



# Estes Valley Forest Issues Forum Canyon Lakes Ranger District Newsletter

December 2010



## Forest Health

Since the last issue, the mountain pine beetle (MPB) has continued to spread. In 2009, the largest increase was seen in Larimer County. The numbers for 2010 are not out yet, but we know the spread is continuing.

The infested area grew by 524,000 acres in Colorado and southern Wyoming in 2009. In Larimer County, the infested area grew by 220,000 acres nearly doubling the area previously infested to 500,000 acres since 1996.

Although most of the acres affected are lodgepole pine, a more troubling statistic is the expansion of the epidemic into ponderosa pine forests. In Larimer County, the number of ponderosa pine acres infested increased from 1,900 acres in 2008 to 16,000 in 2009.

Although there is no way to stop this epidemic, the

U.S. Forest Service is doing what they can to help minimize the impacts. Safety is a priority, as falling trees can cause many hazards.

In 2010, the Canyon Lakes Ranger District sprayed over 16,000 trees in campgrounds and trailheads. More than 4,400 hazardous or infested trees were cut at campgrounds and trailheads too. Tree cutting has taken place along some roads and nearly 32 miles of trails.

Efforts like these will continue in the coming years, along with fuels reduction efforts near private land.

As a homeowner, you play an important role in preventing damage to your home and property from dead and dying trees. This link from [www.frftp.org](http://www.frftp.org) (Adobe Acrobat pdf file) provides in-depth information about the beetle and what you can do: [Landowner Guide to Living with Bark Beetles](#).

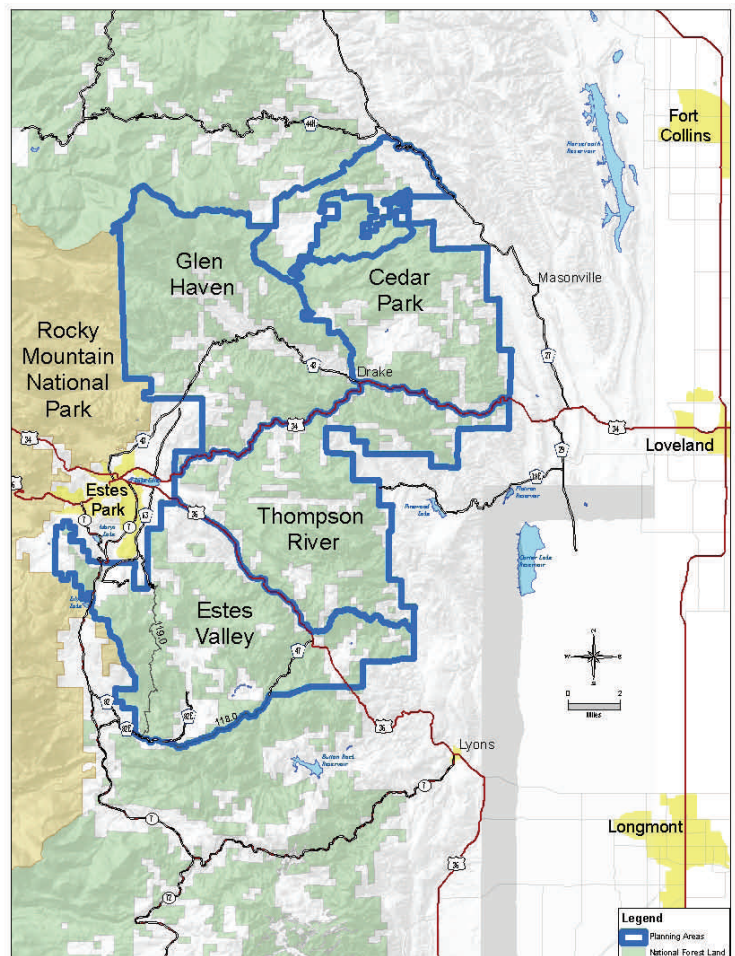
## Fuels Reduction

Fuels reduction planning has been completed for Estes Valley, Thompson River and Glen Haven areas. The next planning area on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District is Cedar Park, northwest of Drake.

More than 3,100 acres of fuels reduction has been implemented in the Estes Valley project area. The Thompson River area has had 548 acres implemented. Implementation near Glen Haven is expected to start in 2014.

In 2011, two new portions of these projects will get underway. One, called Estes Valley #5, is 790 acres and is located along the Johnny Park Road. This project consists of thinning trees and piling slash in ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest types, and small patch clearcuts in mountain pine beetle infested lodgepole pine. Trees that can be used for wood products will be removed from the area.

The second portion, called Thompson River #2, is 694 acres and located between West Pole Hill and Meadowdale Hills Subdivisions. This portion consists of thinning trees and piling slash in ponderosa pine and mixed conifer. No forest products will be removed from this area.



*Vicinity map of Estes Valley area planning areas*

## Recreation Update

**Roads:** Snow and freezing conditions mean that some roads will start to close, predominately for resource protection. Although changing weather conditions can close roads at any time, many roads close by or on December 1.

Those in the Estes Valley area closed include:

#119 Pierson Park	#123 Hell Canyon
#122 Pole Hill Road	#128/153 Storm Mountain
#132 Moody Hill	#118 Johnny Park/Button Rock

Current road status on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District is available online at [www.fs.usda.gov/arp](http://www.fs.usda.gov/arp). Click on the "Road Status" link on the right-hand side. A free Motor Vehicle Use Map is also available for road information online or from the visitor information office in Fort Collins (or call 970-295-6770).

**Dunraven Trailhead:** An analysis was conducted to improve this trailhead, located northwest of Glen Haven, and took public input into consideration.

A decision is under consideration to reconstruct the existing trailhead, signing and parking area at its current location. The planned parking area would accommodate 32 passenger cars and seven vehicles towing horse trailers. The parking area and related road would be surfaced with chip-sealed asphalt. Additional facilities at the trailhead would include signing, interpretive panels and a corral near the equestrian parking area. Implementation of the decision will occur in the future as funds are available.

This trail sees a lot of use and this decision is expected to help with traffic flow, more controlled use, and nicer facilities for users.

## Safety

Everyone who ventures out into the forest must keep safety a priority, particularly falling tree hazards and changing weather conditions.

With the current mountain pine beetle epidemic, remember trees can fall without warning, especially on windy days. Make sure to park vehicles and place tents in areas where they cannot be hit by falling trees and take a saw or ax with you to remove fallen trees from roads if you become trapped.

Make sure to always tell someone where you are heading and when to expect you back.

## Wildfire and Prescribed Fire Information

Information for all wildfires and prescribed fires on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District is provided on our recorded incident information line at 970-498-1030.

This year, pile burning will continue in the Estes Valley. Areas include Pinewood Springs, Grizzly Gulch, Lake Pasture and Fish Creek. There are approximately 43,000 piles in these areas. Firefighters will burn piles when conditions, including weather, fuel moisture, smoke dispersal, and staffing, allow. The number of piles burned each day depend on conditions.

The district maintains an e-mail list of smoke sensitive individuals in the immediate area of prescribed fires to keep them informed. If you have smoke allergies or other concerns and would like to be included on this list, please send an e-mail to Reghan Cloudman at [rcloudman@fs.fed.us](mailto:rcloudman@fs.fed.us) or call 970-295-6770.

## Additional Information

This is the Canyon Lakes Ranger District's second edition of the Estes Valley Forest Issue Forum.

If you have comments, questions, or suggestions for future topics, please contact Richard Edwards at 970-295-6760 or email him at [rsedwards@fs.fed.us](mailto:rsedwards@fs.fed.us).

The Forest has a new website with a plethora of information. Please check it out at [www.fs.usda.gov/arp](http://www.fs.usda.gov/arp).

More information on the mountain pine beetle is available at [www.FrontRangePineBeetle.org](http://www.FrontRangePineBeetle.org).