

Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland

USDA Joint Chiefs' Award
FY2019 Accomplishment Report

Northern Front Range Collaborative Watershed Resilience Project

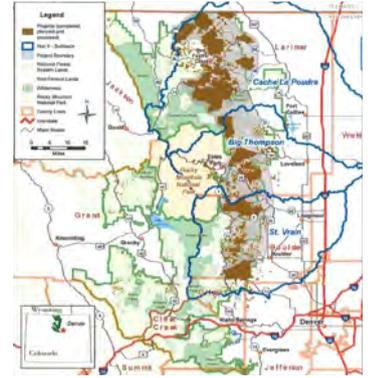
#SharedStewardship



www.fs.usda.gov/goto/arp/jointchiefs

The Vision

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests’ Northern Front Range Collaborative Watershed Resilience Project is creating a more resilient landscape across both public and private lands to reduce the detrimental effects of wildfire to infrastructure and watersheds, while engaging with 15 partner organizations. This effort essentially creates a “ribbon” of interconnected prescribed fire treatment units at a landscape scale targeted to protect watersheds, reduce risks of wildfire to communities and provide for a safer firefighting environment.



The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests received \$888,110 and the **Natural Resource Conservation Service** received \$1,676,390 for the project this year. This is a three-year project, funded annually, to implement specific conservation efforts that restore watershed conditions, support habitat for wildlife, enhance streams and manage invasive plant species.

Many people depend on the Forests for their livelihood, like cattle grazing. We must work closely with our **permittees** to balance the impacts our forest restoration activities can have on them.

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The **Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative** is working to increase the scope and scale of prescribed fire



**NORTHERN COLORADO
FIRESHED
COLLABORATIVE**

across the landscape to address watershed health, forest restoration and values at risk by bringing a variety of stakeholders together. The Fireshed partners, which include the USDA Forest Service, **Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed**, **Natural Resource Conservation Service**, **Colorado State University**, **The Nature Conservancy** and others, is sharing information and leveraging resources to address forest health concerns in northern Colorado. **#SharedStewardship**

The Collaboration

This project is a collaborative effort coordinated by the **Natural Resource Conservation Service** and the USDA Forest Service that focuses on areas where public lands intersect with privately-owned lands to address forest restoration and watershed health at a landscape scale.

Collaboration is and will continue to be key to the success of implementation of the Joint Chiefs’ Project. Of the \$888,110 received by the Forest, more than \$300,000 went into partnership agreements to expand public outreach, augment strategic fuels reduction and restoration planning efforts, provided for multi-year county noxious weed mitigation, and leverage to upgrade three water crossings to aquatic organism passages.

Internal collaboration is also an important piece to increasing the scope and scale of treatments. Specialists from fire, timber, wildlife, range and weeds, hydrology, engineering, recreation and more must come together to implement work on the ground that is sustainable and valuable to the forest.

The Preparation

A lot of work has to take place before implementation can begin. This preparation includes mapping, surveys, and access solutions just to name a few. It also involves meeting with potential partners to look at work across the landscape. Working closely with scientists from the **Rocky Mountain Research Station**, staff is utilizing the best science available to look at restoration possibilities into the future.



Fire cooperators, from state to county to local volunteer fire departments, are participating in the USDA Forest Service prescribed fire efforts, sharing in the risks and successes of these burns. **#SharedStewardship**



The Implementation

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests successfully burned 1,854 acres of Wildland-Urban Interface prescribed fire, associated with 1,513 acres of wildlife habitat improvement, for the Joint Chiefs' Project in Fiscal Year 2019, despite an abnormally wet spring and summer limiting burn window opportunities. Projects included the Red Feather Prescribed Burn and the Pingree Hill Prescribed Burn, all within the Poudre River Watershed.

Invasive weed treatment occurred on 375 acres within the Joint Chiefs' Project area this year, with even more expected in 2020. Contracts were awarded for restoration work of unauthorized routes and other important work to be implemented next year.

Implementation of the Joint Chiefs' Project has been carried out by USDA Forest Service employees, contractors and partner organizations.



The Monitoring

Monitoring is a key component of a successful project. Following the implementation of prescribed fire, many specialists monitor their resources. This includes botanists, hydrologists, soils scientists and others. We are also working closely with universities, like **Colorado State University's Colorado Forest Restoration Institute**, on post-burn monitoring opportunities with some findings expected in 2020.



The Canyon Lakes Ranger District has partnered with **Larimer County** to treat invasive species in areas impacted by fuels reduction activities like prescribed burning or mechanical thinning. The Joint Chiefs' Award allows the Forest to treat approximately 2,000 acres annually that may not have otherwise been treated.

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The Future

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests has plans to burn an additional 1,550 acres in Fiscal Year 2020 under the Joint Chiefs' Project to continue towards interconnected treatments providing for a "ribbon" of treatment across the landscape.

The Forest plans to implement 972 acres of mechanical fuels reduction and 1,200 acres of manual fuels reduction treatments. The mechanical treatments will provide 9,000 ccf of timber volume, which will be utilized as forest restoration byproducts by local businesses. Both mechanical and manual treatments will be strategically placed to set containment areas for future prescribed fire operations.

Contracts are in place to restore (obliterate) nearly 10 miles of unauthorized routes within the project area, reclaim 10 landings and reconstruct over 17 miles of Forest Service Roads in 2020.

Continued efforts with public education and collaboration will be critical as work continues to improve forest health. Funding will bolster community engagement, including public meetings and partnership expansion with multiple water suppliers.

Finalization of agreements with private landowners are expected, providing an increase in cross-boundary implementation.