

FOREST RESTORATION AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION MEYER RANCH PARK

2021-2022



JEFFERSON
COUNTY COLORADO
Open Space

BACKGROUND

Jeffco Open Space (JCOS) will treat approximately 37 acres of ponderosa, aspen, mixed conifer, and lodgepole forests in Meyer Ranch Park. This work will focus on healthy forest structure, aspen enhancement, and wildfire risk reduction. Work is scheduled for completion by the end of 2022 and will contribute to our Conservation Greenprint goal for improving forest health on 1,000 acres of JCOS lands by the year 2025.

Treated areas will become much more open as unnaturally dense pockets of trees are thinned. Under natural conditions, frequent low-intensity fires would remove most young conifers, and infrequent high severity fires would almost completely replace dense stands, particularly lodgepole pine. A century of wildfire suppression has created an ecologically unhealthy forest with higher risk of catastrophic wildfire than would naturally occur in this area. JCOS management is intended to mimic the natural processes of fire to restore these forests to a more natural, healthy, and resilient condition.

Standing dead trees, down logs, and scattered woody debris will be purposefully left in many areas. Standing dead trees provide important habitat for cavity nesting species, down logs can serve as habitat for small mammals and insect species, and the smaller scattered material creates micro-habitats that benefit many native plant communities.

While no treatment can eliminate the risk of wildfire entirely, this forest management work will help slow the spread of wildfire and reduce the potential of a high severity crown fire, which will help protect, wildlife, outdoor opportunities, neighboring communities, and ecological services throughout the area.



Sample of pre-treatment, with significant ground level-fuels and canopy crowding.

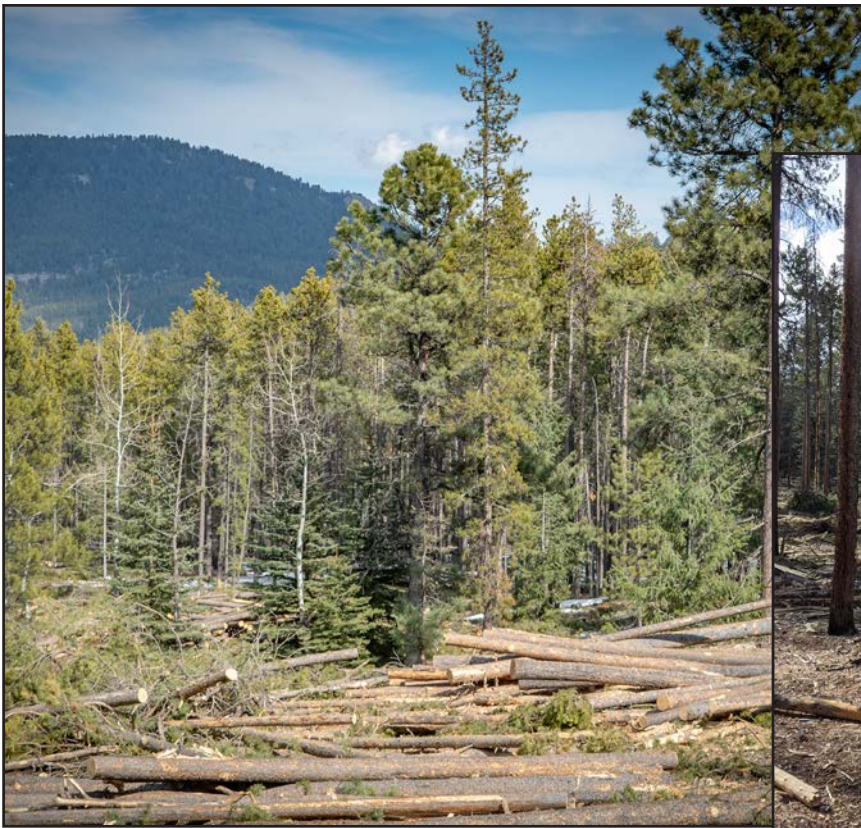


Sample of post-treatment, with canopy openings and increased spacing between trees. Surface cover contains wood chips and debris.



Large equipment will be used to remove trees up to 28 inches in diameter.

Many areas of the park will experience significant changes as seedlings, saplings, and mature trees are removed to restore areas of the forest to historical conditions. Some areas will see almost complete removal of overstory, including living trees. Large openings in the forest will allow existing aspen stands to increase in size and regain prominence on the landscape, mimicking the natural succession of nature.



Just like natural disturbance, some changes will be dramatic. Many areas will see significant tree removal. Woody debris left on-site provides valuable benefits to the local ecosystem while still reducing fire danger.



PROJECT DETAILS

- Visitors should expect brief and rolling trail closures, loud equipment, and temporary impacts such as rutting on the south half of the park.
- Dangerous equipment will be in use that may cause flying debris and other hazards. Please give crews space, be aware of signs, and respect closures!
- Large trees will be removed in some areas to create healthy, natural forest conditions.
- Mimicking natural events creates valuable habitat for many important wildlife and plant communities.
- Vegetation recovery and noxious weed treatment will occur over several years.

TIMELINE

- Data collection and project scope defined**
- Begin tree pruning and removal—
Winter/Spring 2022**
- Estimated project completion—Fall/Winter 2022**
- Noxious weed, erosion, and impact mitigation—
Ongoing**

Boundaries and timeline are subject to change.



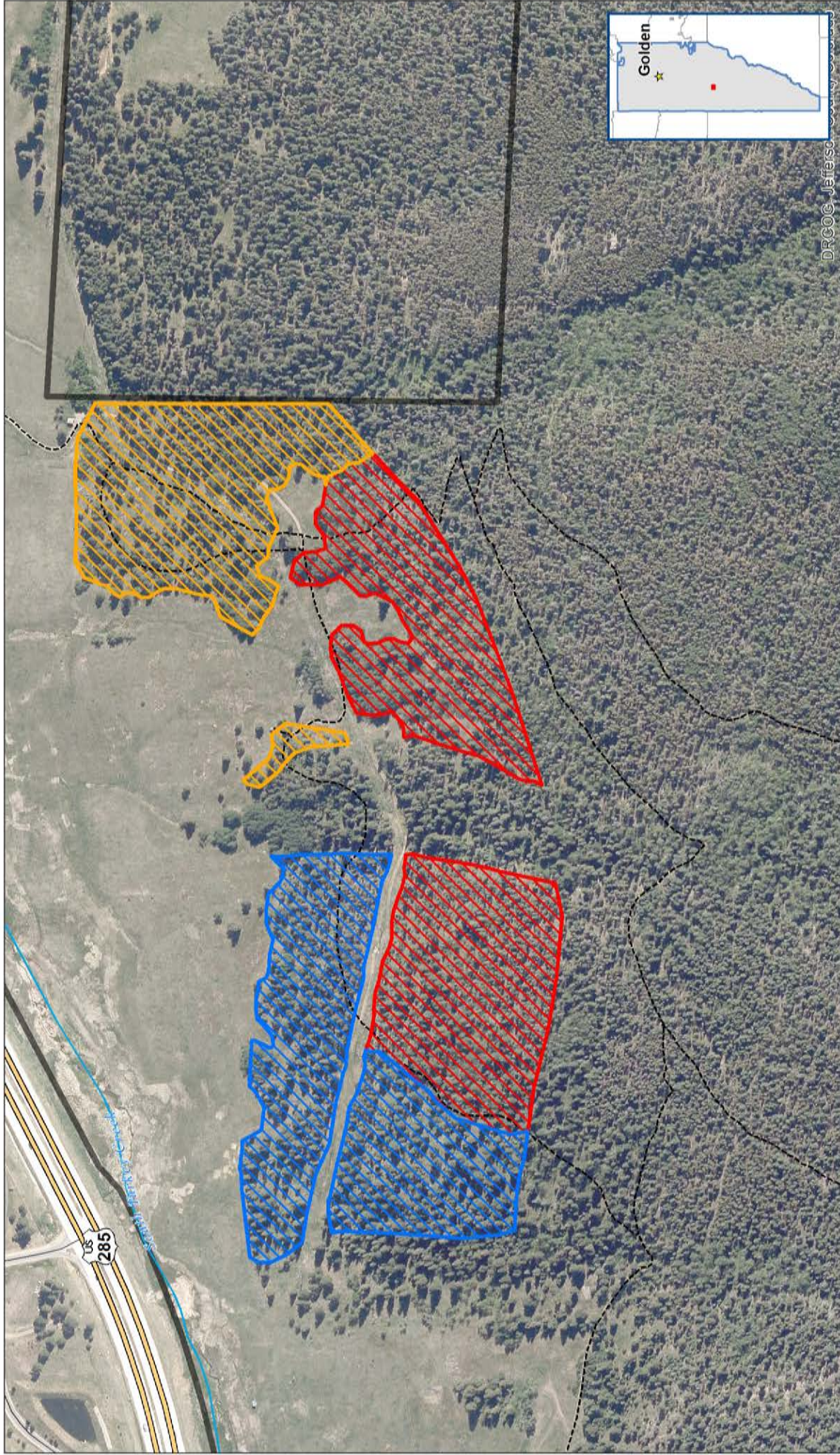
CONTACT US

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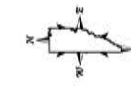
Meyer Ranch Park

2022 Forest Management Units



-  Unit 1 ----- Jeffco Open Space Trail
-  Unit 2  Jeffco Open Space
-  Unit 3

0 250 500
Feet
Scale is 1:5,000 when printed at 8.5"x11"
Last Revised 11/29/2021



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