

Wood collection sites ramp-up

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Front Range wood collection sites, made available to the public through the Peak to Peak Wood Program, are ramping up to gather pine beetle-infested wood before the beetles fly in mid-summer.

"This year, we have the opportunity to accept infested wood and move it into markets before it becomes a hazard," said Craig Jones, program manager for Peak to Peak Wood, a collaborative effort between the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado State Parks. "Private landowners who bring in limbed tree trunks, known as roundwood, that have been cut to specification can help prevent infested wood from being moved during beetle flight times and potentially infecting lower-elevation or urban forests."

The Peak to Peak Wood Program was created to move wood generated from forest

management projects on public and private land into private markets where it can be utilized. Recently, the program has been expanded to help deal with the impacts of mountain pine beetles, which already have killed more than 1.9 million acres of mature lodgepole pine forests in Colorado. The beetles typically fly between July and September, leaving popcorn-sized pitch tubes of sap where they have bored into the bark of infested trees. Infested trees still have green needles, while red or gray needles indicate that the tree already is dead and no longer is infested.

The Gilpin County wood collection site, about five miles north of Blackhawk on Colorado 119, will open for roundwood deliveries on April 9 and will accept beetle-infested wood through beetle flight. The collection site, which immediately chips all infested wood, will be open from 8 a.m. to 4:30

p.m. every Thursday through Sunday until October.

Boulder County's Meeker Park site opens on April 14 and will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every Tuesday through Saturday until Aug. 15 (closing date is subject to change). No beetle-infested wood will be taken beginning in mid-July. Larimer County's Stove Prairie site opens on April 18 and will accept wood from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every Saturday until July 18.

The Estes Park site, near Moraine Avenue and Elm Road, is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday year-round, but only accepts wood from the Estes Valley. Google maps of all site locations can be found on the Peak to Peak Web site at www.peaktopeakwood.org.

The Peak to Peak Wood program manager requests that landowners cut the roundwood 8 feet 2 inches or longer to encourage private

markets to utilize the wood. This year, Peak to Peak Wood is making several options available for moving the wood. In some areas, Peak to Peak Wood will arrange to pick up loads of roundwood that landowners have dragged near roadways.

Landowners also can leave information about the amount of wood they may have available for pickup by registering on the Peak to Peak Web site. Businesses interested in purchasing or having wood delivered also can register on the Web site.

Peak to Peak Wood already has moved several hundred tons of beetle-infested or standing, dead trees to Front Range businesses to create value-added products including sawlogs, posts and poles, firewood and fiber for mulch and animal bedding.

The Peak to Peak Wood Program is partially funded by a \$100,000 Working Partnerships Grant from the U.S. Forest Service. Colorado

State Parks and the Colorado State Forest Service, an outreach agency within the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, administer the program. Employees and resources provided by the five counties participating in the program, which also includes Clear Creek and Jefferson counties, were largely responsible for creating the most unique part of the program — the public wood collection sites and sort yards.

For additional information on log specifications and collection sites, visit www.peaktopeakwood.org. For more information about mountain pine beetles and how to identify infected trees, visit the Colorado State Forest Service Web site at www.csfs.colostate.edu and click on Forest Insects & Diseases under Quick Links.