

Notes

Priority Area Refinement Meeting

1-4:30 PM, April 6, 2022

Lyons Fire Protection District, 251 Broadway, Lyons, CO 80540

- Scott Ritter, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
- Andrew Slack, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
- Wayne Park
- James White, USFS
- Bill Ellis, Raymond resident and property owner
- Matt Henry
- Mark Mendonca, USFS
- Jason Whitmore, Left Hand Water District
- Chris O'Brien, Lefthand FPD
- Nick Stremel, Boulder County Parks & Open Space
- Tom Bates
- Scott Heffernan, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts
- Mike Caggiano, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
- Scott Golden, Boulder County Parks & Open Space
- Ben Pfohl, Colorado State Forest Service
- Chad Buser, USFS
- Pryce Hadley, City of Longmont Natural Resources/Water Resources
- Sally Park, Estes Park resident
- Koren Nydick, NPS
- Ben Markle, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts
- Kevin Zimlinghaus, USFS
- Aurelia DeNasha
- Gary Maguire, Allenspark Fire
- Shane Milne, Boulder County Parks & Open Space
- Steve Pischke
- Katie Fialko, USFS
- Ron Gosnell, Lyons Resident & retired CSFS
- Rob Walker, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts
- Pete Zick, Lyons Fire
- Jonathan Markovich, USFS
- Tim Griffin, SZ FMO USFS
- Mike Cousineau, Allenspark Fire
- Wesley Page, USFS
- Ken Huson, City of Longmont

Key Questions to Address

Is the width of the buffer feasible in FID0? Should we be editing FID1 to better define treatments?

Is further refinement of FID5 needed? Does it make sense to provide more connection in the southwest section?

Near Lyons, is this the correct protection boundary for this fire district?

Is the northern section of FID5 broad enough?

Is the boundary sufficient to protect the towns of Raymond/Riverside?

Do the polygons bordering the Jamestown/Ward/Peaceful Valley area make sense?

The polygon around Left Hand Creek is huge – does that make sense? Should we also connect to the Four Mile fire burn area? Does Lickskillet Rd make sense as a connection?

Comments and Discussion

We're focusing on the St Vrain watershed rather than the southern part of the map today.

The designated priority area around Peak to Peak Highway is there to help manage some lower flame length fires in that area and help folks feel more comfortable letting fire "do its thing" while continuing to buffer properties along the highway corridor.

What is the goal of these polygons? Do we want every acre in these polygons to be treatable?

We want to know that, big-picture, this is a reasonable goal for us over the next ten years

Did the map take into account high-risk ignition source areas? (Example: highly recreated areas like Bunce School Rd, etc.)

Yes, but more could be added in!

Old Stage Fire (2009) area is missing from map

Post-fire fuels remain the same in this area, which is why it isn't listed on the map as a fire break

We could potentially start off by identifying low-hanging fruit like places at the intersection of value and risk.

PODs are Potential Operable Delineations, which are areas that have the highest potential for fire control; these are natural and manmade features that firefighters would use – roads, rivers, ridgelines – to help "box in" fire. It makes sense to treat fuels here because we'll have the highest chance of success in these places.

Let's note that this map represents landscape-scale efforts. It should be assumed that mitigation should be done around homes and communities, but the map would be too crowded if we showed desired mitigation efforts to this level of detail.

Post-Map Discussion

- CO 72 corridor boundary

Additional completed fuels treatment (by NPS) to be added to map.

Having treatments in the park helps private landowners see significance in smaller-scale treatments on their own properties.

Koren has been trying to expand how people think of fuel management, in that it's not just reducing fuel levels but also converting fuel to less flammable fuel types (restoring aspen, wetlands). Protecting existing wetlands can contribute to fire risk mitigation!

Camp St Malo project is a good example of this and could extend into the park per current funding

There is also momentum along Big Owl Rd to compliment Camp St Malo work

Could we continue treatment into area south of this section (just south of Allenspark)?

This is a Research Natural Area, (USFS) where we are limited to only certain management actions, namely prescribed fire.

Once fire gets into the Raymond/Riverside area, there is nothing to stop it. More of this should be included in priority area, although there is acknowledgement that there may be community resistance to treatment in this area.

- Should FID 1 extend to the north to meet the fire area, or follow previous treatments to the east instead?

Obstacles to this include private property and unsuitable terrain

- Button Rock area and Cook Mtn potential project

Funnel of fuel between Allenspark and Lyons is difficult because of a study area with restricted potential actions, and because it lacks accessible roads

Most feasible projects will fall in the City area where there are multiple forest treatment units

Treatments off Johnny Park and Coulson Gulch have occurred

Hundreds of acres as potential project area (300-600); if road repair is possible you could bring fire vehicles into Coulson Gulch

Cook Mtn project sounds like a high-impact project that could meet a lot of partnership goals

Johnny Park area is of concern as an ignition source because of high recreation use (Button Rock area also has high probability of lightning strike)

- Should we wrap priority area around Pinewood Springs (use ridgelines surrounding community)?

Area noted on map

- Left Hand Priority Area

Old Stage/Hwy 36 area - LH Water has offered to do a very visible prescribed burn here

Heil Ranch and Calwood/Overland fires: every place where the Calwood fire made contact with the Overland scar, fire became much more manageable. This helps us make the argument that introducing fire to the landscape is beneficial. Low intensity, broadcast burning helps maintain health of landscape.

Number of substantial FS treatments just south of Jamestown and a lot of public support for treatment on private property that borders FS treatments.

Licksillet conundrum: half BLM and half county land with some private land mixed in. If we can get all parties involved, there could be work done despite the topography.

FS has done substantial work north and west of Gold Hill which does a fair amount to protect the town.

- Raymond/Riverside

200-250 residential structures here

This area should be expanded westward to include Bunce School Rd area as it is a high-use recreation area with high ignition risk. This would expand the buffer for towns.

USFS has already done treatment here so it would make sense to expand the area and increase the buffer

Boulder County has property here and could work in partnership to do mitigation work

Bunce School Rd itself is obstacle for County here – terrible road condition only suitable to UTV. Would need to work with federal partners to have access via this road

Further define boundary near Rock Creek Trail to connect up to Indian Peaks

Expansion to the east doesn't feel as high a priority, but has access and isn't as steep. There aren't a lot of structures here.

Projects Needing Funding

- Proposal for Indian Peaks Wilderness (no representation at meeting)
- Interested landowners near Glacier View and Peaceful valley; project ready to go with right balance of funding. Treatments on private property would abut USFS treatments and this project could check a lot of boxes. Treatment in this area benefits water supply to both LH and St Vrain.

Projects on Shelf

- SVLHWCD project on Larimer County line

Information Needs

- Operability assessment for Button Rock
- On-the-ground tours for PODS