Colorado State FOREST SERVICE

NEWS

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<u>**Media Advisory**</u>
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Local Charity to Cut, Deliver 300 Christmas Trees for Less-Fortunate Families

Note to editors: Gift of a Green Christmas, a local charity that provides free Christmas trees to less-fortunate Fort Collins-Loveland-area families, will work with the Colorado State Forest Service to harvest 300 trees for December delivery. The trees will be harvested at Colorado State University's Pingree Park Campus to improve forest health. **Media personnel will have the opportunity to join CSFS employees and GOGC volunteers when they cut the trees on two dates: Nov. 24 and Nov. 29.**

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – Gift of a Green Christmas, a Fort Collins-based charity that each year provides hundreds of free Christmas trees to families that otherwise would not have one, continues to deliver more joy every year. This year, the charity will cut and deliver 300 trees provided by the Colorado State Forest Service.

"Many more families will benefit this year thanks to the Colorado State Forest Service and Pingree Park," said Ryan Behm, who runs Gift of a Green Christmas.

Starting this weekend, the young lodgepole pine trees will be harvested from Pingree Park, Colorado State University's mountain campus and outdoor classroom for natural resources students. As part of an Eagle Scout community project, a local high school student will lead the volunteer cutting efforts. Trees will only be cut in designated locations to improve forest health on the campus.

"In much of the stand, there are too many trees per acre to allow for fully grown, mature trees. Thinning out some of these lodgepole pines will help us create more room for healthier trees to grow," said Boyd Lebeda, district forester for the CSFS Fort Collins District.

Behm started Gift of a Green Christmas in 2003 and delivered 23 trees the first year. Last year, the program provided trees to 257 families in the Fort Collins-Loveland area. Deliveries are always made the first two weekends in December; donated lighting, ornaments and a stand are included with each tree. Behm obtains most of the recipient families' names from United Way of Larimer County 2-1-1, House of Neighborly Service and similar organizations that support families in need.

"The most powerful thing about this program is that our volunteers are able to physically deliver Christmas trees to families and show them that we really do care," Behm said.

To volunteer with Gift of a Green Christmas or to donate money, artificial trees, tree stands, Christmas lights or other decorations, contact GOGChristmas@gmail.com.