

High Country Forest Collaborative

The High Country Forest Collaborative (HCFC, formerly the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative), has been working since 2005 as a cooperative group of state, federal and local agencies; communities, counties, conservation groups, timber industry, and other groups to address the impacts of the mountain pine beetle epidemic on Colorado's high elevation forests. The collaborative is now addressing broader issues facing our high elevation forests.



HCFC is now working on strategies to enhance resilience in the face of hazards produced by disturbances in high elevation forests in Colorado. Forest hazard reduction and management around communities is an ongoing process involving municipal, county, state, and federal government entities, and private property owners. However, our communities that are located in high elevation forests, or rely on values those forests provide, need to plan for long-term resilience because our forests provide important ecological, economic, and cultural values that may not be addressed through short-term hazard reduction around our communities.

High Country Forest Collaborative Actions

The HCFC has worked with various stakeholders to collaboratively assess and build consensus around priority needs, and then advocate for resources in the political arena to get this work done. We are now using those experiences to facilitate the work of increasing community resilience. To do this, we are working on the following tasks;

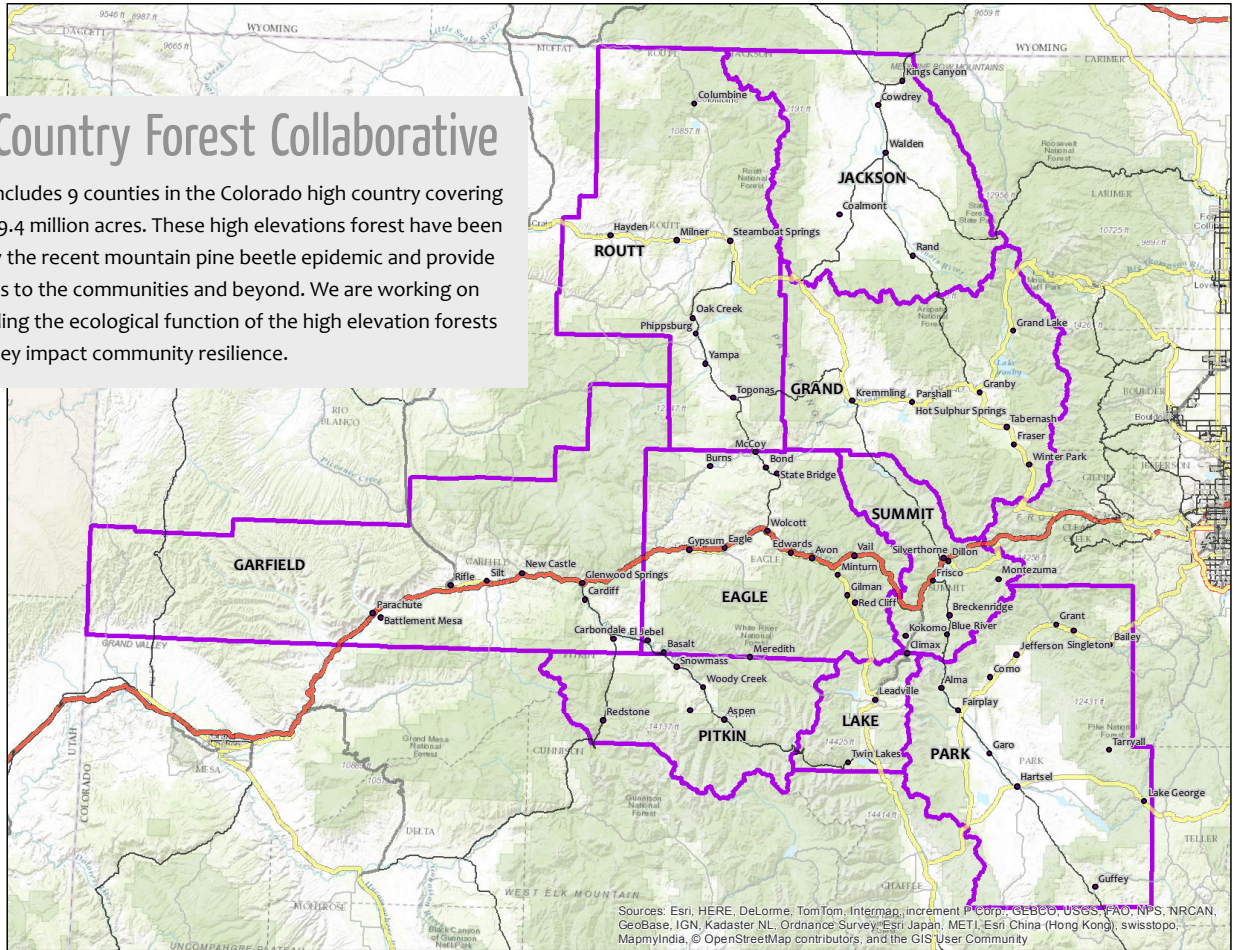
- ◆ Working with agencies and researchers to define forest resilience and appropriate management activities to increase community resilience
- ◆ Mapping areas that have high hazards to communities, watersheds, and other values
- ◆ Advocating for appropriate funding, legislation and other resources across our 9 county area and all of Colorado
- ◆ Working with counties, communities, and Northwest Council of Governments (NWCOG) to identify needs of local governments and communities

Why Focus on High Elevation Forests

High elevation forests (moist mixed conifer, aspen, lodgepole pine and spruce-fir) have not been transformed by fire suppression like lower elevation forests that have more frequent disturbance regimes. However, large areas of high elevation forest in Colorado have been impacted by past human activities (i.e. mining and associated development disturbances), epidemic insect infestation (mountain pine beetle and spruce beetle) and climate change. These forests have high social, recreational, and economic values to the surrounding communities, and state-wide. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate how resilient these forests are to disturbances and assess what actions could improve resilience while maintaining their values.

High Country Forest Collaborative

The HCFC includes 9 counties in the Colorado high country covering more than 9.4 million acres. These high elevation forest have been changed by the recent mountain pine beetle epidemic and provide many values to the communities and beyond. We are working on understanding the ecological function of the high elevation forests and how they impact community resilience.



High Country Forest Collaborative Organization

The HCFC has been working on high elevation forest issues since 2005. We have reached consensus on some large forest hazard actions following the mountain pine beetle epidemic in Colorado and have successfully advocated for large commitments of funding and resources by federal, state and local agencies.

We are a diverse group of state, federal and local agencies; communities, counties, conservation groups, timber industry, and other groups, that meet quarterly. We are actively looking for new members and communities to work with us.

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