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**1/31/2023**

Dear **Santa Fe Trail Ranch POA/FHWMC**,

I am pleased to inform you that your application for the 2022-2023 Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program **Santa Fe Trail Ranch SW Fuelbreak Project** has been approved for funding in the amount of **\$75,000** for a treatment of **220 acres**. The project period deadline is March 31, 2027.

This notification is not your green light to initiate implementation. At this time you are to meet with your local CSFS Field Office Forester for a pre-implementation meeting to; (1) develop your final scope of work and incorporate required standards and guidelines including best management practices, (2) discuss the documentation and payment request procedures, and (3) answer any other questions you may have.

For future reference your CSFS Field Office Forester is Supervisory Forester **Paul Branson**, who can be reached at **719-742-3588** or **paul.branson@colostate.edu**.

A draft scope of work based on your application is included with this letter. Once the final scope of work is completed, the CSFS Field Office will submit it electronically to the FRWRM Program Manager **no later than March 13, 2023**. Official 'Project Award Notifications' will be prepared and sent after the final scope of work is received. Reimbursement procedures and cost documentation requirements are described in the Project Award Notification. Projects may be initiated only after grant recipients have signed the official Project Award Notification and initialed the final Scope of Work and returned to the Program Manager. Please remember that any efforts, activities, and expenses prior to the official award notification are not eligible for reimbursement or match.

Thank you for your interest in reducing hazardous fuels and creating resilient forests and communities.

Sincerely,

Kahla Montrose  
Forestry Program Specialist

# Colorado State Forest Service Financial Assistance Program

## Attachment A: Scope of Work

**Project Name:** Santa Fe Trail Ranch SW Fuelbreak Project

**CSFS Account Number:**

### **Work to be completed/deliverables:**

This project addresses the first phase of maintenance for a more than 1000 acre Shaded Fuel Break along the south & west borders of the Santa Fe Trail Ranch subdivision. The initial treatment was done in 2004-2010. The regrowth of Gamble Oak, New Mexico Locust (NM Locust), and volunteer trees has created a significant fuel load. This will be addressed with Hydro-Ax mastication of approximately 220 acres at \$343 per acre to return this portion of the fuel break to its original integrity.

### **Prescription**

The original shaded fuel break was completed based on the recommendations from the CSFS pamphlet "Fuelbreak Guideline for Forested Subdivision and Communities" by F. C. Dennis. Prescription and implementation was overseen by C.K. Morey, La Veta District Forester, CSFS and Scott Chase, Head Forester for Vermejo Park Ranch. The initial tree thinning aimed at 40-60 trees/acre near the center of the fuel break with tree density increasing toward the edges until blending into the existing forest. The fuel break width varies from a minimum of 300-400 feet and a maximum of nearly 1400 ft based upon topography and availability of usable/salable material. Logs were prepared to the specification of Western Wood Products, a producer of treated post and pole products in Raton, NM. Proceeds from the material delivered for post and pole production were used for additional mitigation efforts on the ground.

Leave trees were selected based on health, vigor, species, and spacing. The majority were Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir as are native to the forest in the area. Some Juniper and Pinion were left but were intentionally selected against. Clusters of 2-5 trees were left as is usual in a native forest and occasional clumps of Gamble Oak were also left. These clumps were given additional spacing to avoid undo fuel loads while providing a more natural look. The understory consisting primarily of Gamble Oak and NM Locust was masticated with Hydro Axes.

Overall the area has thrived with the reduction in competition contributing to the health and vigor of the leave trees by reducing the competition for water and nutrients. Growth of some grasses and forbs were seen in the first few years, but rapid regrowth of the Gamble Oak has begun to choke them out. Maintenance mastication following the "Forestry Best Management Practices to Protect Water Quality in Colorado 2010" guidelines will return the fuel break to its original prescription and reinvigorate the fuel breaks ability to reduce wildfire risk as well as protect the value of the initial investment.

### **Utilization**

Since this project will be accomplished solely through mastication there will be no by-products of value generated from this project. The woody materials generated by mastication will decay on the forest floor thereby incorporating this organic material into the soil. The result will be a significant sequestration of forest carbon into the soil increasing the organic content and enriching the soil.

### **Milestone dates:**

Initials:

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Negotiations with the General Manager of Vermejo Park Ranch were completed in September 2022. A mutual agreement has been reached that the bulk if not all of the work can be accomplished with Hydro-Axes since little or no marketable material is present in the project area. It is agreed that no work will be done during hunting seasons.

Scheduling of the project will be determined by availability of our contractor Rue Logging who has multiple Hydro-Axes and should complete the project in 2-3 months.

In-Kind work by SFTR property owners will commence upon approval of the grant and continue throughout until project completion. SFTR Forest Health Wildfire Mitigation Committee will also be conducting educational events for the community throughout the year and be responsible for encouraging HIZ and landscape thinning projects as well as documentation of In-Kind from individual property owners using current volunteer labor rates and machine rates.

Project Completion date: **March 31, 2027**

Final Report and reimbursement request date due to local CSFS Field Office: **April 30, 2027**

**Standards or Guidelines:**

Best Management Practices must be followed for all forest management/fuels mitigation work completed under this award. Refer to the handbook *Forestry Best Management Practices to Protect Water Quality in Colorado* for more information which is located at <http://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/ForestryBMP-CO-2010.pdf>.

*All work completed under this award must be certified as meeting minimum Colorado State Forest Service standards prior to any reimbursement being made to the award recipient. CSFS Grant Reimbursement Request Form Package will be used to both request reimbursement and to certify that work has been completed to minimum standards.*

Initials:

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