

On August 2, 2016, 15 leaders from local, state and federal agencies as well as local community and human services organizations served on a panel during a community meeting in the Town of Nederland. The following summarizes the questions we heard at the meeting as well as the responses that were provided. Questions taken in writing that were not answered at the meeting are answered here as well. The full 3-hour meeting was captured via live video. The recording can be seen on Facebook at Nederland Colorado Town Hall.

Forest Mitigation:

- **What types of future treatment do we need?**

It takes a village to reduce risks to homes. Homeowners become informed through programs such as Firewise and Wildfire Partners. Additionally, there are things we can do at a landscape level on public lands: We can help create defensible space along the Wildland Urban Interface by promoting landowner opportunity to create a buffer zone that's complementary to what they are doing on private; and we can implement larger treatments units in watersheds.

- **How do treatments help firefighters during wildfire?**

Whether intentionally or as a byproduct, treatments (thinning, patch cuts or clear cuts) help reduce the risk of wildfire. Some treatments make the landscape more resistant to bug, climate change, drought and other natural forces that make forests susceptible to wildfire. When wildfires hit some types of treatment, flames move from the treetops to the ground and as a result allows firefighters to more safely and effectively engage the fire

- **Where do we learn about strategic mitigation/preparedness plans at local/county/federal level?**

Some great information can be accessed at the following web address:

<http://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/colorado-community-wildfire-protection-plans/>

- **Are there plans for the Forest Service to replant trees on the National Forest land that was burned?**

Our burn area recovery team toured the burn site and determined that the area would likely regenerate on its own. Thousands of seeds were released from cones in the aftermath of the fire and we expect to see grasses, small plants and aspen emerging quickly. We are considering planting ponderosa pine in the spring to give them a head start on establishment. Weather does play a role in how the area regenerates and so we will continue to monitor it in the coming years.

- **Will the Forest Service cut down trees near homes in burned areas? These are heavily used by local families for daily walks. When will they be safe to use again?**

Following a wildfire, the Forest Service often cuts down burned trees that may be considered a hazard along Forest Service System roads and trails. In most circumstances, we do not cut down trees in the

general forest area. In the Cold Springs Fire area, there are no Forest Service System trails, but we will look at cutting trees that pose a hazard to the system roads. If there is a burned tree adjacent to your private land that may impact your property if it fell, please contact us and we can assess it.

- **What can be done to have people who own unmitigated property to have it mitigated?**

Currently both the State of Colorado and Boulder County do not have statutes or ordinances in place to define requirements for defensible space for existing homes within the WUI. Boulder County Land Use does have requirements for new home construction and works with these residents to make sure a new home is built and landscaped with wildfire risks in mind. Within some local communities there are existing covenants that address wildfire mitigation but enforcing these typically result in civil legal battles. The best solution is to work at the local level and talk with your neighbors about the shared risk and how collectively the community/subdivision is more likely to survive a wildfire than working at property mitigation on a house by house approach.

- **Do you have suggestions for encouraging our neighbors to get more proactive with mitigation?**

We encourage everyone join Boulder County's Wildfire Partners and to talk with their neighbors about mitigation. There are currently 133 partners in the Nederland Fire Protection District with more homeowners joining every day. These individuals are our early adopters, community leaders, and ambassadors for mitigation. They are the best resource for spreading mitigation from home to home. Knowing this, Wildfire Partners helps our participants encourage their neighbors to join the program in many different ways.

We also direct individuals to the Wildfire Partners website (www.WildfirePartners.org) and the Wildfire Partners hotline (303-441-1420). If a homeowner has a specific question or concern about mitigation, Wildfire Partners can answer it. Wildfire Partner's 35 ally organizations also help recruit and answer questions about mitigation. Specific initiatives to help neighbors encourage neighbors to perform mitigation include: 1) the Wildfire Partners Tour of Homes, 2) Wildfire Partners Community Chipping Events, and small gatherings with a Wildfire Partners Mitigation Specialist.

The Wildfire Partners Tour of Homes gives reluctant homeowners an opportunity to see what mitigation looks like and ask their questions in an informal, outdoor setting. Wildfire Partners Chipping Events help bring neighbors together and offer new and old participants a financial incentive to join. For qualifying events, Wildfire Partners pays 100% of chipping costs for certified homes, 75% of chipping costs for Wildfire Partners who have received an assessment, and 50% of chipping costs for those who have been accepted into the program. Wildfire Partners Mitigation Specialists are also available to meet with small groups of neighbors to answer questions about the program and encourage everyone to perform mitigation. Neighbors talking with and working with neighbors is a central message and core value of Wildfire Partners. Connections between neighbors are critical for mitigation and serve as the foundation for a resilient community.

- **How do we get someone from the local fire crew deems our home and property and access to it defensible by them? A Wildfire Partners assessment may not be enough.**

The local fire protection district or department may be able to look at your home. Another option is to call the Boulder County Fire Management Officer (Jay Stalnacker: jstalnacker@bouldercounty.org) and he can make an appointment with the homeowner to discuss mitigation and suppression tactics that may be considered during a protection effort at or around your home. The simple answer for all homeowners is to eliminate or reduce ALL combustible materials around your home within a 30-100' distance.

- **Does the Forest Service publish data on water content in the trees in the area? If so how often is that updated during fire season? What's current water content and what's considered average or normal?**

Live fuel moisture is collected every two weeks at 7 locations across the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest. This information can be found at:

http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2tfc/FTCFireDanger.htm

- **How can the Forest Service mitigate in the smaller pieces among the mining claims on North Boulder Creek (will that ever happen?)**

At this time we do not have a specific project planned for that specific location. We will initiate a project in September 2016 where private landowners can complete defensible space (Colorado State Guidelines) mitigation on National Forest System lands if defensible space mitigation has been completed on an individual's private land.

- **Please provide a website link to Mark Finney's research on prescribed fire, which was mentioned during the community meeting.**

Here is a website link to Mark Finney's profile at Missoula Research. During the meeting we mentioned some of his more recent research, which talks about how implementing 40,000 acres of prescribed fire along the entire Front Range will help keep forests in good condition.

<http://www.firelab.org/profile/finney-mark>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/research/people/profile.php?alias=mfinney>

- **What will happen with the trees that received heavy slurry drops?**

Simply explained, slurry is mainly composed of salt. The application of slurry to trees, grasses and even homes is used often during fire suppression and at times very effective in slowing the fire spread. Slurry is a fire retardant not fire extinguisher. The mixture of water and "salt" is colored with red pigment so the aircraft pilots can see where they are applying the slurry from the air. When washed off within 24-72 hours, the slurry has very little negative effects to most man-made and natural materials. If slurry is left to dry in the sun it may not wash off easily and could stain man-made materials like wood and plastic. It is also corrosive to certain exposed metals. Natural materials, like trees seem to have resilience to the slurry. Often they appear dead, but this is the red pigment. It can stay visible for years after the application but over time will slowly be washed off by rain and snow. Unfortunately, some natural

materials that received heavy concentrations of slurry may not survive due to the amount and coverage of the slurry applied. In many cases only time will tell if the natural material will recover.

Firefighter Safety:

- **Can you please address how we as landowners can help prevent another Yarnell Hill life loss? Did you say you need 12-acre patch cuts in lodgepole to help with life safety of firefighters?**

There is very little that ground forces and aerial resources can do to be effective in crown fires. Crown fires spread very rapidly from tree top to top, throwing embers and burning material downwind. This is often referred to as extreme fire behavior. The characteristics of extreme fire behavior are intense heat, superheated gases, and rapid rates of spreading. In conditions of extreme fire behavior, most aviation resources are ineffective and engaging directly with the leading flanks or head of the fire on the ground is extremely dangerous. Due to the intense heat, smoke, super-heated gases, prolific and rapidly spreading spot fires this situation usually leads to entrapment, burn over and very minimal chance of survival. Structure protection in this situation is tremendously difficult, creating life-threatening risks.

Fuel continuity plays a huge part in fire behavior. By reducing canopy density through thinning fuels treatments and/or patch cuts, land managers can moderate fire behavior to a surface fire which allows firefighters to more safely engage the fire and immensely increases the effectiveness of control tactics implemented by ground and aerial resources. Firefighters also need areas clear of vegetation such as brush and timber to withdraw to in the event that the wind shifts, the fire out flanks them or they are overtaken by spot fires. These areas are typically referred to as Safety Zones, if adequately sized. If not adequately sized, these shelter deployment areas offer diminished chances for survival. Fuels treatment such as thinning and patch cuts not only provide for increased firefighter safety but are also strategically used to gain an advantage over the fire's progression.

Landowners can help improve firefighter safety by:

- 1. Supporting local land management fuel treatment practices.*
- 2. Implementing fuel reduction treatments on their own lands.*
- 3. Diligently implementing Firewise techniques and practices.*

Slash Piles:

- **What role do slash piles play in wildfire? Did they make the Cold Springs Fire worse?**

Firefighters who were on scene during the Cold Springs Fire report that the Forest Service's treatment unit gave them a tactical advantage. The work completed last year had increased the space between tree tops and removed a lot of heavy fuels from the overstory. When the fire came running through the treetops and hit the treatment unit, it brought the flames down to the ground where firefighters were more safely able to engage it.

The fire moved through portions of the treatment unit as a result of topography and wind, not because of the piles. The burn area where the piles were is not more severely impacted than other areas of the fire.

- **Does it matter if slash piles aren't built to specification?**

Pile construction specifications are designed to help the piles burn well in wintery conditions so that as much material is consumed as possible. If the contracting officer determines that the piles are built well enough to burn and consume roughly 90 percent of the material in the pile, then he passes them during inspection even if they don't perfectly match the specifications.

While we try to keep piles spaced away from each other and trees, this isn't always possible due to the amount of fuels that need to be removed from the overstory. Piles are burned in the winter, in cool and snow weather to minimize the potential for spread. However, single tree torching and creeping between piles does occur, and this is OK! It helps further the objectives of the fuels reduction projects and brings some small amount of prescribed fire back to the landscape under the safest conditions. Single tree snags are good for wildlife too!

Piles that sit too long sometimes degrade and won't burn efficiently. We reconsider our options when addressing older piles. Options include rebuilding prior to burning, chipping and lopping/scattering.

- **There are 15-20 slash piles within 100 feet of our home at North Skyview/Ridge Road that have been there for 8 years.**

Those piles will be prioritized to be disposed of this winter. They are on the list for disposal through burning, chipping, or scattering.

- **What are we doing about slash piles west of Gold Hill?**

Some of the piles west of Gold Hill are on a chipping contract that was recently awarded this summer. The remaining piles are planned to be burned.

- **Why do we have to wait so long to remove slash in some places when it was removed so quickly in others?**

In the best of circumstances, slash piles would be either chipped or burned within a few years of the vegetation management. The Boulder Ranger District does have a backlog of piles but we have made efforts to catch up through chipping and burning. We are working to address the backlog of slash piles and the newly created slash piles. We are working towards a better balance of our vegetation management treatments and slash pile disposal.

- **Can we remove the slash piles ourselves?**

Unfortunately, you are not allowed to remove the slash piles. In the past people have removed the larger pieces of wood (mainly for fuelwood) from the pile and have broken up the structure and arrangement of the pile so that it could not be burned.

- **What are the Forest Service's plans for burning slash piles this winter?**

The Forest Service works to burn as many piles during the winter months as the conditions will allow. In 2016, we burned about 900 acres and hope to increase that amount if the weather conditions allow. We will post a list of priority project areas on our prescribed fire page later this fall:

<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4648/>

Long-term/Counterculture Camping:

- **What is attracting counterculture/long-term campers to Nederland?**

The same thing that has attracted people to Nederland for decades attracts homeless and quasi-homeless people today. It's a beautiful area with great culture, close enough to Boulder, far enough from Boulder drama. Some people come to get away from the stress of living on the streets or in shelters--although considering that the Boulder shelter shuts down its drop-in bed program in the summer, and sleeping outside is illegal in Boulder, plenty of folks have no other option. Other people come because Nederland has a history of being open to countercultural ways of life. And many people are just following the same patterns we see across the country: that homelessness is moving from urban areas to public lands. The Nederland area is feeling this more acutely than other places, because we are one of few places where someone can take a quick bus ride between free camping and great homeless services; but this issue is being dealt with in many, many places.

- **What enables them to stay?**

If the homeless followed charity and freebies, they would be in Boulder (21 meals a week, multiple food pantries, addiction services, job training...) as opposed to Ned (1 meal a week, 1 tiny food pantry bag a month). Instead, they are here because there is a safe place to sleep. And as long as they feel that the forests--which are financially free and offer personal freedom--are a better option than getting tickets for sleeping on the streets, they'll be here. There can be small ways to dissuade folks from coming up. For instance, as the community has decided to give fewer hitchhiking rides, fewer people are coming or staying for as long. However, there are always unintended consequences to changes like that; in this instance, more homeless and quasi-homeless people who can't get rides are camping closer to town, illegally on private land. If there are legal, civil ways to dissuade some folks from coming up the mountain, we will consider those sorts of options; but very many people will be here, no matter what.

- **How can we encourage good behavior?**

On one hand, the various law enforcement agencies have many behavioral expectations. Those groups have begun to collaborate more effectively to know who is camping, to address violations, and to offer their presence before there is a need to be punitive. On the other hand, the human services agencies have the relationships built of engagement and trust that can encourage personal responsibility. Whether it is better communication from the Boulder shelters to prospective campers, or the direct outreach folks do in Nederland (with a camper guide, friendly conversations, and compassionate follow-up), it often takes a personal touch to explain why campfires need to be doused, or what folks can do with trash. Better signage may help, in some ways. Expanding the sheriff's water program, to encourage better fire dousing, could help. The presence of large piles of trash is much more about illegal dumping, than illicit campers, but we can encourage campers to bring their trash to town, if we have an easy, affordable way of processing it.

- **What are officials doing to address the problems?**

NICHE (Nederland Interagency Council on Homeless Encampments) meets regularly, to manage this situation as best as we can. Our agencies work together for any helpful step we can take. We listen to

the community's concerns and try to work with individuals and the grass roots organizations that care about this issue. We are in conversation with other areas that deal with this particular problem, and other governmental agencies that work with homelessness. Police presence in the campsites has increased many times over this year. Human outreach continues to be a vital piece to the puzzle of responses. Proposed policy adjustments take longer to implement, but many other ideas are being considered.

Forest Service Recreation Management:

- **Can we address some of the conflicts dispersed camping presents in the wildland urban interface by studying the options of eliminating all dispersed camping and/or developing more campgrounds? What would it take for the Forest Service to initiate a study like that?**

Designated dispersed camping areas are undeveloped sites (no toilets, trash, etc.) where minimal improvements have been made to reduce resource impacts (fencing, signs) ... basically telling folks to “camp here.” These are typically put in place after an area has already been heavily impacted by camping in order to reduce the footprint of the area being used.

Our regulations allow us to consider a range of management options, from developing new campgrounds to eliminating dispersed camping altogether. Anything that would change the current use requires public involvement from interested parties across the nation as well an analysis of the broader impacts (social, economic, resource). Other needs include funding for planning and implementation. The timeline for a study like that is often one to two years.

As part of anything we consider, we first need to identify the issue we are trying to solve, known as the “purpose and need.” We then assess the additional impacts the proposed management may have. For instance: Will this action solve the immediate problem? If so, where will this use go? Will this use be displaced to areas that are even more difficult to manage? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed when considering proposed management changes.

- **Is there a precedent for the Forest Service prohibiting dispersed camping in areas close to populated areas? If so where?**

National Forests across the country are all managed differently based on conditions. Some National Forests have restricted uses, including dispersed camping and/or campfires. Examples we are aware of include the Angeles National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest.

- **What needs to be done to begin the process of studying a camping ban or developed camping areas or campground hosts near Nederland? How do we get that started? How can the community help?**

To start, work with the local community leaders to develop a proposal. Then the community leaders can come to the Forest Service with a unified request. The Forest Service would then need to take this through our NEPA process, which involves an analysis of impacts and public input.

- **If dispersed camping in the Wildland Urban Interface were illegal, would that help the patrol issue?**

One benefit of designated dispersed camping is that law enforcement and fire patrols know where people are likely to be camped and are able to respond easily and quickly if there is an issue.

We have not analyzed the possible effects of eliminating all dispersed camping--impacts on patrols need to be considered before taking such action.

- **Can the Forest Service create camping fire exclusion zones around communities? For example, a five-mile radius around Nederland or other towns surrounded by National Forests?**

The Forest Service could study the possibility of having Stage 1 Campfire Restrictions in the Wildland Urban Interface. This would require a NEPA study to assess environmental impacts. Bear in mind, however, that there are many sources of wildfire ignition, lightning being the most common. Cars, cigarettes, and sparks from machinery are others, in addition to careless and abandoned campfires. Further, such a campfire restriction would apply only to US Forest Service Land--private land would not be included in such a campfire restriction.

- **Can we shut down West Magnolia until it can be converted to a paid campground with an attendant?**

We are not considering shutting down the dispersed use at West Magnolia in the short term.

- **What would it take for hosts from Kelly Dahl to also drive through West Magnolia?**

While that seems reasonable, the campground hosts work for American Land and Leisure, who are permitted to manage the developed sites on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP). This permit would need to be renegotiated and require additional funds from the ARP.

Fire Ban:

- **What are the factors that help fire officials determine when a ban is needed?**

Forest Service fire personnel collect information weekly from 7 different locations across the National Forest, measuring fuel moistures and assessing the long term forecast as well as pressure on staffing and resources due to fire activity across the nation. This determined local conditions by Ranger District.

We speak with Sheriffs weekly and work closely together to coordinate fire restrictions when they become necessary. Often, our criteria is not fully met when the Boulder County Sheriff decides to go into fire restrictions. For simplicity and compliance, in most cases, the Boulder Ranger District enacts restrictions in unison with the Sheriff.

- **Can we get more signage/better signage/what are best locations?**

Please let us know if you see an area on the National Forest that needs signage by emailing brdvis@fs.fed.us. Boulder County has received a grant to purchase signage that discusses good campfire behavior and proper techniques for extinguishing campfires. The sign easily flips to inform the public of fire bans.

Law Enforcement/Patrols:

- **How are law enforcement patrols currently covered between the US Forest Service/Boulder County Sheriff/Nederland Marshal?**

The U.S. Forest Service has one federal Law Enforcement Officer covering 160,000 acres of National Forest on the Boulder Ranger District. He is the Forest Service's only fully qualified law enforcement officer who carries a gun. Our Forest is fortunate to have one law enforcement officer for each district. Many forests have one officer covering the entire forest. We also have several forest protection officers who are able to issue tickets on minor infractions if they encounter issues while performing other duties. These folks are generally recreation specialists who are in charge of cleaning bathrooms, maintaining trails and trailheads, picking up trash.

Through a cooperative agreement, the US Forest Service pays for a mountain deputy to patrol our campgrounds and dispersed camping areas and the sheriff's office has the ability to respond to issues on federal lands. This agreement allows for two patrol shifts a week during peak season. The Boulder Sheriff's Office also funds the Town of Nederland Marshal's office to support calls in the immediate area.

- **Is there a fine for littering in National Forest? How is littering being enforced?**

Littering is enforced by either contacting those associated with it at the time of the incident (i.e. trash thrown from a moving vehicle: sanitation issues in an occupied campsite) or through following up on information found in the trash.

Maximum penalties under federal law for this type of offense, which is a Class B Misdemeanor is \$5,000.00 and/or six months imprisonment.

- **How can the 14-day camping ban be enforced?**

This can be a challenge as we need probable cause/reasonable suspicion to believe someone has violated this regulation. It applies to people, not property such as tents.

- **What is the fine for illegal campfires? How is it being enforced?**

Under federal law up to \$5,000 and/or six months imprisonment is the fine for an illegal campfire.

The Boulder County Resolution 2006-2 makes violating the fire ban a class 2 Petty Offense. The fines are \$500 for the first offense, \$750 for the second offense, and \$1000 for the third offense. Mountain deputies are responding to any reports of illegal fires and citing people when contacted. When we have time we will also do proactive patrols not just for illegal campfires.

The fire ban is currently being enforced with a zero tolerance policy.

- **How are we enforcing the temporary shooting ban? Do we have signs up about it? Who should one call if one hears shooting?**

Similar to our fire ban, signs are a key component to bringing attention to this prohibition, as well as enforcement. Without adequate signage we can't enforce it other than contacting and educating any in violation of it. Keep in mind that the shooting ban is only in effect on USFS land – shooting on private

land is still allowed. Contacting county dispatch (303-441-4444) is the most effective method to summon a law enforcement response.

- **Is there a strong effort to obtain and “run” ID’s when police/sheriff/forest rangers are in contact with campers?**

Yes. This is standard practice for all commissioned law enforcement. Forest Protection Officers do not do this.

- **What is being done to track campers that are moving away from “harassment” and farther into the woods?**

If there is reason to believe a regulation or law has been broken, the person is identified and this information is shared among officers.

- **Fines mean nothing to people who have no money to pay them. Why can’t the penalties be increased so these individuals are removed from the forest?**

This is a tactic that is used depending on the circumstances. Civil rights must be taken into account when a judge levies this punishment. There is a process for changing penalties of any criminal activity and that is through the legislature. Another key component is the overcrowding in our jail and we simply don’t have room to lodge people on petty offenses.

- **How does the Forest Service partner with county and local law enforcement?**

Although Forest Service jurisdiction & authority is different from county & local partners, each works with the other in a variety of settings through relationships established over time as well as written agreements. Additionally the US Forest Service hires off duty county deputies for patrols on National Forest System Lands to focus on the enforcement of state laws. Additional funding is being pursued to fund additional agreements with local law enforcement as well as bolster existing agreements.

- **How can we pay for more patrols?**

By discussing and establishing agreements for extra duty patrols with local law enforcement agencies. Several years ago a group of mountain residents formed a non-profit organization to collectively pay for deputies to conduct extra patrols in a specific geographic area.

- **Can the Forest Service hire more law enforcement officers?**

Yes, although this can be challenging due to funding and policies limiting the number of Law Enforcement Officers (LEO’s) nationally, as well as where they are located. We’re currently reducing two LEO positions in Colorado and one in Wyoming.

- **What is the plan for INCREASED enforcement of the area’s campgrounds to prevent illegal fires from folks who ignore the fire ban or have unsafe fires when no ban is in effect?**

This depends completely on additional funding for an increase in resources. BCSO, actively patrols the campgrounds and other areas of the mountains when call load allows. In addition, BCSO has made it a priority to maintain staffing in the mountain regions as much as possible.

- **How can I volunteer with law enforcement if I have a law enforcement background?**

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office has a Reserve Deputy Program. Contact Commander Kevin Parker at kparker@bouldercounty.org for the eligibility requirements, application progress, etc.

- **Is it illegal to post photos of irresponsible campers on Facebook to warn people?**

Possibly, as it could be a violation of various civil rights.

Egress Routes

- **Several similar questions were received related to egress routes out of neighborhoods, to be used in emergency situations. An example: Why aren't there more egress roads? Are there plans for more egress roads?**

Several neighborhoods include multiple access routes, to allow for folks to get in and out of the neighborhood in a number of ways, in case one point is cut off for some reason. In fact, land use codes require such multiple accesses, including in Nederland and nearby communities. However, many neighborhoods in the Peak to Peak region were constructed prior to modern land use requirements, resulting in some being built without multiple egress points. The Town of Nederland, in conjunction with staff from Boulder County and the Forest Service, are working to create a new egress in one such neighborhood, the Big Springs neighborhood in northern Nederland. This process has taken many years; it is difficult to retrofit old neighborhoods where residents have grown to expect certain conditions, e.g. in this case, use of a beautiful trail area that will now have to serve both that purpose and one as an emergency exit. These types of planning efforts take significant time in planning and design, to avoid impacts to the land and natural areas, as well as to best create a viable route useful in an emergency.

Follow the Nederland egress process at <http://nederlandco.org/forest-issues/>.

For more information on egress plans for unincorporated areas, contact Boulder County Land Use.

What can we do as a community to get involved?

- Mitigate your own property EVERY YEAR (clean gutters, rake needles, prune trees)
- Get your neighborhood involved in [Saws and Slaws](#), [FireWise](#), [Wildfire Partners](#)
- Participate in and support [mitigation efforts on public lands](#)
- Join [Peak to Peak Forest Watch](#) (a community watch organization)
- Volunteer with [Socks and Sandwiches](#) and other human services organizations
- Write your local elected representatives asking for more funding for patrols, studies and mitigation