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NEWS

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Colorado State University Names Mike Lester New State Forester

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – Colorado State University today named Mike Lester the new state forester and director of the Colorado State Forest Service. As state forester, Lester will lead the CSFS to provide for the protection of Colorado’s forest resources; ensure forestry education, outreach and technical assistance to private landowners; and carry out the duties of the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of Colorado State University, and provides landowners with technical forestry assistance and outreach via 17 district offices located throughout Colorado.

Lester, a CSU alumnus, comes to the CSFS with nearly 30 years of professional experience in state and private forestry. He currently serves as assistant state forester for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, a position in which he is responsible for more than 300 staff, manages 2 million acres of state forest land, oversees the Pennsylvania State nursery manager, and manages a silviculture program that yields \$25 million in annual revenues.

“Mike Lester comes to us with a wealth of knowledge, experience and leadership in state and private forestry, and a tremendous passion for Colorado,” said Joyce Berry, dean of the Warner College of Natural Resources at CSU. “The critical challenges facing Colorado’s forests require the kind of visionary leadership that Mike will bring to the Colorado State Forest Service, and we are very excited that he has accepted this important position.”

Lester’s resume includes positions with the Procter & Gamble Paper Products Company and the Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station. He also has served as past president of the Society of American Foresters, an organization he first joined while a natural resources undergraduate student at CSU and in which he has remained actively involved. He holds a Master of Business Administration from the State University of New York and a Master of Forestry from Duke University.

“Colorado’s forests are undergoing extraordinary changes that provide many challenges – and tremendous opportunities,” Lester said. “This is an exciting time to be involved in forestry in Colorado, and I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the skilled and dedicated professionals at the Colorado State Forest Service. As a Colorado State alumnus, I’m also happy to be returning to the place where my career as a professional forester began.”

Previous State Forester Jeff Jahnke retired in 2012 after seven years with the agency. Deputy State Forester Joe Duda has been the acting/interim state forester since March 2012.

Lester will start on July 1, but plans to visit Colorado before then to engage with CSFS personnel.

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