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NEWS

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Public Participation Encouraged in County Wildfire Protection Meeting

CEDAREEDGE, Colo. – Delta county residents who want the chance to provide input on the development of a county-wide wildfire protection plan will have the opportunity at a public meeting next week.

Forestry, emergency services and fire department officials will meet with area landowners at a meeting in Cedaredge on Feb. 23 to discuss the development of a county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Citizens who attend the meeting will have the opportunity to help identify the values at risk in their communities, define the local wildland-urban interface boundary, prioritize fuels treatment goals and establish wildfire preparedness objectives within identified hazard zones. The meeting will include representatives from the Colorado State Forest Service; county emergency management teams; local fire departments; fire management consulting firms; and federal forestry officials.

“This meeting will give people who live in our wildland-urban interface a chance to provide input to the plan. It’s important that we listen to all the stakeholders,” said Kelly Rogers, district forester for the CSFS Grand Junction District, which serves Delta, Mesa, Pitkin, Garfield and Rio Blanco counties. The CSFS will provide input throughout the process and will ultimately be responsible for signing off on the final plan.

Having the plan in place will be valuable to landowners not only because of its protective benefits, but because many state and federal grants designated for forest treatments require communities to have a CWPP approved by the Colorado State Forest Service to compete for funds.

State legislation passed last year required every Colorado county to identify fire hazard zones in unincorporated areas by the end of 2010. Counties have until this summer to develop CWPPs that establish guidelines for fire mitigation in each hazard zone.

The Delta County meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at the Cedaredge Fire Department, 216 S. Grand Mesa Drive. Meeting attendees will have the opportunity to win a Stihl chainsaw and other door prizes; cookies and refreshments also will be provided. For more information about the CWPP meeting, contact Lilia Colter with the West Region Wildfire Council at 970-249-9051, ext. 125.

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