

Funding Now Available for Defensible Space

The Huerfano County government is pleased to announce that funding has been acquired to fund a Wildfire Mitigation cost-share program in neighborhoods of extreme wildfire hazard. These funds are available for a short time, involve specific requirements, and are to be used only to establish Defensible Space around habitable structures in the areas listed below.

Once all contracting, site assessment and vegetation marking is completed by experienced local personnel, the actual thinning work will be completed by qualified contractors who are appropriately insured, equipped, and trained for this type of work. All Defensible Space treatments completed will conform to NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standards as illustrated in the Firewise Communities/USA program promoted locally. Work will be monitored and assessed by qualified County and Fire personnel to ensure compliance to program standards. In addition, random Firewise Defensible Space assessments will be completed by the Colorado State Forest Service-La Veta District.

This funding will be utilized as a 50/50 cost-share of total project cost. Participating homeowners will be required to pay one half (1/2) of total project cost invoiced upon completion. Local averages of total project costs are anticipated at \$2,400.00-\$3,500.00 and are based on similar projects in this area. Actual total costs are dependent on forest type & density, property size, technical requirements, and ease of accessibility. Some properties with numerous mature trees and above ground utility lines will require specialized removal and subsequently will have higher treatment costs. Despite the existing conditions of any given site, the objective of this grant is to ensure the lowest possible cost while retaining the highest standard of work for which ever type of treatment may be required. All produced slash will be chipped and distributed evenly and all unwanted firewood size wood will be promptly hauled away to be used in the Huerfano County L.E.A.P program.

The five neighborhoods targeted for this funding are identified as Extreme Hazard areas for wildfire in the LVFPD Community Wildfire Protection Plan of 2011. Home owners in the following Wildland-Urban Interface areas can request this subsidy: Pinehaven, Panadero/CMR, Spanish Peaks, Wahatoya Canyon ('Little Kansas'), and the greater Cuchara Village area.

This opportunity will be available primarily to homeowners with a residence in either of the above neighborhoods. If interest in this program is insufficient in these areas, the cost-share program will be offered to other neighborhoods within Huerfano County. Due to the restrictions of this grant, rapid public response and participation is essential in order to execute this valuable subsidy. While it may be inconvenient for some, we request an **immediate** response by interested parties.

Recently an announcement for this grant from Huerfano County was delivered via the U. S. Postal Service to all applicable addresses on file. This email notification refers to the same grant and is intended to ensure wide spread awareness of this opportunity (or to alert any owners who may have been missed). For complete information regarding this grant click on the "Cuchara Area Cost-Share" button at lavetafire.org or contact Jake at lvfpd.wms.gm@gmail.com or Paul at pbranson@huerfano.us