

Questions & Answers

Provided below are answers to questions that arose from online attendees to the Wildfire in Northern Colorado: Stories and Strategies for Resiliency public event, held the evening August 2, 2023. Questions have been grouped together for ease of reference about a particular topic, and in some instances the same or similar question was asked by more than one attendee.

- 1. Will the recorded webinar [and associated event presentations] be available online?**

A recording of the webinar is posted on the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) website:

<https://www.larimer.gov/emergency>

A copy of the presentation on the Glacier View Fire Adapted Community Alliance (FACA) is available at this [link](#).

- 2. Can you share information on the book(s) and documentary that were mentioned during the event presentations?**

Book – [*The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire That Saved America*, by Timothy Egan](#)

Film – [*CO-Existing with Wildfire*, presented by Rocky Mountain PBS](#)

Film & Companion Book – [*The Forest Service and the Greatest Good: A Centennial History*, by James Lewis](#)

- 3. Boulder County has a “wildfire partners” program that among other things, can help homeowners with their insurance coverages and costs... does Larimer County have such a thing?**

Yes. The new Larimer County Wildfire Partners Program is being built-out to emulate several aspects of the Boulder County Wildfire Partners Program, including providing homeowners with the opportunity to earn a certificate of completion for wildfire mitigation on their property. Regarding insurance, upon earning the wildfire mitigation certificate of completion the

homeowner can choose to share that certificate with their insurance provider to potentially retain current coverage, or they may use the certificate to shop for new coverage from an alternate insurance provider if they have been excluded from future coverage by their current insurer. The Larimer County Wildfire Partners Program provides the home assessments and guidance to empower homeowners to complete mitigation, and potentially earn a certificate of completion, but the program does not share assessment information with insurance companies nor get between the homeowners and their insurance company.

4. How can I sign up for a wildfire risk home assessment?

In the near future there will be a Wildfire Partners Program webpage that will be accessible through the Larimer County Sheriff's Office and Larimer County Office of Emergency Management websites, and this webpage will include an auto-scheduling link where homeowners will be able to schedule "Wildfire Partners Home ignition Zone Assessments". Until this webpage is available, homeowners can request these assessments by emailing the following information to Wildfire Partner Program Coordinator, Raina Eshleman, at eshlemrf@co.larimer.co.us. Include *"Request for Wildfire Partners Home Ignition Zone Assessment"* in the email subject line and in the body of the email, be sure to provide information on the property address to be assessed, property owner's name, email address, and preferred day and time. Until we have the auto-scheduler system built, we will do our best to accommodate day and time requests, but cannot guarantee availability on any specific date. Some alternative dates may be offered by the Wildfire Partners Ambassador until a mutually agreeable day and time can be confirmed.

5. Is there a document you can share that gives information on how to mitigate my home for wildfire risk?

Yes. The Colorado State Forest Service "Home Ignition Zone Guide" is available here:

https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021_CSFS_HIZGuide_Web.pdf

Additional resources and further guidance to homeowners on wildfire mitigation is available here:

<https://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/protect-your-home-property-from-wildfire/>

6. What are your thoughts on wooden privacy fences, in terms of wildfire risk to a home and the home ignition zone?

Wooden privacy fences are combustible and will contribute to the spread of ground fire to homes/structures. We recommend the best practice of using non-combustible fencing instead of wood. When and where that is not possible, we recommend replacing the final section of fence or the gate that is in contact with the home/structure, to be replaced with a metal (non-combustible) gate to create a fire-break between the fence and the structure.

7. When homeowners file an application for their home to become a short-term rental, the permit process includes a section that says “wildfire”. What does this entail, what are the rules and regulations, and who is in charge of certifying that these homes are wildfire ready?

Within Larimer County’s jurisdiction the application and permitting process to convert a home to a short-term rental requires a Wildfire Safety Inspection through the Larimer County Sheriff’s Office Emergency Services Unit (ESU). There is no formal “certification,” however, a wildfire specialist from the ESU reviews each short-term rental application forwarded from the Planning Department, conducts an on-site wildfire inspection, places mitigation requirements on the property owner per national standard (based largely on the Colorado State Forest Service Home Ignition Zone Guide, and the Larimer County Land Use Code) and confirms through a standardized follow-up inspection process that the required mitigation has been completed before producing a “PASS” inspection report for the property owner and Planning Department records.

8. Can the county or state require “mitigation level” disclosure during the sale of homes, like they do with radon levels?

The County cannot, as the State holds the authority when it comes to disclosure requirements in real estate transactions. These disclosure requirements have legal implications and are born through the legislative process, thus a law must first be created that would require the disclosure of wildfire risk (and/or mitigation information). The Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies' Division of Real Estate maintains the Seller's Property Disclosure forms.

- 9. LFRA has been coming up 34 in recent lightning storms watching for emerging problems -- which is great. Do we have lightning strike location technology? and do we have drones that could survey areas outside of the "from the road" view?**

The National Weather Service provides products and services that depict lightning strike data, whether during or following storm events. Additionally the Colorado Division of Fire Protection and Control owns and operates Multi-Mission Aircraft that is used for fire detection and near real-time intelligence with respect to fire starts. There are also numerous partnering agencies that have small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) that may provide reconnaissance assistance if conditions allow and situation warrants. Whether remote sensing or ground observation, all agencies involved attempt to use many tools at their disposal in an integrated fashion to assess the need for emergency warning and response.

- 10. Would it be possible to re-engineer rivers and/or tributaries in order to provide fire ponds in critical areas?**

There are a number of factors to consider that would have a great impact on the degree of complexity in this type of project. From the engineering and design components, to environmental and ecological considerations, to legal ramifications and water rights and more - any particular construction and designation of a fire suppression pond must undergo the necessary steps and study in order to determine feasibility, with larger projects likely being most complex and challenging.

Larimer County does have many reservoirs that are used for wildland firefighting.

11. One person's problem might be another's solution: Can people who are mitigating their property by removing small saplings provide them to be used in reforestation efforts in burn areas (rather than taking them to the slash pile)?

This method is not typically used in local reforestation efforts, as it can be less effective and less efficient. Transplant success rate is lower in many cases, and the logistics associated with removal and transport to plant care can be more difficult and not cost-effective.

12. The [Community Partnership Panel] panelists are all passionate about their fields and good at collaborating with one another, how would they suggest trying to actively engage individuals and their communities to see the need to keep our forests and watersheds healthy?

Being friendly and respectful is a recommended way to initiate a conversation, and being visible by attending neighborhood events or using community amenities will provide opportunities to connect with neighbors. Offering help and asking for advice may also help to establish trustful and authentic relationships.

When appropriate to do so, sharing information on the ways that our forests and watersheds benefit people, wildlife and the environment would be a good starting point. This can be done during casual conversation, at community events, or even through social media. Creating opportunities to connect with nature such as a hike, camping trip or even just a walk in a local park, can help foster an appreciation for nature and care for its protection.

Active engagement and support of our forests and watersheds can take many forms, to include supporting local organizations that steward and champion the health of our forests and watersheds. Find more information on how to get involved here:

Big Thompson Watershed Coalition: <https://bigthompson.co/>
Coalition for the Poudre River: <https://www.poudrewatershed.org/>

Estes Valley Watershed Coalition: <https://www.evwatershed.org/>
Larimer Conservation District: <https://www.larimercd.org/>
Peaks to People Water Fund: <https://peakstopeople.org/>

13. Has anyone looked into using native fungi as a means to help reduce fuels in the forested areas, rather than conducting prescribed burns?

There are some studies that suggest fungi as a tool in the fight against wildfire risk however, questions remain about the efficacy of this method when applied on a large scale: it can be difficult to inoculate large areas of forest, and the effectiveness may depend on the type of fungus and type of forest. Further research is needed in order to determine the best ways to use fungi for this purpose. In a related use, there has been some evidence of operational success when used on chip piles.

14. Some propane tanks are close to homes – is Larimer County working with propane companies to incentivize moving them to “Zone 2” of properties?

Currently we are not working with companies in terms of an incentive program, however, Larimer County has adopted the 2021 International Residential Code (IRC). With respect to 2021 IRC Section G, 2412.2 and the National Fire Protection Association’s NFPA 58 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code standard, there are certain minimum distance requirements in place for new construction that prescribe how far from the structure a propane tank must be placed.

15. Some fire hydrants in our neighborhoods are non-functional as hydrants. Are there any regulations to force the water districts to correct this issue or make sure they are labeled correctly?

Hydrants are typically required, regulated and maintained by land use development standards and the fire district/department having jurisdictional authority. Regulation and maintenance details may differ depending on the particular location and jurisdiction. Please check with your local fire district/department as this would be the best starting point to get an answer.

16. Our neighborhood has only one way in and one way out. Are there any grants or funding available that would help us build an emergency fire road for our neighborhood?

Larimer County has looked at this in the past and have been unable to find grant funding for this purpose. It is especially difficult on private roads and subdivisions due to ownership and maintenance responsibility held privately. We will keep researching potential funding sources for this purpose.

17. Can we use tax dollars to provide curtain burners in dedicated locations near the forested properties to encourage mitigation?

Answered Live – See webinar recording