



Pleasant Ridge Forest Management Project – Phase III

PROJECT SUMMARY

The **Pleasant Ridge Forest Management Project – Phase III** is a 157-acre forest restoration and fuels reduction project spread across 5 private properties and multiple forest types within the wildland-urban interface of Conifer, CO. The project is located within the Upper South Platte watershed, which millions of Coloradans (along with 18 other states) rely on for drinking water, irrigation, and energy. Prolonged droughts and increased average temperatures across the western U.S. are expected to contribute to longer fire seasons with large, high-severity wildfires. These large wildfires destroy homes and forests, and can cost the public millions of dollars in post-fire damages of water sources (as was seen after the Buffalo Creek Fire in 1996). Outlined in the Elk Creek/Inter-Canyon Community Wildfire Protection Plan, this area was given a “high” wildfire hazard rating because the area is densely populated, the steep undulating topography elevates unpredictable wildfire behavior, and the lodgepole pine/mixed conifer forest produces intense fires with high flame lengths. Through selectively thinning hazardous fuels, projects like Pleasant Ridge Forest Management Project – Phase III will reduce risks to life and protect Colorado’s precious natural resources.



Pre-treatment forest conditions of the Pleasant Ridge Forest Management Project – Phase III
(Photos: Emma Brokl, Colorado State Forest Service)

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to increase landscape resilience, promote fire-adapted communities, and to allow for safe and effective fire response. By decreasing overrepresented species (lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir), promoting underrepresented species (aspen and ponderosa pine), and removing diseased and dying trees, this project will improve forest health, watershed health, wildlife habitat, and increase resistance to insects and disease. It will also significantly reduce the amount of hazardous fuels in the forest, helping decrease the community’s wildfire risk. This project will expand off of multiple fuels reduction projects in the area (both CSFS and partners) and aid in the on-going efforts to protect the Pleasant Park community as well as neighboring communities.

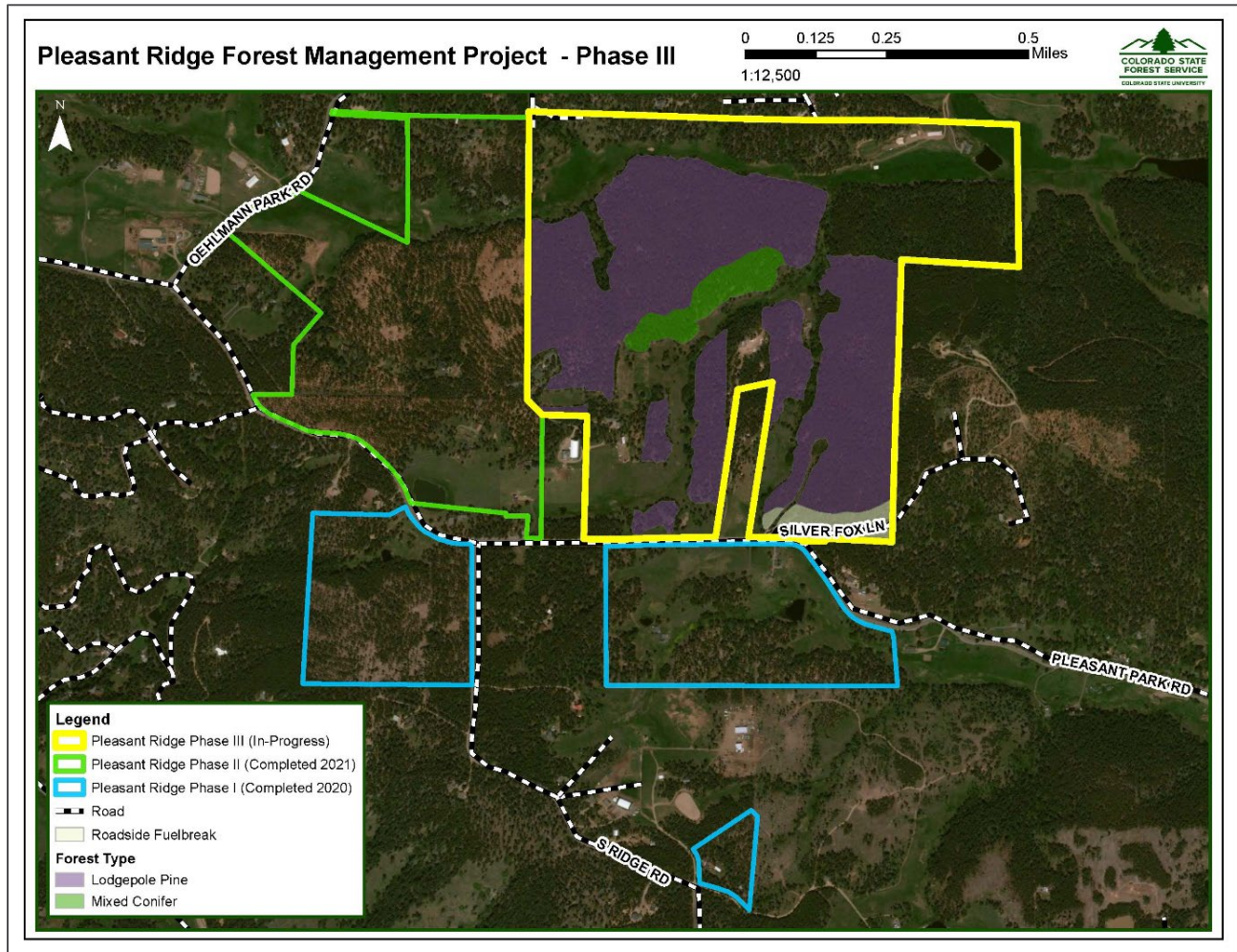
FOREST CONDITIONS

This project consists of 2 main forest types – lodgepole pine and mixed conifer. **Current Forest Conditions:** the lodgepole pine stands are incredibly dense, over-mature, and heavily infested with ips beetle and western gall rust. The understory is sparse and lacks regeneration. The mixed conifer stands consist of ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, blue spruce, and occasional aspen clumps. The understory is dominated by lodgepole pine regeneration, which is encroaching on the ponderosa pine and aspen. **Post-Treatment Forest Conditions:** forest canopy reduction and removal of diseased trees will open up the forest floor, allowing for understory regeneration, increase diversity in grasses and forbs, and promote ponderosa pine and aspen growth. Strategically placed patch cuts and roadside fuelbreaks will also break up contiguous fuels, reducing the risk of wildfire and promoting regeneration of a healthy new stand.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WORK

The majority of the treatment will be performed by mechanical means. Trees to be removed will be felled with a feller-buncher or hand-felled in steep slope areas and skid to designated landings where they will be processed as logs or ground and hauled off site for utilization. Slash, downed wood, and non-merchantable wood will also be ground and hauled off site for utilization.

MAP



COOPERATORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Colorado State Forest Service, U.S. Forest Service, Denver Water, Upper South Platte Partnership

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Colorado State Forest Service: <https://csfs.colostate.edu/>
- U.S. Forest Service: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/>
- Denver Water: <https://www.denverwater.org/>
- Upper South Platte Partnership: <http://uppersouthplattepartnership.org/>
- Elk Creek Fire Protection District: <http://elkcreekfire.org/>

CONTACT US

Colorado State Forest Service

Golden Field Office
1504 Quaker St.
Golden, CO 80401
CSFS_Golden@mail.colostate.edu
P: (303) 279-9757