



Colorado Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Mitigation Grant: An important opportunity for Black Forest landowners

The “greater regional Black Forest” is a huge wooded area that stretches from Peyton to Larkspur and Franktown. Over a century of un-checked forest growth, and aggressive firefighting, this forest has become dangerously overgrown. These unhealthy forest conditions fueled the disaster of the 2013 Black Forest Fire, and could create another disaster in the future. The Pikes Peak Wildfire Prevention Partners report to the Governor, (download at www.PPWPP.org) showed that mitigation on a landscape scale is far more effective than scattered individual efforts. The Black Forest remains at a very high risk for future extreme wildfire behavior. Community-level mitigation is the best answer in reducing this threat

The problem: Overgrown forests

To avoid another catastrophic wildfire, the forest must be thinned to restore healthy conditions. That job falls to land owners. Property owners who live in wildland-urban interface environments have a responsibility to themselves, their community and future generations to be good stewards of the lands they own. Wildfires *will* happen again and insurance companies are increasing premium costs as a result of un-mitigated lands. But many landowners cannot afford the cost of hiring a contractor to mitigate five or more acres of overgrown forest.

The solution: Grant assisted mitigation

Black Forest Together Inc. has secured a grant from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. BFT will manage this program in strategic partnership with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) and the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP).

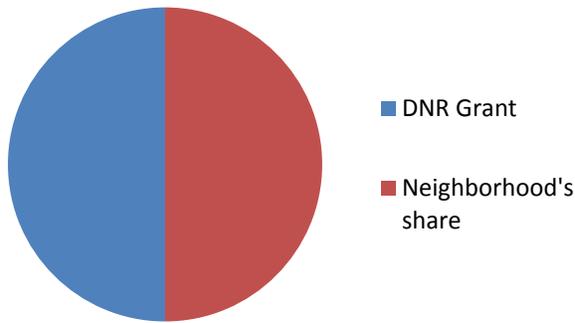
This grant will provide \$136,480.00 in matching funds to help us accomplish two goals:

- Perform wildfire mitigation (green forest thinning) on parcels larger than the typical five-acre property. **Mitigation does not mean clear cutting your property.** The goal is to create defensible space around homes and buffer zones to protect communities. This grant will pay 50% of the cost of hiring contractors to do mitigation work.
- Initiate a “Tree Donor” program that removes small trees from areas that need to be thinned, and transplant those trees in burned areas that need to be restored.

Do property owners have a say in the work being done on their property?

ABSOLUTELY YES! You have full control over what work is done on your property. To qualify for the DNR funds, work must meet Colorado State Forestry Service (CSFS) standards. These standards will be fully explained at the time of planning the work and establishing a contract. If that work is not what you want to be done, you can simply choose to not participate in the program.

Grant pays 50% of the project cost



How the grant funding works

Grant funds will pay 50% of the cost of an eligible project. The other 50% of the cost must be paid by participating neighborhoods.

If a neighborhood has an extreme financial need, it can provide “in kind” contributions for up to half of its share (up to 25% of the total cost). Those in-kind contributions can help a neighborhood *qualify* for a grant-

assisted project. But an in-kind contribution does not pay bills owed to contractors or suppliers. If some residents of a neighborhood have financial challenges that prevent them from contributing the full 50% share of the cash cost of a project, Black Forest Together will need to find another cash donor to make up that difference.

In-kind contributions are a great tool to help our elderly and low-income neighbors participate in this important program. But if a neighborhood has the financial means to pay all of its 50% cash share, it should plan to do that. The grant program will still reduce the cost of a mitigation project by 50%.

Bottom line: The DNR grant will reduce the cost of fire mitigation work by 50%

To learn more about how your neighborhood can take advantage of this important opportunity, please contact Black Forest Together, blackforesttogether@gmail.com

Examples of cash match and in-kind contributions

“Cash match,” or “hard match” includes:

- Cash payments
- Providing required supplies, such as equipment fuel.

“In-kind” contributions include:

- Volunteer time: One person working one hour on a project is credited as a contribution of \$22.43.
- Use of equipment: If a resident owns equipment, such as a chipper, he can be credited for the cash value of the use of that machine.