



Colorado State Forest Service  
5060 Campus Delivery  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-5060  
970.491.6303; FAX 970.491.7736  
<http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

# NEWS

## **For Immediate Release**

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**Contact for Reporters:** Ryan Lockwood

970.491.8970

[ryan.lockwood@colostate.edu](mailto:ryan.lockwood@colostate.edu)

## **Donations Sought for Post-Wildfire Tree Planting**

**FORT COLLINS, Colo.** – In the aftermath of destructive wildfires, reforestation of burned land is a priority in order to help protect water supplies, restore wildlife habitat and reduce flooding and erosion. Private citizens and business owners concerned about recently burned areas in Colorado can help restore forests by donating to a Colorado State Forest Service fund established specifically to provide tree seedlings that will be planted on lands most severely impacted by wildfires and other disasters.

Tax-deductible donations to the CSFS-administered Restoring Colorado's Forests Fund are used directly to pay for seedlings that will be planted on state and private land in areas deemed most critical to water protection and wildlife habitat. Since 2003, program funds have been used to plant more than 110,000 trees, primarily in the area of the 2002 Hayman Fire – the largest fire in state history.

“After a major wildfire, rebuilding lives and homes in affected communities is the highest priority,” said Joe Duda, interim state forester and director of the Colorado State Forest Service. “But everyone impacted by potential effects to a burned watershed benefits if we replant trees to help stabilize soils, protect water quality and get green forests growing again.”

The current goal is to receive enough donations to plant at least 1 million seedlings over the next decade in critical areas burned by recent fires. CSFS foresters will determine where seedlings should be planted, based on available funding and reforestation needs within burned areas. Every \$2 donation will purchase one seedling.

Areas that directly impact important watersheds and provide the most public benefit are most likely to be targeted first for planting efforts. Forestland burned by the High Park Fire is of significant concern, where the loss of trees and other vegetation has already led to runoff and erosion that has damaged slopes and polluted the Cache la Poudre River with ash and sediment. Also of major concern are the Waldo Canyon, Weber and Lower North Fork fire areas, where mud and ash flows have led to highway closures, road damage and property destruction.

State lands and private landowners with two or more acres may be eligible to receive seedlings purchased through donations. CSFS foresters will utilize their technical expertise and research from Colorado State University to make decisions about planting operations in coming seasons.

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To donate to the fund, checks payable to the CSU Foundation and with “Restoring Colorado’s Forests Fund” in the memo line can be mailed to: Restoring Colorado’s Forests Fund, CSU Foundation, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Collins, CO 80522-1870. Donations also can be made online at <https://advancing.colostate.edu/RestoringColoradosForests>.

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