



# Forestry and Fire Section

FORESTRY AND FIRE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023 Staff

**Michael Agena** -  
Forestry Supervisor

### Planning

**Jessica Hawkins** -  
Resource Specialist

**Nick Stremel** -  
Resource Specialist

**Emily Terhofter** -  
Seasonal Technician

**Olivia Stern** -  
Seasonal Technician

### Contracts

**Scott Golden** -  
Resource Specialist

### Volunteer Programs

**Shane Milne** -  
Resource Specialist

### Operations

**Zach Price** -  
Resource Specialist

**Dan Buelow** -  
Resource Technician

**Patrick Morgan** -  
Seasonal Technician

**Kiernan McClish** -  
Seasonal Technician

### Sort Yards

**Wayne Harrington** -  
Resource Specialist

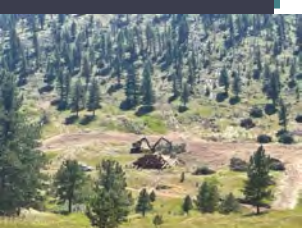
**April Temple** -  
Resource Technician

**Brendan Swanson** -  
Seasonal Technician

## 2023 Highlights

- ◆ Welcomed April Temple and Jessica Hawkins to the forestry workgroup as full-time employees
- ◆ Completed a 116-acre fuels reduction project on Hall Ranch, as part of a larger 420-acre project with several strategic partners
- ◆ Established nine new long-term monitoring plots to support the limber pine conservation program
- ◆ Limber pine presentation at the 2023 Colorado Open Space Alliance conference highlighting the program and its progress
- ◆ Collected limber pine seeds to support planting 2,000 seedlings in 2024
- ◆ Completed 49 acres of prescribed fire at Hall Ranch, burned 103 piles and 10,000' of ditches
- ◆ Hosted 17 forestry volunteer events totaling more than 600 hours of volunteer time
- ◆ St Vrain Storage Yard project is progressing with biomass material now on site





# Phase 1: Saint Vrain Forest Health

- ◆ \$1M Grant, \$2.3M Total Project
- ◆ Multi-Agency, Cross-Boundary Fuels Reduction Project
- ◆ ~420 acres mechanical/manual treatment completed, ~4,000 acres of planning
- ◆ Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Management (FRWRM), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant funding as well, with Partner match
- ◆ Involved multi-agency coordination/collaboration with Colorado Department of Natural Resources, The Watershed Center, City of Longmont, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service, and Private Landowners
- ◆ West Hall 116+ acres manual/mechanical treatment(40 acres added)
- ◆ Antelope Park (FRWRM) 20 acres mechanical treatment
- ◆ North Shore (FRWRM) 22 acres mechanical treatment
- ◆ Cook Mountain 132 acres mechanical treatment
- ◆ Eagle Ridge (EQIP) 130 acres mechanical treatment
- ◆ Markit! Forestry Management. LLC was the selected contractor
- ◆ 4,000 acres planning in St. Vrain Watershed –The Watershed Center

<https://dnr.colorado.gov/divisions/forestry/co-strategic-wildfire-action-program>



**COLORADO**

**Strategic Wildfire  
Action Program**

Department of Natural Resources



**Parks &  
Open Space**



# Forestry Operations

In 2023, our operations staff primarily focused on the limber pine conservation program. The remainder of long-term monitoring plots throughout Boulder County Parks lands were established. More detailed limber pine stand mapping efforts have also begun, targeting properties in the lower and upper elevational transition zones. Data compiled helped steer our spring and fall limber pine direct seeding, cone collection, and future seedling plantings for 2024. Highlights include:

- ◆ Nine newly established limber pine specific long-term monitoring plots, totaling 30
- ◆ Data collection on nearly 5,000 trees
- ◆ Stand mapping throughout 36 Open Space properties
- ◆ Public and staff direct seeding and seed-cleaning events
- ◆ Cone collection / initiating nursery production of 2,000 seedlings for planting in 2024
- ◆ Participation and hosting of inter-agency Seed Seminar
- ◆ Presentation at the Colorado Open Space Alliance 2023 Conference



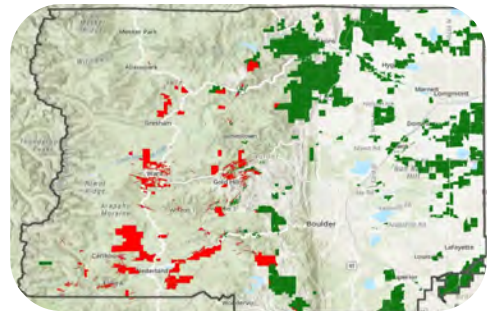
Staff surveying for white pine blister rust



Long-term limber pine monitoring plot



Cutting work, Reynolds Ranch



In-house operations also continued to provide a variety of assistance and forest products to the department, as well as partnering non-profit organizations. Examples this year include:

- ◆ Processing and delivery of firewood and tipi poles to Harvest for All Nations
- ◆ Material transport for ecological restoration work in the St. Vrain Creek corridor and straw bale barrier installations at Rabbit Mountain
- ◆ Delivery of honeybee logs for the CSU Extension Community Garden in Longmont
- ◆ Hazard tree removal for the Wapiti Trail reroute at Heil Valley Ranch
- ◆ Multi-workgroup weed pulling at Williams/Merlin
- ◆ Forest contract marking, county office/public holiday tree cutting
- ◆ Staffing a variety of volunteer events at our Community Forestry Sort Yards
- ◆ Continued forest management operations at Reynolds Ranch PA1U3



# Forest & Fire Planning



Data collection at the Wallace property

2023 was a solid year for the forest planning group. Two excellent seasonals joined the workgroup for the field season and later in the year, we welcomed a new full-time Resource Specialist to the group. With all the help this year we were able to complete pre-treatment inventories on the Wallace Property near Allenspark and post-treatment inventories at Caribou Ranch/Sherwood Gulch and Hall Ranch.



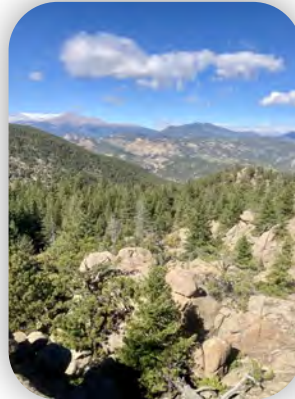
Forest planning by the numbers:

- ◆ 63 plots, 40 of which are new
- ◆ 311 acres of pre- and post-treatment inventory
- ◆ Over 2000 slash piles mapped
- ◆ ~5 miles of boundary painted
- ◆ 32 fuels samples collected

The fire planning group had a strong year despite the dry conditions in the fall. Fuel moistures prohibited burning most of the units at the Nelson Loop treatment project; however, 49 acres were burned over the course of two days with the assistance of other agencies. The Sheriff's Office Fire Crew was very active burning 103 slash piles and 10,000 feet of ditch as well as cutting and piling 10 acres at Sherwood Gulch. We also contributed to three Community Wildfire Protection Plans and worked collaboratively within the various watershed groups and fire sheds in Boulder County.



Nelson Loop prescribed fire



Burning slash piles at Walker Ranch



## Community Forestry Sort Yards



View from above Meeker Park (photo credit : C Moss)



Meeker Park CFSY



CFSY staff member checking in a customer.

The Community Forestry Sort Yard (CFSY) program is now in its 16th year. In 2023 there were 203 operational days. The Nederland CFSY was open from May 5 through November 18, and the Meeker Park CFSY was open from May 17 through October 21.

The total load count for 2023 was 7,165. This was a five-year low because of the lack of fires and an increase in precipitation in the area. There were 240 new property locations in 2023 (171 from Meeker Park and 169 from Nederland). In total, 1,784 different property locations used the yards, with an average of four loads per property.

In addition to woody biomass material, yard debris (pine needles, cones, grasses, and

Yard	Slash Tons	Wood Tons	Chip Tons	Yard Debris Tons
<b>Nederland</b>	<b>363.94</b>	<b>168.68</b>	<b>44.79</b>	<b>82.08</b>
<b>Meeker Park</b>	<b>492.77</b>	177.59	76.72	117.90
<b>Totals</b>	<b>856.71</b>	346.27	121.51	199.98

noxious weeds) has been collected for the past nine years. Pine needle removal from the home ignition zone is an important part of maintaining good defensible space. The collection of yard debris is popular at both sort yards.

Education and outreach are a large part of the program. Unfortunately, there were no Wildfire Awareness Days at either yard because of lack of seasonal staffing. We were able to continue a monthly newsletter, handout brochures, and managed a twitter account.



Nederland's resident moose (shown left), and another wet day at the Nederland Yard (shown right).



# Public Participation & Youth Corps

## Volunteer Projects

- ◆ 17 volunteer projects
- ◆ 202 volunteers contributed 610 hours of service
- ◆ Thinned four acres of lodgepole pine regeneration at Reynolds Ranch
- ◆ Held two cone-cleaning events during the winter months
- ◆ Held six limber pine seeding events, planting more than 20,000 seeds

## Holiday Trees

- ◆ 30 trees harvested and handed out to various county offices
- ◆ Provided 15 trees to Casa de la Esperanza
- ◆ Partnered with Resource Protection to host the second annual San Lázaro tree-cutting event
- ◆ Public holiday tree-cutting event held on Dec. 2 and 3 at Reynolds Ranch

## Youth Corps

- ◆ Thinned 10 acres of lodgepole pine regeneration at Reynolds Ranch
- ◆ Constructed 54 slash piles from thinned material



Volunteer prepares site for sowing limber pine seeds



Family hauling out a holiday tree at Reynolds Ranch





## Resource Management Forestry and Fire

For more information or questions:

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