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NEWS

Media Advisory

May 7, 2010

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Colorado State Forest Service Durango District Takes Pro-Active Stance on Spruce Beetles

Note to editors: The Durango District of the Colorado State Forest Service is holding an informal informational seminar at **7 p.m. Tuesday, May 11, at the Vallecito Community Events Center** to discuss the potential advancement of spruce beetles into La Plata County and steps landowners can take to protect their trees. The public is invited to attend the seminar.

DURANGO, Colo. – The Durango District of the Colorado State Forest Service is holding an informal informational seminar at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 11, at the Vallecito Community Events Center to discuss the potential advancement of spruce beetles into La Plata County and management strategies landowners can take to protect their trees from these and other pests.

“Because spruce trees account for the majority of the trees in upper Vallecito Valley forests, it’s important that area landowners find out what may be coming and what they can do to protect their trees,” said Lindsay Gartner, assistant district forester for the CSFS Durango district.

A 2009 annual aerial survey of insect and disease activity in Colorado, conducted jointly by the CSFS and U.S. Forest Service, detected 114,000 acres with active spruce beetle infestations. Although La Plata County was not impacted by the spruce beetle last year, approximately 80 percent of affected acreage was in nearby Hinsdale and Mineral counties, primarily in the Weminuche Wilderness.

Gartner said the CSFS wants to make sure La Plata County landowners are prepared to battle the beetles in the event they move into lower-elevation blue spruce. Spruce beetles primarily infest trees that have blown down in a wind event, but in major outbreaks they will kill large-diameter standing trees that have been stressed by drought, flooding or old age.

CSFS Forest Entomologist Sky Stephens will be joining foresters from the Durango District at the seminar to talk about spruce beetles and other insect and disease issues in southwest Colorado, including Douglas-fir beetle, western spruce budworm and sudden aspen decline.

“Southwest Colorado has its own unique set of forest insect and disease issues,” Stephens said. “The Colorado State Forest Service wants to make sure landowners here have the tools they need to address those issues.”

For more information about bark beetles, visit the Colorado State Forest Service website at www.csfs.colostate.edu.

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