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February 25, 2015

Dear Colorado General Assembly Member,

Enclosed for your information is the *2014 Report on the Health of Colorado's Forests – Urban and Community Forests: An Investment in Colorado*. Accompanying the report this year we also have enclosed: a DVD production that describes forest conditions in Colorado, related challenges and solutions to forest health problems; a map of Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) districts throughout the state; and contact information for our district offices.

This year's report is the 14<sup>th</sup> in a series of forest health reports developed by the CSFS. The 2014 report focuses on the importance of our urban and community forests, challenges we face in managing them, and the actions we can take to address those issues. Of particular concern in these settings is the emerging threat of emerald ash borer (EAB), an exotic pest first confirmed in Colorado in 2013 that has cost Eastern U.S. communities billions of dollars. The report also highlights significant pests of our mountain forests, the most destructive of which for the third year in a row was the spruce beetle.

Information sources for the report include the annual aerial forest health survey, a cooperative project between the CSFS and the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service, on-the-ground observations by CSFS foresters, and special surveys designed to ensure early detection of invasive insect species like EAB, thousand cankers disease and gypsy moth.

This year's forest health report, as well as the online-only *2014 Colorado Forest Insect and Disease Update*, will help guide forest management decisions and programs over the next year. All previous forest health reports and the insect and disease update are available on the CSFS website at [www.csf.colostate.edu](http://www.csf.colostate.edu).

As the lead state agency providing forest management and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners, the CSFS is here to help provide these landowners, decision-makers, partners and others the information and tools they need to help achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments.

If you have questions or would like additional information about Colorado's forests and the programs being implemented to address forest health concerns, please contact me at 970-491-6303 or [mike.lester@colostate.edu](mailto:mike.lester@colostate.edu), or call the CSFS District Forester in your area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike B. Lester".

Michael B. Lester  
State Forester/Director  
Colorado State Forest Service