

April 2013

Colorado Mountain Residents,

We wanted to take a minute and visit with you about what we are seeing in the forest as we conduct our annual pine beetle/general forest inspections on your land. We will break these observations down into 3 categories that our clients always ask about, Pine Beetle Observations, Wildfire Observations/Concerns, and General Forest Observations

1. **Mountain Pine Beetle:**

Observations - As we conduct annual pine beetle surveys from Boulder to Wyoming and from I-25 to Cameron Pass we are seeing a significant decline in MPB infected trees. I am not sure if the intense fire season played a part or if they are just not reproducing in the Ponderosa as well as they did in the Lodgepole but we are seeing a nice decline. 1-2 years does not make a trend but the results the last 2 seasons have been very positive. As we speak to agencies and contractors throughout Northern Colorado we are hearing the same thing. We are getting some help from Mother Nature but I believe the integrated management of cutting and removing infested trees and a focused preventative spray program is having a huge effect on your private lands.

Recommendations – You should continue to remove the brood/infested trees annually being sure to check for bugs earlier in the year and later into the year. We seem to be getting bug flight earlier into the spring and later into the fall than previously experienced. We would recommend continuing to spray your high value trees for a few more years and remember the healthier your stand of trees are the more likely they are to survive a few bug hits. Keep thinning those forests to improve your forests health.

2. **Wildfire Observations and Concerns:**

Observations – As you know the last 2 years have been very intense years for Wildfire. In 2012 alone we had the High Park Fire, The Fern Lake Fire, The High Drive Fire in Estes, and we had Home owners from Estes Park to Red Feather evacuated for Wildfire in December. Already this spring we have had the Galena Fire and it looks to be another very dry year. I don't ever recall completing surveys in Dec, Jan, and Feb with virtually no snow on the ground. We are also seeing a very large increase in Insurance Company Inspections/Enforcements.

Recommendations – Make sure you have good defensible space around your home and a wildfire/forest management plan for your larger forests. The more we talk to fire officials and see the results of wildfire in these communities we see the small details really do matter. Often times we have too much discussion about the larger forest and not enough on your homes Defensible Space Details. The CSFS has a new community program called Fire Adapted Communities. This is a step forward from their Firewise program. Basically we are no longer talking about "if" we ever have wildfire in your communities and have started talking about "when" we experience wildfire in your community. Making sure your home and community are

fire adapted when that time come. You can get lots of good details from www.fireadapted.org. Often times the work on your homes Defensible Space is not a matter of cutting a lot of trees and have expensive contractor work done but maintenance details. We want to make sure we have predictable fire behavior on your property and that starts with your Defensible Space. Through cutting, pruning, raking, and digging around your house we can create the kind of predictable fire behavior we are looking for.

3. **General Forest Observations:**

We have seen a nice decline in mountain pine beetle activity met with an increased wildfire threat in our forests. I do not say this to scare anyone but we would be doing our clients a disservice if we did not stress this point to you.

Many of you live in neighborhoods that have been active in managing their forests. This forest management is great for reducing your overall threat of fire, reducing fire intensity, and for neighborhood safety but the work you do around your home will have the most impact on its ability to survive a wildfire. Your neighborhood being “fire adaptive” is one thing, your home is another. Is your home “fire adaptive”?

We strongly encourage everyone to have a look at their homes Defensible Space and work outward from there. We are happy to come out and inspect your property, take photos, and make recommendations. We can come up with a plan that protects your home now while taking into consideration future insurance requirements. If you have acres of timber or steep slope issues we can come up with a plan that starts to reduce your wildfire threat while being cost effective. As I mentioned earlier, often times this is not a matter of expensive forest management work but a matter of maintenance and pruning. We will be doing a lot of maintenance work for our “out of town” clients cleaning up their properties in the spring and coming back out later in the summer and keeping up on the maintenance.

Please give me a call with any questions you have.

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www.fireadapted.org is also a great resource.