

## Protecting Our Forest, Homes, and Property Values

Neighbors,

Are you concerned about:

- The risk of fire,
- The devastating impact of Pine Beetles,
- Increasing home insurance rates,
- The health of your trees?

Creating and managing a healthy forest addresses all of these concerns. The key to a healthy forest is thinning weak trees and ensuring proper spacing between Ponderosas to ensure they have the water, nutrients and sunlight they need to remain healthy. As we have highlighted in recent TPR E-Blast articles, the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) is expected to take advantage of our recent warm dry weather and become a major threat to Ponderosa forests along the Front Range.

In an effort to stay ahead of this threat, the Tall Pines Ranch Firewise committee recently met with retired State Forester Dave Root and community Firewise educator Lisa Hatfield to learn more about the impending Pine Beetle Infestation and what actions we as property owners can take to mitigate the risk and / or manage the infestation should it impact our forest. We learned valuable information about what action we can take now as well as later in the year.

### Spring Actions

- Early May through June, check your Ponderosas for signs that the needles are turning brown on the entire tree. (Some needle browning is normal as trees drop old needles). Overall browning of a Ponderosa tree's pine needles is an indication that the tree has been attacked by the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB). Once through the bark and into the cambium layer, the MPB injects the tree with a fungus that prevents sap from flowing, thus killing the tree. Infected trees should be promptly removed.
- Tree limbing and thinning.
  - The Monument Fire Department (MFD) has expanded their chipping program for 2026. Our neighborhood is scheduled for chipping during the weeks of June 22 or June 29. The exact week cannot be guaranteed, so have your slash at the street prior to June 22.
  - The CSFS also advises that all slash should be removed from your property within 6 weeks of cutting, so you should not begin cutting before May 15.
  - MFD strongly encourages residents to have the wood chips deposited back onto their properties as this aids in water retention and overall soil health, but this year they will also offer the option of having the wood chips hauled away. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) advises once beetle infected slash is chipped, the beetles are no longer viable.
  - As in prior years, slash piles should consist only of cut trees and tree branches. None of the following materials should be included:
    - No construction or building materials, treated lumber, fence posts or signs.
    - No shrubs, root wads, stumps, dirt, or rocks. These items clog and damage chipping equipment.
    - No grass clippings, trash, weeds, bags of leaves or raked needles or pine cones.

More slash pile requirements and a sign-up request will be sent out later in April or May, once we have more information from the MFD.

## Fall Actions – Early October

- Begin to check your trees for chunky sawdust at the base of your trees and pitch tubes (<https://csfs.colostate.edu/forest-management/common-forest-insects-diseases/mountain-pine-beetle/about/>).
- If you are fairly certain the tree is infested, remove it. If you are uncertain, call the Colorado State Forest Service at: 719/687-2921. They will ask you to take pictures and email them to: [CSFS\\_woodlandpark@mail.colostate.edu](mailto:CSFS_woodlandpark@mail.colostate.edu).

### What is TPR Firewise Committee doing to assist you?

- Each year we coordinate between you and the MFD to schedule property assessments that will assist you to identify risks and advise you on mitigation actions specific to your property.
- We coordinate with the MFD to communicate their chipping schedule for TPR and answer your questions
- We arrange for experts to speak at the annual picnic. This year we hope to have a speaker from the Colorado State Forest Service.
- Also, the TPR HOA website is supplemented with current educational information about fire mitigation and threats to our Ponderosa forest.