan at scale and truly change the trajectory of risk to people, communities, and natural resources at this pivotal time.

## HIGH-RISK FIRESHEDS

Community exposure is a central factor in the strategy to confront the wildfire crisis. Other factors include Tribal and State plans, watersheds, equity, climate forecasts, and partner priorities.





# STRATEGIC PLANNING GUIDELINES

The strategy and implementation plan are based on peer-reviewed research and a framework for collaboration established over the past 20 years with other Federal, State, Tribal, local, and private partners. The following guidelines will support how we, at the Forest Service, approach this work:

- **SCIENCE.** Decisions about priority areas for fuels treatment and the design of fuels treatments will be grounded in the best available science, including science that incorporates traditional and Indigenous ecological knowledge and recognizes the value of projects based on traditional knowledge in consultation with local Tribes. Land managers will incorporate emerging data and technology into project design, along with a knowledge of historical stand conditions and structure. Other scientific tools, like potential operational delineations (PODs), fire behavior models, and information on ecological integrity for specific forest types will guide treatment placement and design. New information about changing climate conditions, drought, and other weather behavior that impacts fire risk will also be incorporated to inform work during the implementation period.
- **EQUITY AND INCLUSION.** We will make investments to increase equity and inclusivity, reflecting the need to reach underserved communities, build community capacity, and overcome barriers through informed consent from those affected. Opportunities for co-management and co-stewardship with Tribes will also be a priority.
- **CROSS-BOUNDARY PARTNERSHIPS.** No one entity can accomplish the work alone: to achieve the collective impact that our forests and communities need, we must build a multijurisdictional coalition to work across land management jurisdictions, leverage diverse capacities, and build broad public and community support for the work at the scale necessary to make a difference. This includes work across Federal, Tribal, State, local, and private lands. Partnerships, including those beyond existing contracts and agreements, will help identify barriers to success and ways to overcome them.
- **OUTCOME-BASED PRIORITIZATION.** We are focused on outcome-based work to achieve mutually desired priorities, including reducing risk to people, communities, natural resources, and other values at the scale of wildfire risk. While accomplishing this work with and through partners, we will use prioritization tools including PODs when looking at project layout and design. We will also develop outcome-based performance measures to track accomplishments and effectiveness and inform continued work.
- **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT.** We will need broad public agreement, including support from lawmakers and local communities, to place fuels and forest health treatments in the right places at the right scale. Achieving consensus will require effective and transparent public communication with diverse audiences and cooperation with trusted community partners using a wide range of strategies. Through partner and community engagement and collective action, we will strive to build the mutual trust needed to achieve shared goals and build the social license needed to work at the actual scale of wildfire risk.
- **MAINTAINING IMPROVED CONDITIONS.** Reducing fire hazard and maintaining desired conditions often requires repeated treatments over time; therefore, investments in priority landscapes will be made over appropriate timeframes.



The El Dorado National Forest after the [Caldor Fire](#) occurred, showing an area that was treated for fuels near South Lake Tahoe, CA. USDA Forest Service photo by Cecilio Ricardo.

## CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Meaningfully changing the trajectory of wildfire risk by ramping up fuels and forest health treatments and investing in fire-adapted communities at the scale of actual wildfire risk will require recognizing and investing in the most critical enabling conditions needed for long-term success. In addition to moving forward with early projects, we will focus during years 1 and 2 on working with partners to identify and invest in the enabling conditions necessary for shared success, including the conditions described below. In years 3 to 10 and beyond, we will work to create and sustain the conditions needed to reduce wildfire risk by restoring and maintaining healthy, resilient fire-adapted forests and investing in communities across the West. Critical enabling conditions for this work at scale include:

- **WORKFORCE CAPACITY.** Over the last 20 years, the number of agency permanent employees dedicated to fire suppression has significantly increased, while the number of employees in other fields has decreased: we need to rebuild skills and workforce capacity to accomplish fuels and forest health treatments and fully engage with communities at the necessary pace and scale. This will require building and sustaining an inclusive workforce in Federal and State agencies as well as in local, Tribal, nongovernmental, and other organizations. We need processes for sharing resources across organizations for fuels and forest health treatments just as we share resources for wildland fire suppression.



Together, we will need to develop and train the shared workforce needed to plan, design, and evaluate projects; accomplish treatments at the needed scale; collaborate and communicate well with partners and communities; and support business operations like grants, agreements, and contracting. We will work to create new approaches to training and workforce development, including through the Civilian Climate Corps and other partners, sharing skills in short supply across jurisdictions. We will also work to improve the use of all existing authorities, for example by offering training on the use of the Tribal Forest Protection Act, Good Neighbor Authority, and the Tribal Biomass Demonstration Project. Indigenous people using fire in their communities and working together on Federal lands will be critical, and we need policies that enable inclusive practices and permit the appropriate use of fire.

- **CULTURE.** A paradigm shift in land management to treat landscapes for fuels and forest health at the actual scale of wildfire risk will require shifts in agency and partner culture away from business as usual. We will need to clearly communicate leadership intent, mobilize sufficient financial and technical support, offer adequate skills development and training, and establish performance measures that reflect both the outcomes we want and the relationships we need to achieve them. We will also need to continue close coordination with the U.S. Department of the Interior and work with other Federal agencies to truly deliver an all-of-Federal Government response to this crisis, and to support investments in fire-adapted communities.
- **PLANNING.** Projects under the 10-year strategy will need to be carefully planned and analyzed, which will require new investments in Forest Service capacity for planning and environmental analysis. We will take a new approach to the landscape-scale planning and analysis required to support project implementation at the scale needed and will work closely with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the White House Council on Environmental Quality to support planning and consultation needs.

- **COLLABORATION.** The 10-year strategy will require new investments in collaborative capacity, both within the Forest Service and other Federal agencies and for Tribes, States, partners, and communities. The strategy builds on an already robust network of relationships requiring a sustained commitment, but we will also need new relationships for equitable access to investments in reducing wildfire risk, repairing wildfire damage, increasing community resilience, and rehabilitating postfire landscapes.
- **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.** We will continually incorporate the best available science into project decision making, design, and implementation. That includes acknowledging and incorporating Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge. We will continue to invest in risk mapping to identify areas of high wildfire risk to underserved communities; to ecologic values and ecosystem services, including water, carbon, wildlife and old-growth; and to social, cultural, and economic values including areas important for community access and recreation. We will need to develop additional gap analysis and decision support tools to inform project prioritization, design, and financing. Our projects will use all applicable emerging tools and technologies to reduce wildfire risk and increase community and landscape resilience following a wildfire.
- **MONITORING AND EVALUATION.** We will need the capacity to monitor progress and evaluate project success in terms of outcome-based performance measures. We will also monitor changing conditions, including, but not limited to, fire behavior and activity that might occur, changing drought, and weather patterns.
- **COMMUNICATION OF OUTCOMES.** To build community trust and support for fuels and forest health treatments at scale, we will need to communicate the process for project development and to quantify the project outcomes, both expected and achieved. The outcomes will need to reflect the viewpoints and values of everyone involved, including partners and stakeholders across shared landscapes.

- **REGULATORY OR LEGISLATIVE NEEDS.** Congress has provided extensive tools and programs for partnerships and landscape-scale work, such as the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, the Tribal Forest Protection Act, and the Good Neighbor Authority. Depending on conversations with partners and the bills being considered by Congress, we will work with Congress and partners on any additional regulatory or legislative changes to facilitate multijurisdictional work at the right scale.
- **FOREST PRODUCTS.** The wood products industry has been and will remain an important partner for helping achieve restoration outcomes and reduce wildfire risk. New and innovative uses of wood, such as cross-laminated timber, can

not only support restoration and risk reduction outcomes but also sequester large quantities of carbon.

- **SMALLWOOD AND BIOMASS UTILIZATION.** The Nation needs to supplement public investments in fuels and forest health treatments through markets for biomass and small-diameter materials removed during mechanical thinning. Support for wood products innovation, biochar, and other options for transporting and using the material will be important.
- **FIRE-ADAPTED COMMUNITIES.** Fuels and forest health treatments need to be matched with equal investment in fire-adapted communities, as envisioned by the National Cohesive Strategy developed jointly by USDA, the U.S. Department

The Santa Fe National Forest has worked with the Pueblo of Jemez on the Southwest Jemez (SWJM) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program project to increase the landscape's resilience to severe wildfire and other large-scale disturbances through collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forests and watersheds. The landscape area includes 210,000 acres on the Santa Fe National Forest, the Valles Caldera National Preserve, the Pueblo of Jemez Pueblo, and additional parcels of State, private, and Tribal lands.

The SWJM project was designed to meet four primary purposes: restore the forest's resilience to wildfire and other disturbances by using low-intensity fire to return fire to the landscape; protect cultural resources; improve wildlife habitat, watershed and riparian conditions, vegetation diversity, and water quality; and create local economic development opportunities. As shown in this image, timber from the restoration project will go to the Tribe's nearby Walatowa Timber Industries mill to produce wood pellets, poles for utilities, beams and vigas for conventional and traditional home building, ties for railroads, posts for fences, milled lumber, mulch, and firewood. USDA photo by Lance Cheung with permission of the Pueblo of Jemez.





of the Interior, and several other Federal agencies. We will need to work with partners and communities to support equitable access to technical and financial assistance for community-based investments and continue learning and outreach about defensible spaces, planning, zoning, and other community actions that support living in fire-adapted landscapes.

- **REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION.** We will need to invest in reforestation and restoration businesses and capacity, including nursery capacity. Support

from Rural Development programs could be an important part of helping to create resilience and restoration jobs in rural communities.

- **FINANCIAL MECHANISMS.** We will need financial instruments and related authorities, such as green bonds, to support public/private partnerships and long-term investments in fuels and forest health treatments, including maintenance treatments over time. We might also need new kinds of agreements among Federal agencies or with non-Federal land managers to attract investments in restoration work at the needed scale.

community investments in fire-adapted communities, invest in partner and community capacity, and meet the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

- **MAXIMIZING USE OF EXISTING AUTHORITIES.** We will look for opportunities to use all available congressional authorities and programs for fuels and forest health treatments, including the Tribal Forest Protection Act, Good Neighbor Authority, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, the Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership Program, Shared Stewardship agreements, and other authorities.

At the Forest Service, we will group projects submitted for years 1 and 2 by landscapes as follows:

- (1) High-risk firesheds treatable in fiscal year 2022.
- (2) Other firesheds treatable in fiscal year 2022 based on local priorities.

- (3) High-risk firesheds, and other firesheds treatable based on local priorities, in fiscal year 2023.
- (4) High-risk firesheds needing capacity investment for implementation in fiscal year 2024 and beyond.

# LAUNCHING PROJECTS

The first 2 years of the plan will start with a call to Forest Service regional foresters, followed by engaging with other Federal agencies, Tribes, States, and other partners, to list projects in high-risk firesheds that are ready to go, lacking only the necessary funding to begin. In particular, at the Forest Service, we will identify projects that are:

- **LANDSCAPE SCALE.** We will be looking for projects to treat fuels and restore forest health at the necessary scale and for smaller scale projects designed as part of a larger scale approach.
- **OUTCOME DRIVEN.** We will be looking for projects that are designed to reduce wildfire risk to communities, water supplies, or critical infrastructure (including utility lines, roads, and national security sites); critical ecological values (including watersheds, wildlife habitat, and old-growth stands) and ecosystem services (including carbon storage); economic values (including outdoor recreation, timber, and grazing areas); areas of cultural and historic significance (including areas important to Tribes); and areas of social importance to communities (including for access and subsistence use). Catastrophic wildfire is the largest threat to these values in the Western United States. This strategy and implementation plan will help protect and conserve these values.

- **COMMUNITY READY.** We will be looking for projects that have been collaboratively developed with others and reflect shared priorities. Projects should also have completed relevant public comment and required environmental analysis, at least for the parts of the project intended to be initiated in years 1 and 2.

At the Forest Service, we will also be looking for projects with the following opportunities:

- **INVESTING IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.** We will look for equitability in project design and implementation and for the potential to reduce wildfire risk to underserved communities or Tribes. The analysis will pinpoint any financial, technical, or other capacity barriers that prevent communities from being served. As appropriate, we will work with partners to meet community needs, including developing capacity within Tribal and other underserved communities.
- **ATTRACTING AND COMPLEMENTING PARTNER INVESTMENTS.** We will look for projects on National Forest System lands that attract partner and other Federal, Tribal, and State and private investments, including on adjacent jurisdictions. We will also look for opportunities to coordinate with U.S. Department of the Interior agencies across Federal land jurisdictions, complement

Lupine regenerates after the Robertson Draw Fire near Red Lodge, MT. USDA Forest Service photo.





# POSTFIRE RISK REDUCTION, RECOVERY, AND REFORESTATION

Postfire work is a critical and growing need and will be a priority for the Forest Service to work with communities to mitigate risk and support recovery. At the Forest Service, we have a lot of work to do to restore functioning ecosystems following the 2020 and 2021 wildfires.

For example, wildfires create more than 80 percent of reforestation needs, including approximately 1 million acres that burned with high severity in 2020 alone. We currently addresses only 6 percent of post-wildfire replanting needs per year, resulting in a rapidly expanding list of reforestation needs. We have plans for the reforestation of more than 1.3 million acres of National Forest System land. However, these plans

only address one-third of National Forest System reforestation needs, estimated to be 4 million acres and growing. As we work to recover from wildfire, we are emphasizing planting the right species, in the right place, under the right conditions, so forests will remain healthy and resilient over time.

As with fuels and forest health treatments to reduce fire risk, we will work with Tribes, States, local communities, U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies, and partners to work across jurisdictions and build partnerships to address postfire risks to people, communities, and natural resources and to address the growing need for restoration and reforestation.

USDA Forest Service staff and partners, including Blue Forest Conservation, the State of California, the Yuba Water Agency, and the National Forest Foundation, discuss the Yuba Project. Working together, partners are piloting using a [Forest Resilience Bond](#) to pay for landscape-scale ecological restoration treatments on 15,000 acres of the Tahoe National Forest within the Yuba River Watershed. Collaboration has also laid the groundwork for a new regional partnership to support forest management activities. USDA Forest Service photo by Paul Wade.



# INITIATING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In years 1 and 2, at the Forest Service, we will work with other Federal agencies, Tribes, State and local agencies, communities, collaborative groups, nongovernmental organizations, private landowners, and other partners and stakeholders to develop this implementation plan in a way that is transparent and built on relationships. The USDA and Forest Service leadership team will lead some engagements at the national level, whereas others will be led by the agency and partners at the regional and forest level. The process will include:

- Coordinating with the U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies and Departments to support a whole-of-Government approach, including through the Federal Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group.
- Coordinating with other agencies within USDA, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service on existing partnership work with the Forest Service, and connecting this work with the priorities of other USDA agencies, especially those in the Rural Development and Research, Education, and Economics mission areas
- Consulting with Tribes to meet Government-to-Government responsibilities and ensure Indigenous knowledge, rights, priorities, and interests are reflected in fuels and forest health treatments under the 10-year strategy.
- Working with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council to coordinate with States, Tribes, and local governments in carrying out the Cohesive Strategy, and engaging with States, counties, and local communities to identify shared priorities.
- Reaching out to communities at risk from wildfire to build understanding and support for fuels and forest health treatments, including the increased use of prescribed fire. That includes working with communities at risk to increase their readiness for wildfire and to encourage them to become more fire adapted.
- Reaching out to minority and underserved communities to ensure the equitability of fuels and forest health treatments under the 10-year strategy, along with equitable access to postfire

damage repair and landscape rehabilitation. Ensuring equitability includes removing systemic barriers and giving minority and underserved communities access to the financial, technical, and collaborative resources and capacity they need to reduce wildfire risk and to recover following a wildfire.

- Meeting with partners and stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels to solicit insights and to assess partner capacity and needs for collective work.
- Engaging environmental and conservation non-profit organizations, forest industry, utilities, water providers and other stakeholders to discuss values at risk and build shared understanding to support prioritization and design of projects, identify the necessary investments and enabling conditions for success, discuss opportunities for public/private investments, and develop monitoring and outcome measurements to support accountability.
- Meeting with local collaborative groups and with partners who have been working on cross-boundary treatments through Cohesive Strategy projects, Shared Stewardship agreements, Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration projects, Tribal Forest Protection Act projects, and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration projects to discuss shared priorities and capacities and build on collaborative land management planning processes already underway (such as Shared Stewardship agreements, State forest action plans, forest plan revisions, and cross-boundary projects), thereby capitalizing on their momentum and capacity and on the expectations they have raised.
- Holding conversations within the Forest Service to make sure that the views and needs of the agency's workforce are recognized and included.

By the end of year 1, at the Forest Service, we intend to have a shared all-lands fire-freshed prioritization planning framework in place that Forest Service regions and forests can use together with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, local communities, and other partners to design projects for years 3 to 10.



# NEXT STEPS

- **BEGIN ENGAGEMENTS.** The announcement of the 10-year strategy kicks off an engagement strategy to strengthen alignment with and leverage the energy and innovation of others around this critical work. This will include close engagement with the U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies, Tribal consultation, national and regional roundtables with State and local partners, and engagement with the partners and stakeholders identified above. We will be developing information and additional engagement opportunities throughout the year, as well as implementation workshops that foster learning on tools, techniques, and policy application; the collaborative development of outcome-based measures; an exploration of multiparty monitoring strategies and reporting; the development of public-private partnership strategy; on-going peer learning opportunities; and coordinated policy improvements. Please visit [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us) for updated information on events and ways in which you can personally engage in this work.
- **CONTINUE SCIENCE AND PLANNING.** Science, data, and decision support tools will inform planning, prioritization, and decision making. This includes continuing work being done to reflect risk to additional values, such as updating the fire exposure map to include watersheds and equity layers; identifying areas of importance for ecologic values, including carbon, wildlife, and old-growth; and identifying other social, cultural, and economic values at risk. Work is ongoing to support science-based project design to appropriately use all of the tools for treatment in the right places and in the right way and to incorporate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge into project design. Tools are being developed to support project planning and mapping funds from different sources to the work needed at the project level. The implementation plan will need to continue to incorporate information about changing risk scenarios with climate change and as fires happen in some of these locations on an annual basis.

Crews plant whitebark pine trees near Werner Peak on the Tally Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest, MT. USDA Forest Service photo by A. Drysdale.





- **APPLY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PRINCIPLES.** A key priority for advancing wildfire risk reduction is supporting investments that address equity across communities of place and interest, particularly those that have been historically marginalized, have not traditionally enjoyed the same opportunities for economic mobility, or conversely have been negatively impacted through discrimination or under-representation in key decisions. At the Forest Service, we are committed to the principles and direction set forth by Executive Order (E.O.) 13985, “On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government” and E.O. 14008, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad” and efforts related to Justice40.
- **SEEK TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT.** We aim to seek strategic and ongoing engagement with Tribes to identify opportunities in codeveloping a strategic implementation plan for wildfire risk reduction. The future implementation plan will give us the opportunity to work together with Tribes to build long-term capacity and job opportunities, as well as incorporate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge into planning and project design. Formal consultations in addition to informal conversations and roundtables are planned.
- **COORDINATE ACROSS GOVERNMENT.** In addition to close collaboration with the U.S. Department of the Interior throughout the implementation plan, we will support an all-of-Government approach to this crisis and will continue to participate in on-going and emerging interagency groups, including the emerging Wildfire Commission, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, the Federal Wildfire Resilience Interagency Working Group, and other venues. We will also remain focused on critical USDA and Administration priorities, including Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry and direction under Executive orders.

- **CONTINUE CAPACITY BUILDING.** We are still developing comprehensive staffing plans and will be increasing capacity in not only field personnel specializing in prescribed fire to complete the work but also key administrative positions like contracting officers, human resources professionals, collaboration and partnership coordinators, communications, and grants and agreements specialists who will assist us in connecting with partners around this work. These partners in turn will be force multipliers.

We also recognize that achieving the desired pace and scale of land treatments will require the support of State and local governments, Tribes, nongovernment organizations, and private contractors. We are identifying opportunities for expanding Civilian Conservation Corps, partners, and contractor support in key areas for a shared workforce. As part of the engagement strategy, agency personnel will discuss ideas for sharing skills in the context of multijurisdictional projects to avoid bottlenecks. We will also identify and address gaps in capacity that contribute to inequity.

- **ADDRESS KEY ENABLING CONDITIONS.** Addressing investments in key enabling conditions, in addition to workforce capacity, includes planning and consultation, collaborative capacity and community engagement, transportation and utilization of woody material from treatments, training needs, and more.
- **DEVELOP SYSTEMS AND MEASURES.** Developing systems and measures for tracking work and progress toward outcomes is critical. Tracking outcomes is a known challenge. The existing [FACTS system](#) will be our starting point for tracking progress in work accomplished. Through this first year, we will engage partners and our own researchers to develop models to compare fire growth in pretreatment and posttreatment landscapes. Understanding the optimal distribution of fuels mitigation work will help decision makers as they balance competing demands across multiple landscapes. The work

will be planned and tracked in accordance with the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act, taking a holistic perspective toward measuring success and using key performance indicators aligned with the strategy.

- **CONTINUE FIRE-ADAPTED COMMUNITY WORK.** We will continue working to support fire-adapted community work through planning, zoning, and wildfire defense grants. Investments in fire-adapted communities are a critical part of the Cohesive Strategy and are necessary to complement fuels and forest health work in order to mitigate risks to people, homes, communities and infrastructure and create resilient, fire-adapted communities.
- **ADDRESS POSTFIRE RISK REDUCTION, RECOVERY, AND REFORESTATION.** We will continue to work to address the need for postfire risk reduction, recovery, and reforestation, including mapping, engagement on priorities, and planning/workforce needs. Mitigating postfire risk and addressing reforestation and recovery is a growing need, and work will be ongoing with partners to identify priorities and implement projects of critical importance.
- **MAINTAIN IMPROVED CONDITIONS.** We will continue to focus on maintaining improved conditions over time and building long-term investment

partnerships. This work will take repeated and sustained investment. We are working now to identify the right timeframes for treatment and develop the relationships and sustained ability to invest during the 10-years and beyond to maintain reductions in risk and improved forest health and resilience.

- **IDENTIFY AND INVEST IN ENABLING CONDITIONS.** We will continue to focus on identifying and investing in enabling conditions and identifying any gaps that need to be addressed. As we engage with others, we will continue to refine our shared understanding of the enabling conditions necessary for sustained and meaningful success, and will work together to create solutions to barriers and build on opportunities for collective impact.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE UNKNOWNNS.** We are committed to learning and collaboration to advance our collective impact in a meaningful way. We know that there is much to learn, and we are committed to being open and transparent as we work together with others to implement this plan and meaningfully change the trajectory of risk to people, communities, and natural resources and restore fire-adapted and resilient landscapes.

For more information and for updated information on roundtables, please visit: [www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov)







Mogollon Rim Ranger District on the Coconino National Forest. The Kaibab, Coconino, Apache-Sitgreaves, and Tonto National Forests are part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative in Arizona. USDA Forest Service photo by Brady Smith.



## WILDFIRE CRISIS

### Implementation Plan

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# **Justification for Emergency Fire Order Containing a Recreational Shooting Prohibition Pikes Peak, South Platte, South Park Ranger Districts Pike National Forest**

**October 10, 2024**

## **SUMMARY**

The Forest and Grassland Supervisor for the Pike–San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (“PSICC”) is issuing an emergency fire order that includes a prohibition on recreational shooting in the Pikes Peak, South Platte, and South Park Ranger Districts in the Pike National Forest (“Forest”). This recreational shooting prohibition is part of an emergency Stage I Fire Restriction order, which has the purpose of minimizing the potential of human-caused fires during the extreme environmental conditions present on the Forest. The emergency fire order will be in effect from October 11 through December 31, 2024.

The recreational shooting prohibition in this emergency fire order is not subject to advance public notice and opportunity to comment pursuant to the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (Dingell Act) and the Forest Service’s implementing directive.

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the emergency fire order is to protect the public and National Forest System lands, resources, and facilities during the current period of high fire danger. An emergency exists due to high levels of continuous fine fuel loading, fire danger indices, and extreme weather conditions. These factors have created an environment in which ignition of wildfire from human-caused activities can occur at a much higher rate than normal. Further, wildfires from these ignitions have the propensity to spread quickly, presenting a risk to the public as well as substantial obstacles to firefighters in the implementation of wildfire suppression strategies.

Colorado is experiencing long-term drought, with the Pike–San Isabel National Forests experiencing moderate to severe drought and the Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands experiencing extreme to exceptional drought, according to the United States drought monitor. Colorado is experiencing unusually warm, dry, and windy weather, which has fueled many wind-driven fires during red flag conditions along the Colorado Front Range. As of September 2024, there have been nine red flag warnings issued in areas within the PSICC.

Denver and Colorado Springs are two large metropolitan centers near the Pike National Forest. The ranger districts on the Pike National Forest experience increased visitation due to this proximity, and it was necessary to enact recreational shooting restrictions on the Pike National Forest for public safety.



The PSICC has experienced an increase in recreational shooting, which has caused 56 wildfires from 2014 to 2023. In the Pike National Forest, seven wildfires have been attributed to recreational shooting. In the Pueblo Interagency Dispatch Center these fires are labeled “Turkey Tracks1-7”. These fires are all within the Turkey Tracks shooting range and pose potential harm and danger to the public and firefighters responding to these fires. The area is overwhelmingly used and responding to the fires is impacted by the amount of recreationalist in the area. It is difficult to mitigate its use even when actively responding to an incident. Prohibiting the act would lower the potential of fires and lower the risk posed to the public and firefighters. The PSICC borders hundreds of miles of private property and surrounds entire cities along the Front Range of Colorado. The Pike National Forest proximity to urban areas with large populations (the Denver metropolitan area with a population of 700,000 and the Colorado Springs metropolitan area with a population of 500,000) creates significant challenges for fire prevention and visitor compliance efforts.

## **DINGELL ACT COMPLIANCE**

This section addresses the need for and scope and duration of the emergency fire order.

### **Need for the Emergency Fire Order**

Pursuant to Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 5309.11, Chapter 30, an emergency recreational shooting order may be issued under the Dingell Act, for example, “when the Responsible Official determines that a shooting prohibition under 36 CFR 261.58(m) should be included in a fire restriction order issued under 36 CFR 261.52 because of the increased risk of igniting a wildfire from discharging a firearm.” These conditions are present here.

The recreational shooting prohibition in the emergency fire order is needed immediately to mitigate the significant adverse effects on natural resources and public safety caused by recreational shooting in the Forest. Specifically, the recreational shooting prohibition under 36 CFR 261.58(m) needs to be included in the emergency fire order issued under 36 CFR 261.52 because of the increased risk of igniting a wildfire from discharging a firearm.

A [2013 study](#) of ignition by rifle bullets completed by the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station showed that bullets of different calibers widely available to the public consistently caused ignitions in dry peat in conditions similar to soil surface temperature on sunny days. Sometimes several separate ignitions were caused from the multiple fragments produced by a single shot. These ambient temperatures during the study were a sustained 100°F to 110°F with approximately 710% relative humidity, which preserved the fuel moisture in the peat between 3% to 4.5%.

Conditions in the PSICC are at critical levels at or near the conditions addressed in this study. All districts in the PSICC have had critical weather days meeting these conditions. Fuel moisture in fine dead fuels in the Pike Ranger District is consistently dropping every week and is on track to be in the lower single digits within the next two weeks. The relative humidity is often in the single digit range during red flag conditions, with temperatures nearing 90°F and forecasts showing temperatures increasing.



Furthermore, the [2013 study](#) showed that ignitions from bullets smolder in peat for several minutes, which increases the likelihood for the surface fuels to ignite, causing a wildfire. The fuels in the Pike National Forest are fully cured grasses, which are where these types of ignitions can and have historically occurred. Due to their lack of moisture and persistent drought, these grasses would not slow a fire, but rather fuel it.

Recreational shooting and other human activities such as use of campfires and charcoal grills, smoking, and welding have a high likelihood under the conditions described to create a situation that threatens human life and property. Restricting these activities (recreational shooting, dispersed campfire use, smoking, welding and use of spark arrestors) helps reduce the potential of wildfires, in extreme conditions, caused by these specific activities.

Above-average temperatures and low relative humidity levels (<15%) exacerbate the conditions in which a wildfire can start and rapidly spread. Given the current environment in the PSICC, the likelihood of an ignition in that environment, and the risk of an ignition posed by recreational shooting, a prohibition on recreational shooting is required until environmental conditions improve in the PSICC. Below are graphs showing the fire danger levels in the Pike National Forest.

Fire Danger Rating Areas (FDRA's) are geographic areas with similar topography and fuels that tend to experience changes to the severity of fire danger conditions at the same time. This allows for the use of weather and fuels data to forecast the fire hazard within a given area. To accomplish this, different indices are utilized. The PSICC uses Energy Release Component (ERC), Burning Index (BI), and Ignition Component (IC) as the primary index values to determine overall fire hazard for a given FDRA. In broad terms, ERC is a measure of how intense a fire is likely to burn, BI is a measure of how fast it will spread, and IC gives a sense of how likely a fire is to start in the first place. As can be seen in the forecast graphs above, should an ignition occur in the Pike/North Pike FDRA's (which encompass the majority of the Pike National Forest) it is anticipated that rapid rates of spread and a high degree of energy release, and thus a high degree of resistance to control, would be anticipated by firefighting personnel. To date there have been at least seven shooting caused ignitions in one area (Turkey Tracks) straddling the Pike/North Pike FDRA's this year.



PUEBLO INTERAGENCY DISPATCH FIRE BUSINESS CALCULATOR							
FDRA	PIKE						
DATE	10/9/2024	10/10/2024	10/11/2024	10/12/2024	10/13/2024	10/14/2024	10/15/2024
STAFFING LEVEL	3	3-	3+	3+	3+	3-	3-
DISPATCH RESPONSE LEVEL	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
ADJECTIVE RATING	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE
ENERGY RELEASE COMPONENT	45	44	46	46	45	43	43
BURNING INDEX	26	26	28	29	27	26	26
IGNITION COMPONENT	18	17	23	25	19	14	15
PREDICTED FIRE DANGER	STAFFING LEVEL		DISPATCH RESPONSE LEVEL		ADJECTIVE RATING		
10/9/2024	3		MODERATE		MODERATE		
OBSERVED INDICES	ENERGY RELEASE COMPONENT		BURNING INDEX		IGNITION COMPONENT		
10/8/2024	47		29		29		

10/9/2024	PUEBLO INTERAGENCY DISPATCH FORECAST INDICES			NUMBER OF UNCONTAINED FIRES WITHIN THE ZONE	NUMBER OF RESOURCES COMMITTED WITHIN THE ZONE	SUGGESTED PREPAREDNESS LEVEL
				0	0	3
FDRA	ENERGY RELEASE COMPONENT	BURNING INDEX	IGNITION COMPONENT	STAFFING LEVEL	DISPATCH RESPONSE LEVEL	ADJECTIVE RATING
CENTRAL PLAINS	34	57	11	3+	MODERATE	HIGH
CONTINENTAL	43	25	17	3-	MODERATE	MODERATE
FRONT RANGE	54	29	26	4-	MODERATE	HIGH
HIGH PEAKS	41	27	17	3+	HIGH	MODERATE
HIGH PLAINS	55	84	17	3-	MODERATE	MODERATE
LOW PLAINS	27	32	5	3+	HIGH	HIGH
NORTH PIKE	50	28	21	4-	HIGH	HIGH
PIKE	45	26	18	3	MODERATE	MODERATE

PUEBLO INTERAGENCY DISPATCH FIRE BUSINESS CALCULATOR							
FDRA	NORTH PIKE						
DATE	10/9/2024	10/10/2024	10/11/2024	10/12/2024	10/13/2024	10/14/2024	10/15/2024
STAFFING LEVEL	4-	4-	4-	4-	4-	4-	4-
DISPATCH RESPONSE LEVEL	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
ADJECTIVE RATING	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
ENERGY RELEASE COMPONENT	50	49	51	51	50	48	48
BURNING INDEX	28	28	30	32	30	29	29
IGNITION COMPONENT	21	21	27	29	21	17	17
PREDICTED FIRE DANGER	STAFFING LEVEL		DISPATCH RESPONSE LEVEL		ADJECTIVE RATING		
10/9/2024	4-		HIGH		HIGH		
OBSERVED INDICES	ENERGY RELEASE COMPONENT		BURNING INDEX		IGNITION COMPONENT		
10/8/2024	52		36		37		

The recreational shooting prohibition in the emergency fire order exempts firearms discharged during hunting in compliance with applicable Colorado law. To the best of the Forest Service's knowledge, the PSICC has not experienced any fires attributed to discharge of a hunting firearm. The number of hunters on the PSICC is extremely small compared to the number of recreational shooters. Therefore, the risk of recreational shooting igniting a wildfire is far greater than the risk of hunting igniting a wildfire.

## Coordination

The PSICC has given notice of the recreational shooting prohibition in the emergency fire order to the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife. There are no Indian Tribes affected by the recreational shooting prohibition.

Due to the dynamic nature of these emergency conditions, PSICC staff will implement the following actions to minimize wildfire occurrences from recreational shooting:

- Continue to monitor weather conditions daily.



- Continue to monitor fuel conditions, burning indices, and energy release components daily.
- Coordinate actions with neighboring Federal land management agencies, State resource and fire agencies, County fire departments, and local cooperators.
- Coordinate with the PSICC Public Affairs Officer in developing and disseminating information regarding conditions and restrictions to the media and the public.
- Ensure appropriate posting of the emergency order along access routes and at selected dispersed and developed recreation sites.

### **Geographic Scope and Duration of the Recreational Shooting Prohibition in the Emergency Fire Order**

The recreational shooting prohibition in the emergency fire order is necessary to address extreme weather conditions in the PSICC and the risks of fire ignition presented by recreational shooting under these conditions. The Forest and Grassland Supervisor for the PSICC has determined that the area covered by the recreational shooting prohibition in the emergency fire order applies to the smallest area of NFS lands and for the least amount of time necessary to meet the purpose of the recreational shooting prohibition, which is to address the emergency presented by the extreme fire conditions.

The Pike National Forest was selected as the geographic scope for the emergency fire order because of its proximity to major population centers. Moreover, prohibiting recreational shooting in the Forest aligns with surrounding County shooting restrictions.

The emergency fire order will be in place from October 11 to December 31, 2024. Weather conditions are expected to improve in the winter, and the PSICC will continue to evaluate the situation to determine if the emergency fire order can be rescinded sooner.

### **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) COMPLIANCE**

This decision is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment under 36 CFR 220.6(d)(1), which applies to prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety and which does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision. Resource specialists have determined there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this emergency fire order that would preclude reliance on this categorical exclusion.

In addition, the Forest Service previously analyzed the effects of prohibiting recreational shooting in the PSICC Forest Management Plan Revisions. The Forest Service has therefore concluded that additional NEPA analysis is not required for issuance of this emergency fire order.

### **REFERENCES**

USDA Forest Service. 2021 Pueblo Dispatch Interagency Fire Danger Operating Plan  
<https://usfs.box.com/s/qwpsnf1u4fk0bb94p8130zhrczv3nwno>



Finney, et al. 2013. Finney, Mark A.; Maynard, Trevor B.; McAllister, Sara S.; Grob, Ian J. 2013. A Study of Ignition by Rifle Bullets. Res. Pap. RMRS-RP-104. Full report found at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/43918>.

<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CO>

**CONTACT:** Shawna Graves, Public Affairs Officer, Pike–San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands, 719-466-9122, [shawna.graves@usda.gov](mailto:shawna.graves@usda.gov)





Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest



# Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest

Impacts and management of a popular recreation  
activity

**Pike and San Isabel National Forests Cimarron and Comanche National  
Grasslands**

**January 13, 2021**





## Introduction

**The Pike and San Isabel National Forests Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands** is proposing to more directly manage target shooting (also called recreational sport shooting) on the three ranger districts on the Pike National Forest (the Pikes Peak, South Park, and South Platte Ranger Districts).

The Pike National Forest, named after Pikes Peak which is shown in the photo, encompasses more than 1.1 million acres in central Colorado, much of the which is within a one-hour drive of two growing metropolitan areas: Denver and Colorado Springs. The population in these areas of Colorado has increased dramatically over the past decade, in part because of the wonderful recreation opportunities the adjacent public lands provide.





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The Pike National Forest is located southwest of Denver and west of Colorado Springs.



**Dispersed target shooting,**



where forest visitors set up targets and practice shooting in an undesignated, undeveloped location, is a legal and historical use of National Forest System lands that has increased in popularity more than the population growth would predict.

The risks to public safety have grown with the increase in visitors and shooting activities. Impacts include injuries and wildfires caused by dispersed shooting. The three ranger districts have experienced a rise in visitor conflicts and increased levels of resource damage and trash accumulation. The resource damage is not sustainable, as shown in this photo from the Pikes Peak Ranger District of a hillside where trees were shot down, and paper targets were left behind.



The **Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest** project proposes to more actively manage target shooting as a recreational activity on National Forest System lands. One goal of the project is to prevent resource damage like the trees



shot down to stumps in this photo taken on the Pike National Forest in 2019.

To help inform this effort, Forest officials are asking for input on the project during the scoping period. This StoryMap presents information about why the project is needed, summarizes the proposed action, and provides information about submitting comments about the proposed action. The proposed action, project maps, and draft site designs are available on the [project website](#).



### Why is this project needed *now*?

Impact related to target shooting activities, such as repeatedly shot signs as shown in this photo from the South Platte Ranger District, are not limited to National Forest System lands. Over the past five years, several other agencies have recognized the need to manage

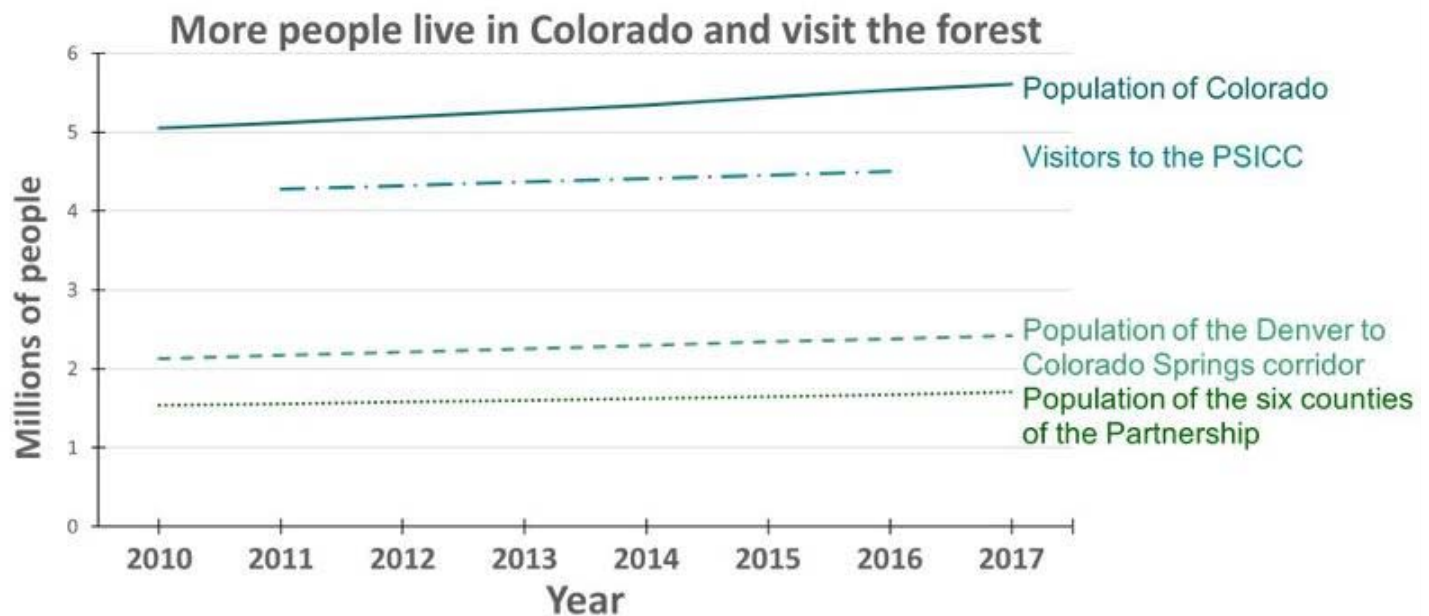


this recreational activity more actively.

In order to address issues related to target shooting on public lands in the Pikes Peak region, the Forest joined ten other land managers, including federal and state agencies (Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Parks and Wildlife), counties (Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Jefferson, Park and Teller), and public utilities (Denver Water Board and Colorado Springs Utilities) in convening the **Southern Shooting Partnership** (Partnership).

In 2019 the Partnership conducted a public outreach campaign. Partners surveyed public land users and recreational shooters about dispersed target shooting issues and held a series of public listening sessions in four counties. Public input gathered by the Partnership was considered when developing this proposed action. In addition, the Integrated Management of Target Shooting project is being supported by a grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to design shooting ranges.





### More people live near and visit the forest

Colorado's world-class outdoor recreation opportunities continue to entice people to live and visit here. Most new residents live in the cities along the Front Range, with a substantial portion living in or between Denver and Colorado Springs. These metropolitan areas are within an hour drive of most of the Pike National Forest. Population estimates on the graph are from U.S. Census Bureau (2019).

The estimated number of annual visits to the Forest (PSICC) has increased as the population increased. The estimated visitation is measured every five years (2011 and 2016 being the most recent) and reported by the Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring program. A greater number of users in the areas closest to the urban centers have resulted in a greater frequency of visitor conflicts and a greater impact on forest resources from the variety



of recreation activities.

Due to the greater number of people recreationally shooting on the forest, Pike National Forest locations are becoming known as established target shooting sites.

None of those sites have been officially designated or designed as shooting sites, and so are not managed for target shooting as the primary recreational activity. One shooting range is managed by a private group operating under a special use permit on the South Platte Ranger District.



## Unsafe and unsustainable

While most forest visitors abide by the rules and regulations, an increasing number of people are target shooting in a dangerous manner and damaging forest resources. Under the current dispersed shooting requirements, it is the responsibility of the



shooter to follow and implement some very basic safety and resource protection requirements.

Each year, additional acres of the Pike National Forest are damaged by expanding target shooting activities.

The resource damage includes forest visitors leaving tons of trash and spent targets, shooting trees down to a stump (as shown in this photo taken on the Pikes Peak Ranger District in 2020), failure to use a proper backstop, using explosive devices, and damaged vegetation and waterways. This damage results in greater management costs associated with trash cleanup, soil and water mitigations, and shooting-related wildfire suppression.

## Target shooting and wildland fires

Wildfires on National Forest System lands are tracked in a database. The cause of each fire is noted when available. This map



shows the locations of human-caused (meaning not lightening) wildfire ignitions that have occurred since 2000. Wildland fires due to target shooting activities are categorized as “miscellaneous” (not a unique category), and are shown in red on the map. Local firefighters (Forest Service and county) have noted an increase in the number of fires caused by target shooting activities.

Fires can start even when all regulations related to target shooting are followed. The increasing numbers of people target shooting in dry conditions has resulted in a need for frequent fire suppression activities. In the first seven months of 2020, the Forest responded to five fires at one popular target shooting location, the Turkey Track area in Douglas County.

## Resource damage

Areas on the Pike National Forest damaged by target shooting



activities are marked with orange dots and yellow shading. Zoom in to see areas in detail. Not all damage on the forest has been inventoried, so other sites may exist.

Specific examples of resource damage can be seen for sites identified by the black and orange pin symbols – **click the black symbols to see a photo.**

*How do we provide for target shooting and reduce risks to the public and environment?*

### The Proposed Action in brief

The issues raised by the growing popularity of target shooting in general and the damage resulting from unsafe shooting, in particular, are complex. They will require a detailed plan to resolve.

The Pikes Peak, South Park, and South Platte Ranger Districts propose to address the needs relating to target shooting opportunities and impacts across the Pike National Forest using a three-part approach:

1. Develop at least one shooting range on each district
2. Close areas of the forest to dispersed shooting based on potential risks to public safety, wildfire, impacts to adjacent private property, resource damage, user conflicts, or enforcement access
3. Implement the changes using a conditions-based, adaptive management framework.



## Develop shooting ranges

The Integrated Management of Target Shooting project proposes to evaluate seven locations as sites for shooting ranges on the Pike National Forest.

Some of these sites are already well known for target shooting activities. The locations vary in access, size, and potential for future development. These sites are indicated with the black open circle symbol on the map. Click on the black circle marker to see a photo of the location.



## **Identify areas that are inappropriate for target shooting**

National Forest System lands close to cities, homes or other developed areas, near sensitive resources, roads or trails are not appropriate locations for dispersed recreational target shooting activities.

Considering known information and existing feedback from agency personnel and forest visitors, forest officials used GIS map data to identify areas that are inappropriate for dispersed target shooting based on a list of safety and resource criteria. A full list of the factors is found in the proposed action on the project [website](#).

Areas designated as "Proposed Target Shooting Closures" are shown in the lavender color on the map.

Some parts of the Pike National Forest have historically been closed to target shooting through special orders or as a result of prior management decisions. The areas designated "Previously Closed to Target Shooting" are a darker lavender color outlined in the thick dash and are included in the proposed action to standardize and simplify closure authorities across the forest.





### **Manage target shooting using an adaptive framework**

Using a conditions-based, adaptive management framework to manage target shooting will allow the three districts to address issues unique to each of the specific areas being evaluated.

The framework considers the desired conditions (the status of resources such as water and wildlife or the visitor experience) and defines when those desired conditions are not being met. The framework also describes the management actions that may be used to improve conditions, as well as future actions that may be needed should a location be selected for development as a shooting range. These management tools could help designate parking areas at popular sites, as shown in this photo.

Details of the proposed adaptive management framework are provided in the proposed action on the project [website](#).





## Your input is important

The Forest Service invites public input on the Integrated Management of Target Shooting on the Pike National Forest proposed action during the public scoping period from **January 6, 2021 to February 22, 2021**. Your comments help us identify issues related to the proposal, determine whether alternative actions need to be considered, focus our effects analysis on resources of concern, and document the results in the environmental assessment as the basis for how to implement the project.

## Comments are most useful when they are specific, descriptive, and locatable

For example, this comment is **not** specific, descriptive, or locatable:

*"I have enjoyed target shooting in the forest for years and do not want*



*any areas closed."*

A more actionable comment might be:

*"I'm concerned about closing areas along NFSR 370. Closing the area to target shooting will mean I need to drive further from my home in Colorado Springs."*

Another comment that is **not** specific, descriptive, or locatable might be:

*"I am sick of hearing gunfire all the time."*

A more actionable version of this comment is:

*"I live in Harris Park and hear gunfire after dark consistently. I think daily closures are needed in this area."*

## **Comments must be submitted by February 22, 2021**

The Integrated Management of Target Shooting Project is subject to the project level pre-decisional administrative review, or the objection process, found at [36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B](#). In order to be eligible to submit an objection, the public needs to provide timely specific written comments during any period designated for public comment, such as this 45-day public scoping period.

## **Written comments can be submitted in one of the following ways:**

- **Forest Service online comment system:** Available at the Integrated Management of Target Shooting project [website](#).
- **Mail:** USDA Forest Service, 5575 Cleora Road, Salida, CO 81201, ATTN: Target Shooting Project
- **Fax:** 719-477-4233, ATTN: Integrated Management of Target Shooting Project, submitted in c/o Jennifer DeWoody, Project



## Team Leader

The Forest Service values public participation. Communication from the public regarding this project, including names of commenters and contact information, become part of the public record for this project.



## Next steps

Comments received by **February 22, 2021** will be compiled and reviewed by the project's interdisciplinary team. These comments will inform potential modification of the proposed action or development of alternatives and the analysis of effects of the proposed activities for the Integrated Management of Target Shooting project, according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Currently, the Forest expects to publish a preliminary



environmental assessment (EA) for the Integrated Management of Target Shooting project for public comment. Depending on the extent of public comments received on the preliminary EA, the final EA and draft decision notice may be published in autumn 2021. The final decision and timing of implementation activities depend on the resolution of any objections received to the draft decision, but are anticipated to occur late in 2021.

In this photo, volunteers clean up a popular dispersed shooting site on the Pike National Forest.

You can stay up to date with this planning effort and review relevant background materials by visiting the Integrated Management of Target Shooting project [website](#).

*Thank you for your interest in the management of  
National Forest System lands!*