


To: Wildfire Matters Review Committee

From: Beth Semptimphelter 

Date: August 25, 2014

Re: Colorado and Prescribed Fire

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the future use of prescribed fire in Colorado. Prescribed fire use through broadcast burning should not occur in Colorado until more testing, research and planning are done and funding is obtained for much needed change. The diversity among local jurisdictions' regulations and state statutes regarding prescribed fire needs to become much more consistent and uniform allowing prescribed fire. New regulations are needed for any type of forest management and treatment in our WUI. Colorado should prohibit use of broadcast burns in the WUI. Treatment methods can include free firewood, logging for profit, chipping and mulching which are viable, proven, useful products that do not require fire.

Colorado's Emergency communications system needs continual improvement and funding until proven it can maintain communication among all types of emergency responders and their radios/equipment and all levels of local and state agencies. Development and implementation of state training standards for public safety telecommunicators and emergency 911 dispatcher who are the public's first and only connection to immediate help and aid. Other states currently maintain public safety telecommunicators' standards (ie: FL, CA, IL). Colorado's local jurisdictions and 911 authorities must jointly agree to use and require a state minimum training standard.

Require the Division of Fire Prevention and Control's review and approval of prescribed fire broadcast burn permit applications statewide for at least a period of 3 years to establish compliance, consistency and allow the Division complete control of prescribed burning throughout our state.

Consider incentives to the public for wood boilers. Just as homeowners received incentives, discounts and credits for installation and use of solar power, our state could provide these for installation and use of wood boilers. Help Colorado become a "Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle Our Forest" state and begin the needed culture change away from prescribed broadcast fire in populated areas, to reducing fuel loads with manual removal that allows for the re-use and recycling of the fuel.