



Joint News Release

Wildfire Mitigation and Landscape Resilience Project Awarded in Montezuma County

North Mancos Wildfire Mitigation Project funded for Ute Mountain Ute and private lands

Mancos, Colo., July 28, 2022—The Mancos Conservation District, in partnership with the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative, Wildfire Adapted Partnership, and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, was recently awarded \$1,000,000 by the CO Department of Natural Resources through the [Colorado Strategic Wildlife Action Program](#) (COSWAP). Under the Landscape Resilience Investment, this funding will provide targeted wildfire risk mitigation on private lands in the Mancos and Dolores watershed to increase community resilience and protect life, property, and infrastructure. Project activities include reducing fuels and increasing defensible space around homes, reducing fuels along important access and evacuation routes, supporting pile burning on private lands, thinning projects on private and Ute Mountain Ute lands, and strategic fuel breaks on private lands for community safety.

The project areas and activities were developed by a broad group of stakeholders through the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative and Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative - SW Colorado and will complement forest resilience and fuels reduction work on adjacent federal, tribal, and state lands. “This project will provide a huge step towards reducing wildfire risk to life, property, and water – the very values we need for thriving communities,” said Gretchen Rank, Executive Director for the Mancos Conservation District. “The District is excited to support this partnership and the amazing work that materializes from collaborative efforts to enhance community, forest, and watershed resilience.”

The funding will support wildfire mitigation activities at multiple scales to reduce wildfire risk in the Summit Lake and Jackson Gulch areas of Montezuma County. This work focuses on high wildfire-risk private and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe ranch lands and will be coordinated with federal and state partners to complete work across ownership boundaries. These important partners include the San Juan National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Forest Service, and Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Much of the wildfire risk to communities and infrastructure exist on private lands, yet projects on private lands can be challenging to fund and implement. Together, these efforts will work across boundaries to enhance community, forest, and watershed resilience to wildfire. Ashley Downing, Executive Director for Wildfire Adapted Partnership, added, “This COSWAP project will increase fuels reduction work on individual private properties as well as on a community scale, decreasing the risk of severe wildfire within our local communities and across the region.”

Landowner contacts:

Wildfire Adapted Partnership: (970) 385-8909, <https://www.wildfireadapted.org/home-wildfire-risk-site-visit>

Mancos Conservation District: (970) 533-7317

Media contacts:



The **Mancos Conservation District** promotes long-term sustainable use and protection of the Mancos River Watershed. We provide educational, financial, and technical assistance to meet these conservation goals.

Contact: Gretchen Rank, (970) 533-7317, mancoscd1@gmail.com

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Wildfire Adapted Partnership inspires, educates and enables individuals and communities to protect lives and property from wildfire.

Contact: Ashley Downing, (970) 385-8909, adowning@wildfireadapted.org

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The **Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative** promotes forest, community, and watershed resilience through collaboration.

Contact: Danny Margoles, (952) 457-8586, coordinator@dwrfccollaborative.org

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The **Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Environmental Program** protects the Public Health and Environment of the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation.

Contact: Scott Clow, (970) 564-5430, sclow@utemountain.org

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The **Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative** mission is increasing the resilience of our forests, wildlife habitats, communities, recreation opportunities, and water resources across all lands in the Rocky Mountains.

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