



THE SOURCE - JULY 2025

2024 Accomplishments

Welcome to our RMRI, The Source Newsletter!

Dear RMRI Partners and Supporters,

As the Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI) reaches the halfway point of its 10-year journey, we find ourselves at a powerful moment — one that calls for reflection and purpose. Like any good traveler, we keep our eyes on the road ahead, yet we also glance in the rearview mirror, drawing strength and wisdom from the miles we've already covered.

Launched in 2019 under the USDA's Shared Stewardship Strategy and with the support of Secretary Sonny Perdue, RMRI was born from a simple but essential truth: no single agency, organization, or community can safeguard our forests alone. Through shared decision-making, shared investment, and shared accomplishments, we set out to match the pace and scale of restoration to the threats facing our forests — wildfire, insects, and disease.

Over the past five years, that vision has taken root in three key Colorado landscapes:

- In Southwest Colorado, collaboration has flourished into quantifiable results, with various partners coming together and leveraging non-federal funding to deliver projects that benefit forests, watersheds, and communities alike. Through the strength of the SW's strong collaborative spirit, they have surpassed 110,000 acres of restoration and forest management.
- The Upper Arkansas has become a standout example of creativity and collaboration, balancing the needs of recreation with wildfire mitigation — and lighting the path for Colorado's Regional Partnerships. Envision Inc., with 54 forest health partners, have raised a total of \$36 M for collaborative and multi-benefit treatments.
- In the Upper South Platte, where at least 2 million people rely on the watershed for clean water, their sense of shared stewardship has increased social acceptance for thinning and prescribed fire — a vital step in building ecological and social resilience. Partners like Denver Water and Colorado Forest Restoration Institute published for public view the Forests to Faucets Wildfire Risk Assessment.

Looking forward, our mission remains as urgent as ever. To protect forests and wildlife habitat, provide clean water, create fire-adapted communities, and ensure sustainable recreation. To deliver on our shared values we would need to scale up and we recognize that funding and capacity are shared challenges that we're navigating. Nonetheless, together we are stronger, smarter, and more capable. As Coloradans, we share a passion for the outdoors. In Colorado, forest health is a shared responsibility. It's also a shared opportunity. Your dedication, creativity, and commitment are the beating heart of RMRI — and we need them now more than ever.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

With gratitude,

Patt Dorsey

Director of Conservation Operations
National Wild Turkey Federation

Andrea Delgado

Deputy Regional Forester
Rocky Mountain Region
U.S. Forest Service



About

Co-convened by the National Wild Turkey Federation and the USDA Forest Service, RMRI was developed when Colorado was selected as the pilot location to showcase the Forest Service's Shared Stewardship strategy in action. Collaborative work, however, started years before. Partners are restoring landscapes in the **Southwest, Upper Arkansas, and Upper South Platte.**

Mission

Increase the resilience of our forests, wildlife habitats, communities, recreation opportunities, and water resources across all lands in the Rockies.

RMRI Values:

Water



Communities



Forests & Wildlife



Recreation



Subcommittees

RMRI organizers identified cross-boundary barriers and assigned subcommittees to address each: Biomass Utilization, Workforce Capacity, Funding, Social License, Governance and Communications. Members are from Partner organizations and come with experience, technical savvy and scientific background.

Partners

RMRI supports Partners across federal, state, Tribal and local jurisdictions to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. Partners direct investments at improving a few larger landscapes rather than make slow progress in multiple small places. RMRI Partners plan together, prioritize together and act together.

2024 Acres Treated

- Marquee Landscape Southwest - 27,109 acres
- Upper Arkansas - 3,391 acres
- Upper South Platte - 4,549 acres

Total: 35,049 acres

Cumulative Acres Treated

- Marquee Landscape Southwest - 110,232 acres
- Upper Arkansas - 12,388 acres
- Upper South Platte - 8,934 acres

Total: 131,554 acres

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Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative



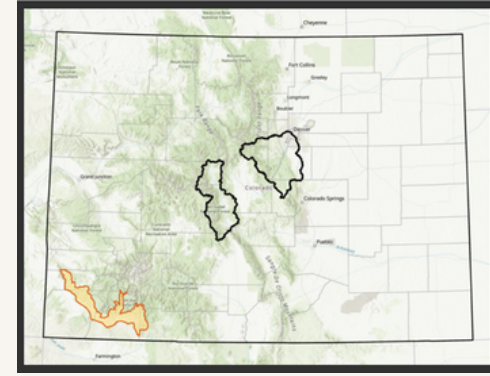
@RestoreTheRockies



@RMRI_Colorado

Southwest -Marquee Landscape

The Southwest landscape is a model of how to leverage efforts and funding to reduce community wildfire risk, create jobs, develop innovative outlets for wood products, and build stronger, more resilient wildfire adapted communities. SWCO partners achieved a major milestone in 2024, surpassing 110,000 acres of restoration and forest management on federal, state, private, and tribal lands since RMRIs inception.



In 2024 the Southwest landscape partners:

- Accomplished 25,063 acres of all-lands hazardous fuels reduction.
- Completed 300+ wildfire home assessments and 1,087 acres wildfire hazard mitigation work in the home ignition zone protecting 400+ structures.
- Managed Hope and Spruce Creek wildfires for 6,989 acres of hazardous fuels reduction and reduction of long-term risk from future wildfire events.
- Hosted over two dozen education and outreach events reaching 250+ people
- Communities of Vista de Oro and Deer Valley Estates, La Plata County updated their Community Wildfire Protection Plans.
- Wood for Life: 300 loads of firewood delivered to 11 tribal wood banks — a 50% increase from last year
- Falls Creek Conservation Area Tribal Engagement: The San Juan National Forest (SJNF) met with 8 Native American Tribes and Pueblos to discuss management planning.

FY24 Funding: \$7,665,907

Federal Partners - \$5.1 million dollars

USFS, BLM, NRCS

Non-federal Partners - \$2 million dollars

Wildfire Adapted Partnership, CSFS, La Plata County, SJMA, NFF, MCD, Durango Fire, MSI, and DWC

2024 Grants Awards:

Dept. of Natural Resources: COSWAP

Bureau of Land Management:

Community Assistant

Colorado State Forest Service: FRWRM, CAFA, SFA, WUI

EPA: WIIN

Natural Resources Conservation

Service: EQIP

Co-Co: AIM

Colorado State Conservation Board

2024 Acres Treated

Total Acres: 27,109 acres

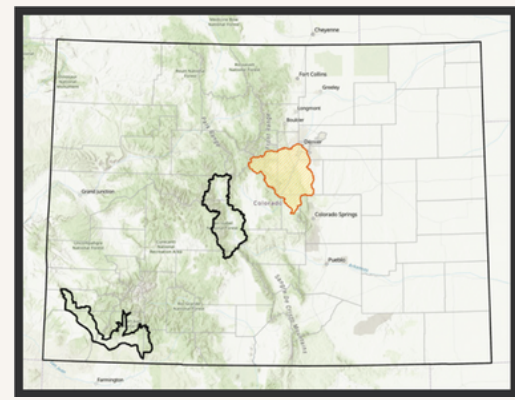
Public- 26,022 acres

Private - 1,087 acre



Upper South Platte Landscape

Work in this landscape is led by the Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP), a collaboration between government agencies, water providers, nonprofit organizations and academic institutions. Partners share a vision of resilient landscapes, healthy forests, fire-adapted communities, and efficient fire response and management in the Upper South Platte watershed—which supplies 80-90% of the water for Denver and Aurora metro areas residents.



2024 Partner Highlights

- Jefferson Conservation District collected 34,629 cubic yards of slash
- Conifer Fire Protection District's chipping program completed 50% more biomass this year
- The Forests to Faucets Wildfire Risk Assessment was published by Colorado Forest Restoration Institute & Denver Water
- The Nature Conservancy partnered with students at the UC Santa Barbara, to provide an online toolkit for climate adaptation literature, along with recommendations
- Genesee Foundation placed ~1,000 verbenone packets in Genesee Open Space
- Upper South Platte Partnership launched their website
- Accomplished alignment and review of Potential Operational Delineation (PODs)

Partner Engagement

33 Organizations total, 20 active in 3 teams

106 Individuals in the General Partnership

152 individual participants (including guests)

39 events total (GP, GSFT, MST, ECO, & special events)



2024 Grant Awards:

Colorado State Forest

Service: FRWRM Fuels Reduction, FRWRM Capacity Building

Dept. of Natural Resources: COSWAP

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Great Outdoors Colorado: RESTORE

Denver Zoo

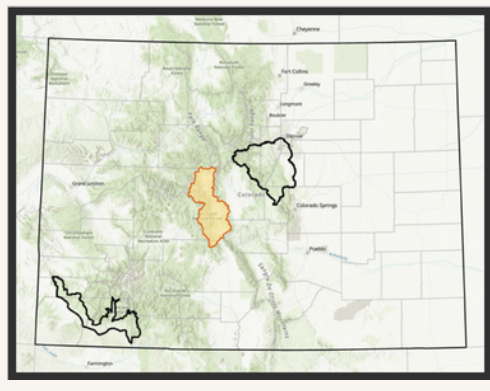
Douglas County Wildfire Cost Share Program

Denver Water: Forests to Faucets

2024 Acres Treated

*Acres treated is based on reported values and may not represent all activities within the landscapes

Total Acres: 4,549
Acres in the Pipeline: 2,443



Upper Arkansas - Lake County

The Upper Arkansas landscape comprises Chaffee and Lake Counties, which include Colorado's largest river basin, 15 of the state's 14-ers and the most rafted river in the world. With its 80+ Partners, the Upper Arkansas landscape is a national leader in community-driven restoration. Chaffee County began tracking data in 2020 and Lake County in 2022, each in accordance with their respective Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).

2024 Acres Treated

Total: 1,696 acres
 Public- 885 acres
 Private - 811 acres



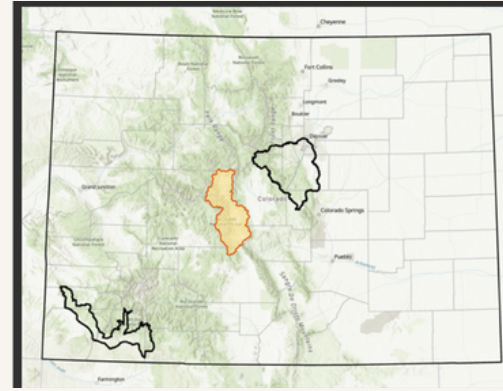
- 2024 Funding**
- **Dept. of Natural Resources:** CO Strategic Wildfire Action Plan - \$500,000
 - **Natural Resource Conservation Service:** Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Year 3 of 5)
 - **Colorado State Forest Service:** FRWRM funding for chipping program (Year 2 of 5)

2024 Project Type Breakdown:



Highlights

- Colorado State Forest Service created a Lake County Lead Forester
- Colorado Water Conservation Board Planned Funding for Twin Lakes
- Local Fire Department doubled fire burn boss certification capacity



Upper Arkansas Landscape - Chaffee County

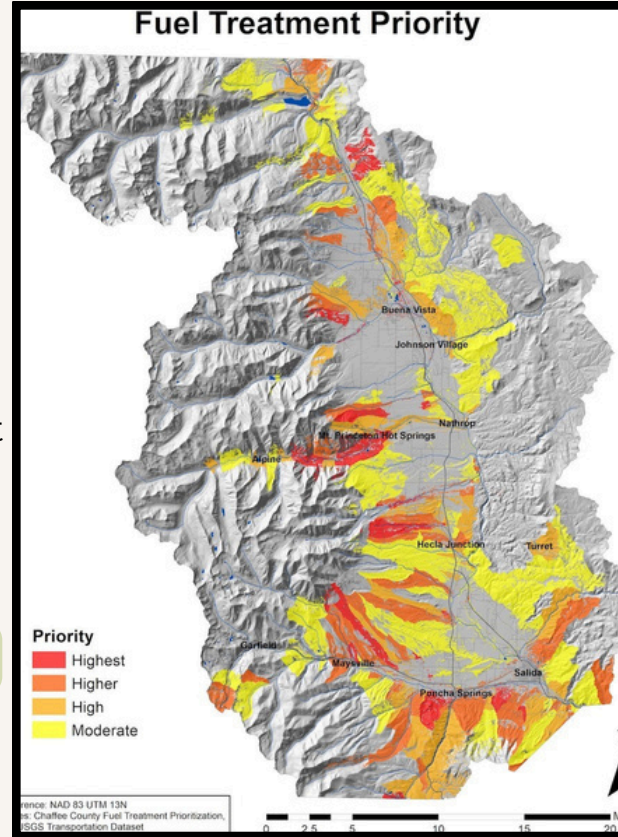


2024 Highlights

- US Forest Service conducted a low-intensity 400 acre prescribed burn south of the Browns Creek Trailhead
- Colorado State Forest Service added staff positions in Salida
- 9 Firewise USA sites

2024 Acres Treated

Total Acres: 1,695
Acres in the Pipeline:
14,265



2024 Funding - \$3 million raised

- Great Outdoors Colorado - RESTORE Grant**
- Department of Natural Resources -**
 - CO Strategic Wildfire Action Plan
 - CO Water Conservation Board grant
- Colorado State Forest Service -**
 - SFA - Wildland-Urban Interface Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation
- United States Forest Service -**
 - Hazardous Fuels Transportation Assistance (CAFA) grant
- Chaffee Common Grounds (Sales Tax)**

Connecting Colorado Event

RMRI partnered with Envision Inc. and the CPW Regional Partnership to host local, regional, and state-wide conservation leaders for a two-day event. Hosted in Salida and Buena Vista, more than 100 state and regional leaders participated to see the impact of collaborative, landscape-scale work and plan strategies on regional funding.

