



Jamestown Fire Mitigation Project Informational Packet and Invitation

St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District





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Foreword by Allan Mueller, Jamestown Resident

Dear Jamestown neighbor,

You're receiving this letter because we want to let you know about an exciting project that you may be able to take part in. We're sending this packet to everyone in town and will be providing more information at a project kick-off meeting on March 29th (see packet for meeting details).

As some of you may be aware, the Jamestown Wildfire Safety Committee has been working for the past two years to establish a more defensible space in the west slopes of the Town. The idea is to -as much as possible- make it safe enough for fire fighters to remain in place to fight the many small fires that would be ignited by an ember storm from an approaching wildfire.

We have been talking with many organizations and agencies to obtain help in conducting work to decrease our collective fire risk. But there have been obstacles. For one thing, Federal and State funding sources that have been recently earmarked for wildfire fuels mitigation will not be available until Summer of 2023, with some coming online later than that. Another hindrance for us is that our project is too small to be competitive when applying for many funds. Others will not fund for work on private property, or require that the landowner cover at least a 50% of the project cost.

So it is with immense relief and excitement that an organization has come forward with a plan and with funding. The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District has heard from members of our community that this is a need that they can support. This funding will come from ballot measure 7A, which was passed in 2020 by 70% of those who voted, increasing the mill levy tax to support water resource planning and action. So, support for this project is coming straight from taxpayer dollars to feed back into local communities. We are projecting that this fire risk reduction project will take place before the next wildfire season!

With that brief history of our past efforts I will turn this public outreach over to the folks who will be taking the lead in this. Please read this project information packet to learn about the details and how you can get involved. All participation in this project is voluntary, but I hope you take part for the benefit of your land and for our collective community.

Any questions that you may have that are not answered in the packet can be directed to me. Also, if during the process, anyone who feels that they need some clarification or advocacy from within the Town can feel free to contact me at any time.

Thank you for considering this important project,
Allan Mueller
allanpmueller@gmail.com



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Project Summary

This potential fire mitigation project site is located on private and public properties in Jamestown and has been identified as a critical area in the county to reduce wildfire threats to public safety and water resources. Currently, fire fighters have noted the project site lacks available areas for safe deployment of firefighters. In addition, the project site is on a slope that sits above James Creek, which feeds Left Hand Creek, providing risk mitigation to water resources in the event of a fire. The project site is adjacent to US Forest Service land, which is in the area covered in the upcoming [St. Vrain Forest Health Project NEPA](#). Thus, this project is an opportunity for mitigation across multiple private properties that can also complement and motivate mitigation work on neighboring public land.

The project will be funded and led by the St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District. The potential project area encompasses private property, as well as properties owned by Jamestown (see potential project area map on page 10, but reach out if you are interested regardless of your location). The exact project boundary will be refined during development of the forest management plan, when landowners within and outside of the proposed project area have the opportunity to decide if they want to participate. Every landowner that decides to participate in the project will be considered part of the project team.

St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District has hired multiple project partners for this project, including the Left Hand Watershed Center (Watershed Center) to conduct landowner outreach and coordination, as well as pre- and post-project monitoring and surveys. The Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts will conduct field work to understand current conditions and will work with landowners and the Watershed Center to design a forest management plan (including treatments, on-the-ground actions, to be taken). Lastly, the Left Hand Fire Protection District will implement the treatment as agreed upon by individual landowners. Initial project goals include:

- Creating a fire break that firefighters can work from when a fire occurs, thus decreasing risk to the life and property in the community of Jamestown and communities east of Jamestown (fires typically move west to east in this area).
- Decreasing the risk of high-severity fire to water supplies, by decreasing the likelihood of high-severity fire above James Creek.
- Improving the resilience of our forest to drought and fire, for the benefit of the ecosystem (plants and wildlife alike).

Project Process Overview and Estimated Timeline

Date Range	Process Step	Landowner/Community Contribution Needed for Project to Move Forward
March 7 th	- Partners introduced project to Jamestown Board of Trustees	- Landowners/community members attend meeting and contribute thoughts
March 29 th	- Neighborhood kick-off meeting - Distribute Participation Agreements	- Landowners attend meeting and contribute thoughts - Landowners opt-in by signing Participation Agreement by April 15 th (the sooner the better)



Early-Mid April	- Property Tour 1	- Facilitate access to land for data collection/assessment of current conditions (Participation Agreement) - Attend tour to share your desire for future conditions
April 4 th	- Partners will give project update to Jamestown Board of Trustees	- Board of Trustees sign Participation Agreement (resolution to allow data collection, forest management plan development, and tree marking with removable flagging tape). The resolution will be contingent on a final approval of marked trees for removal by a representative of the Board.
Mid-Late April	- Peer review of management plan by scientists and practitioners	- None
Late April	- Jamestown Community Meeting	- Attend meeting to share your desire for future conditions and your thoughts on the project
Late April	- Tree marking with removable tape	-Facilitate access to land for marking trees with removable tape
Late April	- Post-marking inventory	- Facilitate access to land so that conservation district can check that trees marked hit goals as outlined
Late April/Early May	- Property Tour 2	- Provide final agreement (signature) on removal of marked trees as discussed and agreed upon during field tour
Early-mid May	- Pre-project data collection	- Facilitate access to land for data collection
Mid-May to Fall, potential to return winter 2022/23	- Project implementation	- Facilitate access to land - Maintain open, clear, proactive communication with project partners via Watershed Center following communication principles
Throughout implementation	- Implementation office hours	- Attend as needed, request alternate meeting time if needed
Fall	- Post-project data collection	- Facilitate access to land for data collection

Project Partners

Who is the St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District and what is their role in this project?

- Local Water Conservancy District (svlhwcd.org).
- Secured funding for this project using 7A funds; taxpayers dollars that are going back to the community through projects like this.
- Manage funding and ensure that funding criteria are met and project is implemented within scope and budget.



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Who is the Watershed Center and what is their role in this project?

- Non-profit watershed coalition (www.watershed.center) staffed by a team of ecologists and communicators working to protect and restore watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment using a collaborative and science-based approach.
- Lead outreach and coordination among partners, landowners, and the broader Jamestown community.
 - Main point of contact for all team members, including landowners.
 - Keep all members of the team in the loop on project progress, current treatment plans, timeline and more.
 - Strive for and facilitate open and transparent communication between all team members, landowners, and the broader Jamestown community.
- Conduct pre- and post-monitoring of both social values and ecological condition.
 - Conduct surveys of the Jamestown community and landowners to understand the ways in which this project is successful in achieving collective goals, and to identify any areas of improvement in our strategy.
 - Conduct ecological monitoring before and after the treatment(s), including but not limited to: tree density, tree species composition, understory species composition and diversity, soil moisture, water quality in James Creek.
- Ensures compliance with local laws and funding rules/requirements.

Who is the Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts and what is their role in this project?

- Conservation Districts (longmontcd.org).
- Team of foresters that will conduct data collection to understand current conditions and write a forest management plan for the project.

Who is the Lefthand Fire Protection District and what is their role in the project?

- Fire district (www.lefthandfire.org).
- Team of experienced and qualified foresters who will implement the treatment that has been agreed upon by the landowner, with ongoing and transparent communication between all partners and landowners.

Who are the landowners and what is their role in the project?

- Collectively, landowners own land in the entire project area. Each landowner is considered part of the project team.
 - Meet individually with the Watershed Center and Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts to conduct a property tour and discuss desired conditions and outcomes for their property.
 - Attend workshops to help team develop treatment options for their property.
 - Participate in reviewing and commenting on draft treatment plans.
- Choose or choose not to participate in the project at critical junctures.



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- Sign Watershed Center’s Participation Agreements indicating willingness to allow data collection and tree marking (removable tape) on their property.
- Assist in providing property access so that the project can happen.
- Communicate questions and concerns to Watershed Center project manager (Chiara Forrester).
- Keep open and honest communication flowing throughout the process.

What is the St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership and what is their role in the project?

- Collaborative of 100+ agencies, organizations, towns, fire/water/conservation districts, scientists, stakeholders, and individual community members working to increase the pace and scale of cross-boundary forest restoration and fire mitigation in the St. Vrain Watershed.
- Coordinated by the Left Hand Watershed Center. St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts, Lefthand Fire Protection District, and Jamestown are all members.
- Will facilitate peer-review of forest management plans and will conduct cross-boundary planning across public and private lands to increase the effectiveness of this project.

Communication Principles

- Strive for open, honest, consistent, and transparent communication throughout process with all team members. We want to develop an environment to build trust among all team members.
- As a general rule, information needs to flow to the Watershed Center project manager.
- Discussions can happen without the Watershed Center present but should always be transmitted back to the Watershed Center, in writing.
- See above for details regarding roles and responsibilities.

Project Manager Contact Information

Chiara Forrester, Forest Program Manager, Left Hand Watershed Center
720-745-3160, cforrester@watershed.center

I’m Interested in Attending the Kick-Off Meeting, Learning More and Getting Updates, and/or Participating in this Project. What Should I Do Now?

Please reach out to Chiara using the contact information provided above. We’re excited to hear from you!

What Goes into Developing a Forest Management Plan?

To develop a plan for what we want to see as an outcome of treatments (on-the-ground actions), we incorporate/integrate the following information:

- Landowner goals and preferences.
- Historical conditions (e.g. tree density, canopy cover, size of meadows, plant species present).
- Current ecological conditions (e.g. tree density, canopy cover, size of meadows)
- Topography (aspect, slope, position on slope).
- Fire behavior modeling with current conditions and with post-treatment conditions.



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- Values, resources, and assets within and adjacent to project area (e.g. water resources, aesthetics, homes, wildlife habitat).
- Best-available science (e.g. peer-reviewed scientific literature, written and oral histories, data collected at site, historical imagery).
- Climate change adaptation considerations – e.g. how can we support post-fire tree growth in warmer and drier conditions.

Project Process Details

Neighborhood Kickoff Meeting – March 29th 2022, 5:30-7:30PM

- Hybrid in-person/remote. Held at Jamestown Town Hall.
- Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6688242485>
- Introductions, project overview, communication protocols
- Discuss project process and expected timeline, including opportunities for input and/or decisions
- Distribute and explain Participation Agreements.
 - This agreement allows the Watershed Center, Lefthand Fire Protection District, and the Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts to visit your property for the purpose of comprehensive information gathering and data collection, and to mark trees with removable flagging tape.
- Discuss project goals with community input
- Post meeting: Post all meeting notes, communication protocol, and list of landowner/project goals on website.

Property Tour 1 with Individual Landowners

- Walk property with Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation District foresters and the Watershed Center to discuss desired future conditions and questions/concerns.
- Notes from meeting will be sent to landowner; Landowner to review meeting notes and respond to confirm or edit within 3 days.

Peer Review of Project Plans

- Forest management plan(s) will be reviewed by the St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership Science Team, a collaborative expert forest and fire ecology group that is coordinated by the Watershed Center. Feedback will be incorporated by the Watershed Center and the Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts.

Jamestown Community Meeting

- The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District will hold a meeting with all project partners present to inform the broader Jamestown community of project plans.

Tree Marking, Post-Marking Inventory and Property Tour 2 with Individual Landowners

- Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts will mark trees for proposed removal (in accordance with desired future conditions discussed with individual landowners) with removable flagging tape. After they mark the trees, they will check that trees marked hit goals as outlined in terms of tree size and cover (“post-marking inventory”).



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- Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts and the Lefthand Fire Protection District will design a proposed method of treatment implementation (e.g. hand thinning and burn piles).
- Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts and the Watershed Center will tour individual properties with landowners to review marked trees and get approval from the landowner on trees to be removed and method of treatment implementation.
- Final agreement will be signed by landowner to give permission for implementation as discussed.

Pre-Project Data Collection

- Watershed Center will collect pre-project data including surveys of landowner feedback and perceptions, and ecological data collection (e.g. canopy cover, water quality, understory plant diversity).

Project Implementation

- The Lefthand Fire Protection District will implement the agreed-upon project on private properties, following final property owner approval.

Implementation Office Hours

- Watershed Center will host weekly or biweekly on-site “office hours”. Weekly meetings are open to anyone interested.
- Watershed Center will send weekly email updates throughout implementation document progress the past week and a look forward two weeks.

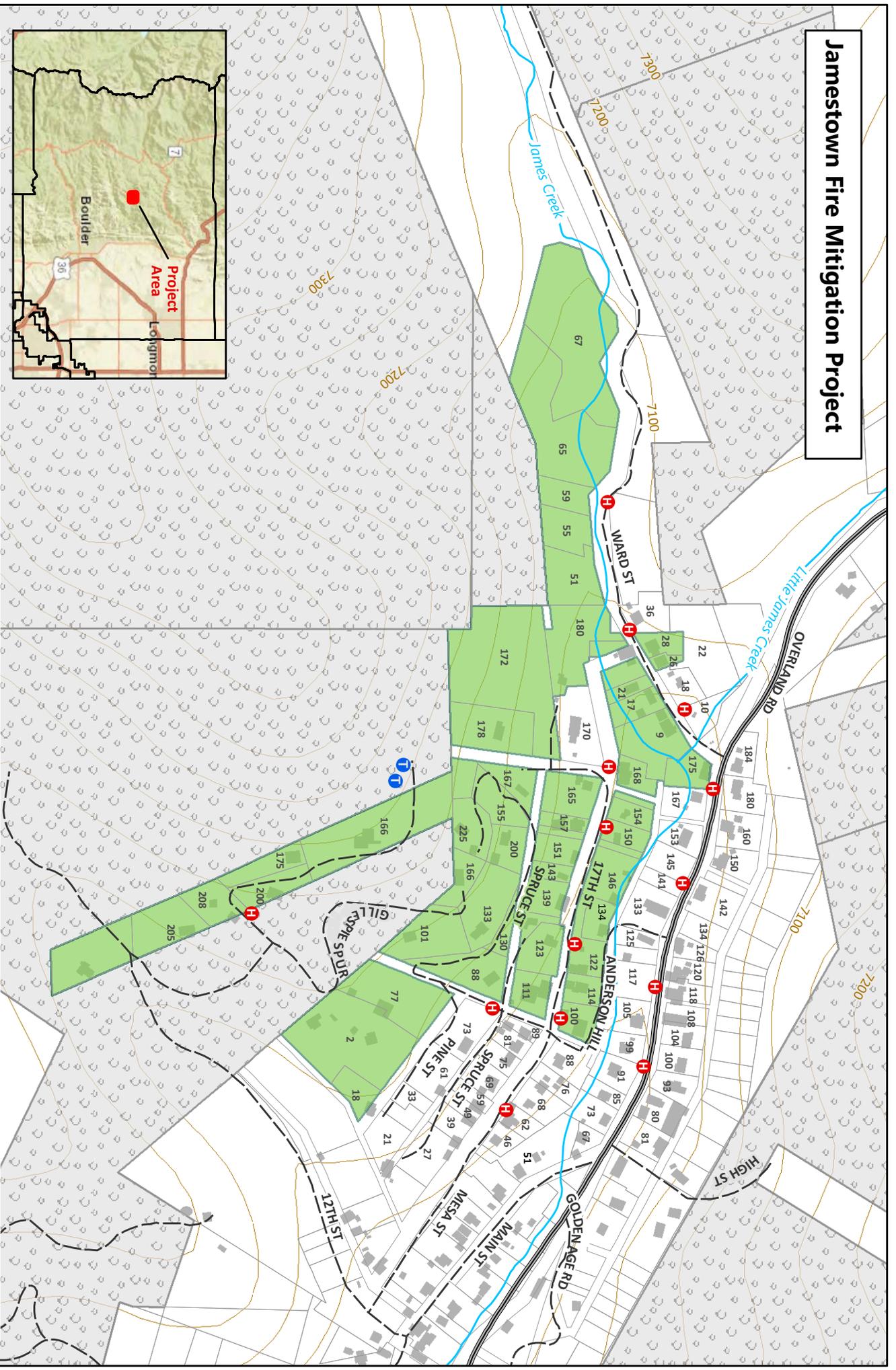
Post-Project Data Collection

- Watershed Center will collect post-project data immediately following project completion and again in April 2023, including surveys of landowner feedback and perceptions, and ecological data collection (e.g. canopy cover, water quality, understory plant diversity).

Glossary

- Treatment: On-the-ground action taken such as thinning (strategic removal of certain trees).
- High-severity wildfire: A wildfire that results in the death of most trees. Typically this is a fire that goes up into the canopy of the trees. High-severity wildfire impacts water quality because soils become water-repellent, leading to excessive sediment transport into the water. Sediment in our waters is a very expensive issue to treat for.
- Ladder fuels: Plants that can help fire get from the ground into the canopy, such as smaller shade-tolerant trees that help the fire get from the ground to the crowns of taller trees.
- Resilience: Ability of the ecosystem and community to “bounce-back” from fire. Forests that are NOT resilient to fire experience high rates of tree mortality after wildfire and the forest has a very difficult time growing back, or can even permanently transition to a different ecosystem type (such as a shrubland or grassland). A forest that is NOT resilient to fire typically burns at high-severity and will often lead to strong negative impacts to water quality after fire. A community that is resilient to wildfire can live with fire without devastating impacts.
- Fire-break: An area where there are fewer fuels, where the fire typically will drop to the ground because of a lack of trees and ladder fuels. Fuel breaks provide a safer area for firefighters to fight fires from.

Jamestown Fire Mitigation Project



Map Explanation

- Parcel Boundary
- Potential Project Area
- USFS Land
- Hydrant
- Water Storage Tank
- Ground Surface Elevation Contour

