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NEWS

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Firewood Sale Provides Chance to Clean up After Pine Beetles

GOULD, Colo. – The Colorado State Forest in north-central Colorado is selling self-serve permits now through September for beetle-kill firewood at \$10 per cord. The low fee is designed to encourage citizens to meet their wood-burning needs by utilizing the build-up of dead wood in the State Forest, as part of a forest management plan intended in part to reduce the fuel available for an intense wildfire.

Clearing dead trees also provides young, living trees more light, which encourages growth and enhances wildlife habitat. The State Forest has 28,000 acres of lodgepole pine, a majority of which has been impacted in recent years by mountain pine beetles.

Those harvesting the dead lodgepole pine trees should come prepared with a chainsaw, personal protective equipment and a willingness to work hard. CSFS foresters have already felled the beetle-kill trees in the five-acre sale area, but permit holders will need to cut or “buck” the felled trees into preferred lengths and load them onto their personal truck or trailer.

In addition to helping clean up the area, another advantage to utilizing this wood is that people can be certain that the wood is safe to transport without spreading the beetles. Only trees no longer housing live bark beetles or their larvae have been identified for removal.

The Colorado State Forest, a state trust property, runs along the west side of the Medicine Bow Mountains and offers 71,000 acres of forest, jagged peaks and alpine lakes with miles of access trails. While responsibility for recreation management at the State Forest falls under the jurisdiction of Colorado State Parks, the CSFS is responsible for forest management.

Coloradans who make the trip to gather firewood can take advantage of summer recreational opportunities the park offers, including camping, hiking, fishing and wildlife viewing. North Park and the adjacent forest are unofficially known as the moose viewing capital of Colorado, with more than 600 resident moose that can be viewed year-round. A Colorado State Parks pass is required to recreate in the State Forest, but not to gather firewood with a permit.

Interested woodcutters can buy a \$10 permit and pick up a map of the firewood area on a self-serve basis at the CSFS office located at 59228 Highway 14, 6 miles west of Cameron Pass and adjacent to Ranger Lakes. For more information about the State Forest firewood program, call 970-723-4505.

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