

Front Range Roundtable

Presentation to the Governor's Forest
Health Advisory Council

September 28, 2009



Today's Objectives and Agenda

Objectives	
Update the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council on the Front Range Roundtable's goals, accomplishments, 2010 priorities, and challenges	

Topic	Timing
1. Front Range forest health challenges	3:30 – 3:35
2. The Front Range Roundtable: history, recommendations, and successes to date	3:35 – 3:45
3. Roundtable priorities for 2010	3:45 – 3:55
4. How the FHAC can help	3:55 – 4:00
5. Questions, discussion	4:00 – 4:15



Colorado Fire History

- In 2002, Colorado experienced its worst fire season in years.
- Costs for wildfire response (local, state, and federal) in the last decade have totaled \$235 million, with 34,000 wildland fire events burning 1,335,000 acres. In that time, more than 17,000 homes have been threatened, involved or ignited¹
- These forests protect many values at risk, foremost of which are people and homes.
 - The forests also contain many resources that Front Range residents depend on for their safety, including watersheds and water supply infrastructure, roads, energy transmission lines, and communication systems.
 - Many of Colorado's visitors depend on the Front Range forests for the health of its tourism industry, which is supported by natural resources such as habitats for species of concern, but also recreation sites and amenities.
- Years of fire suppression have resulted in increased fire risk in some Front Range² forests. The conditions that led to the fire season of 2002 are for the most part still present, namely too much hazardous fuels.

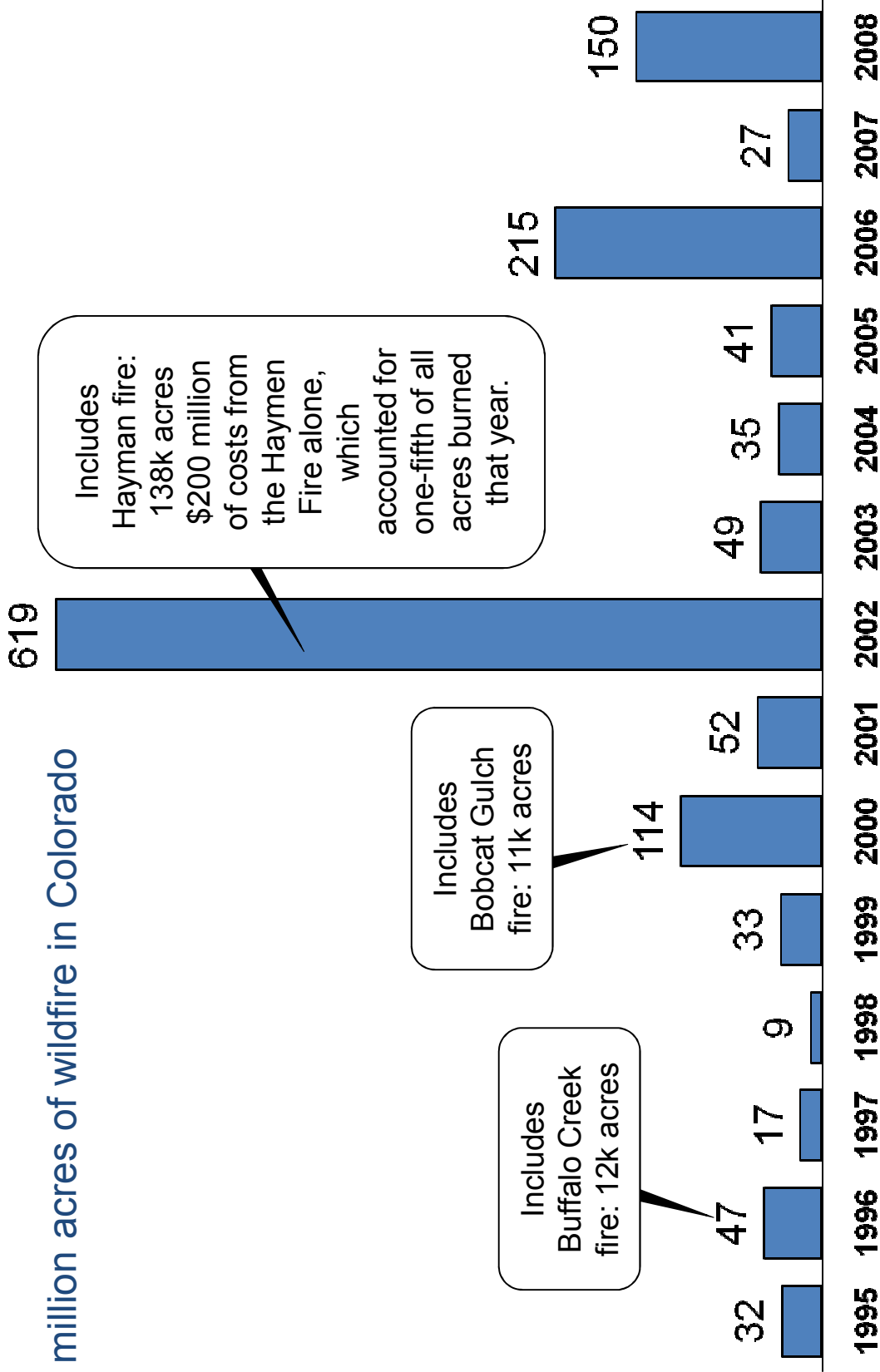
1. "1996-2008 Wildland Structure Fires and Structures Threatened" analysis

2. Front Range defined as 10 counties: Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer, Park, Teller



Colorado's Fire Seasons

1.3 million acres of wildfire in Colorado



Sources: Rocky Mountain Area and Coordination Center Annual Activity Report (2001-2004); Wildland Fire Activity by Cause, Combining Federal and Non-federal Agencies Within Each State (www.fs.fed.us/r2/fire/oo_annual_report.pdf)



Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable

Mission

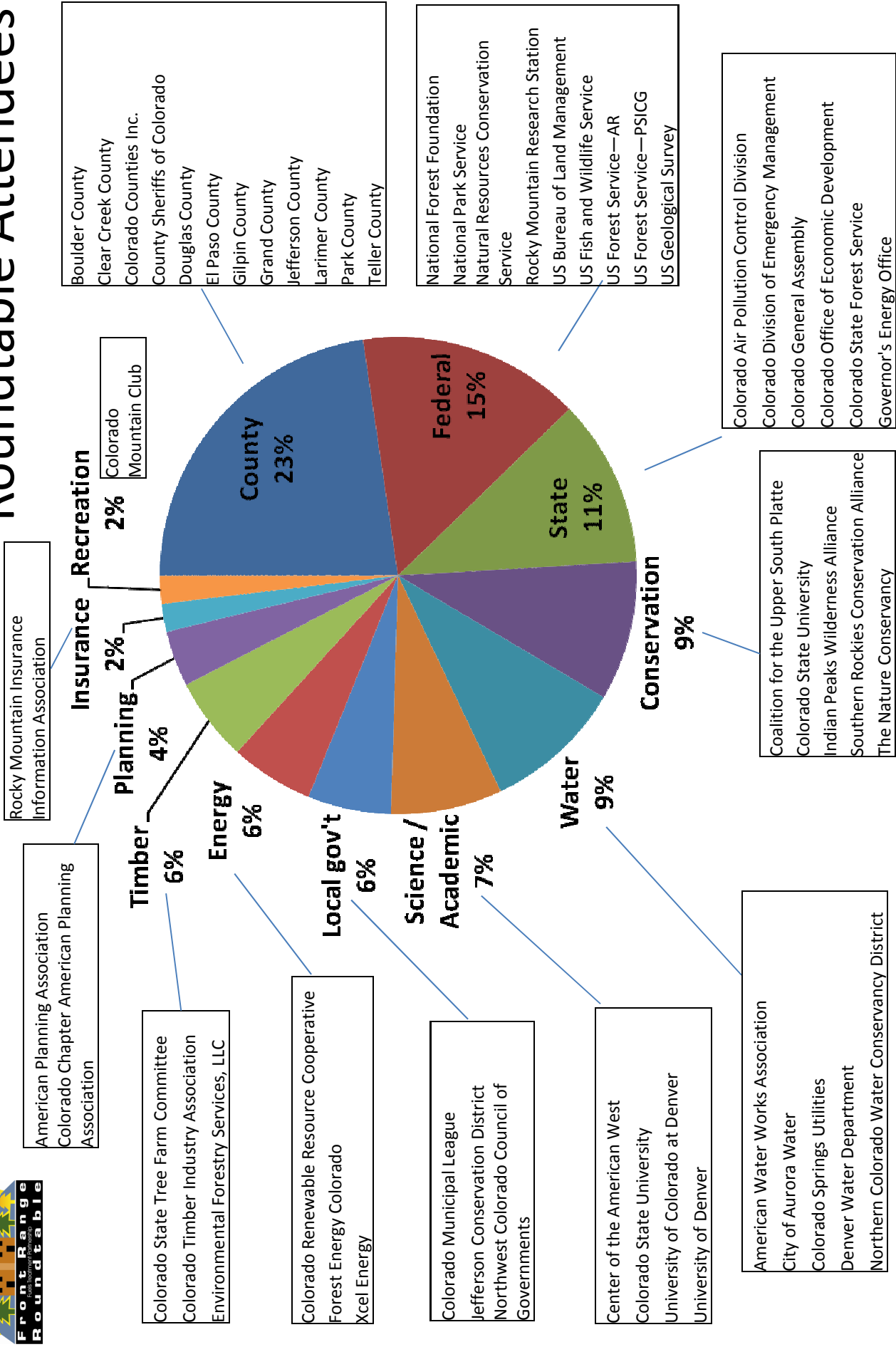
Develop a long-term vision and roadmap for protecting communities from the risk of wildfire and restoring forest health in 10 Colorado Front Range Counties (Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer, Park, Teller).

History

- Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership was formed in 2002 to reduce wildland fire risks through fuels treatment projects that are economically feasible, socially acceptable, and ecologically sustainable; to protect communities from wildland fires; and to restore fire-adapted ecosystems.
- The FRFTP formed the Roundtable to broaden its capacity and expertise to include representatives from state and federal agencies, local governments, environmental conservation organizations, academic and scientific communities, and industry and user groups.

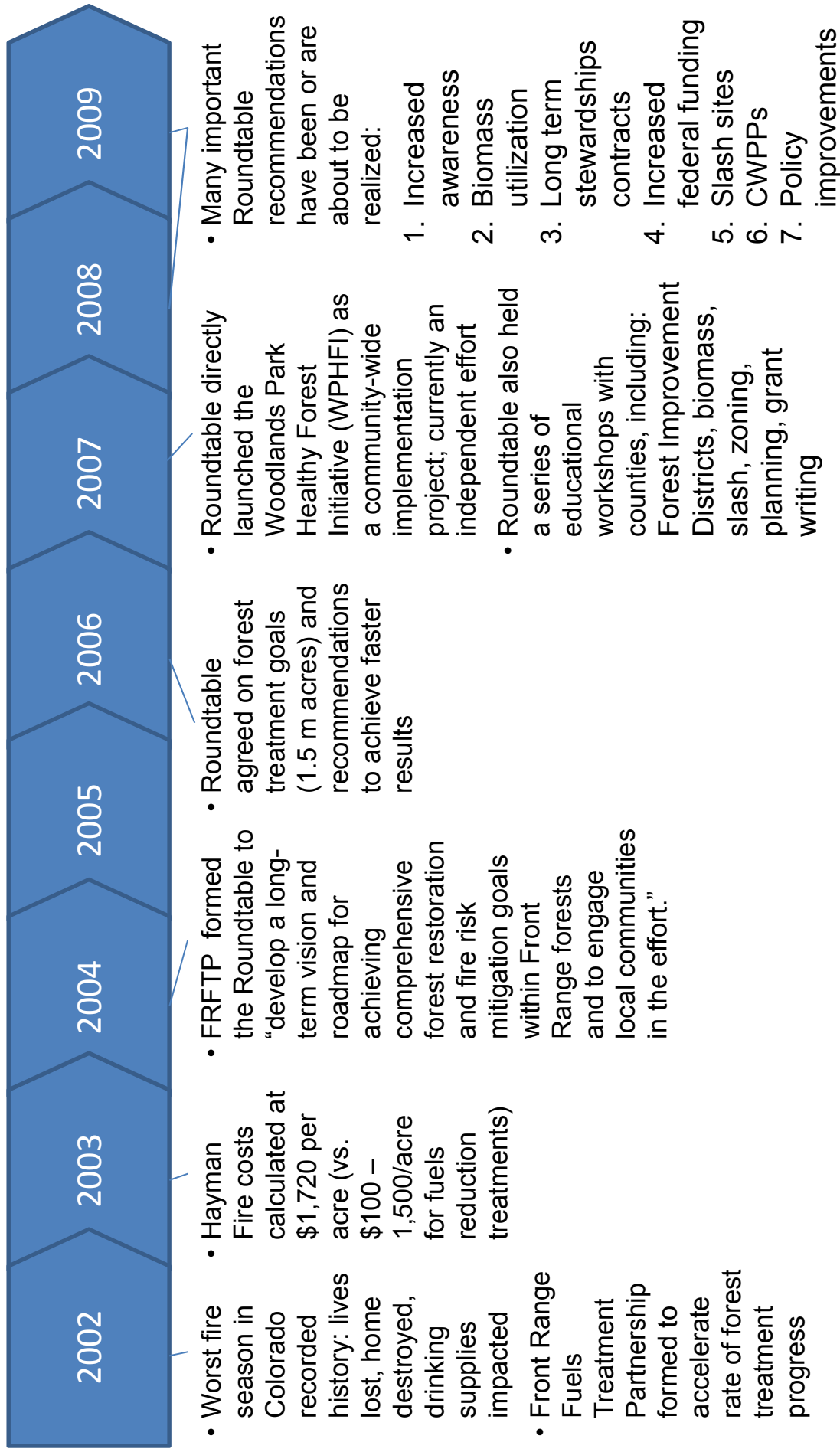


Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable Attendees





Roundtable History, 2002–2009



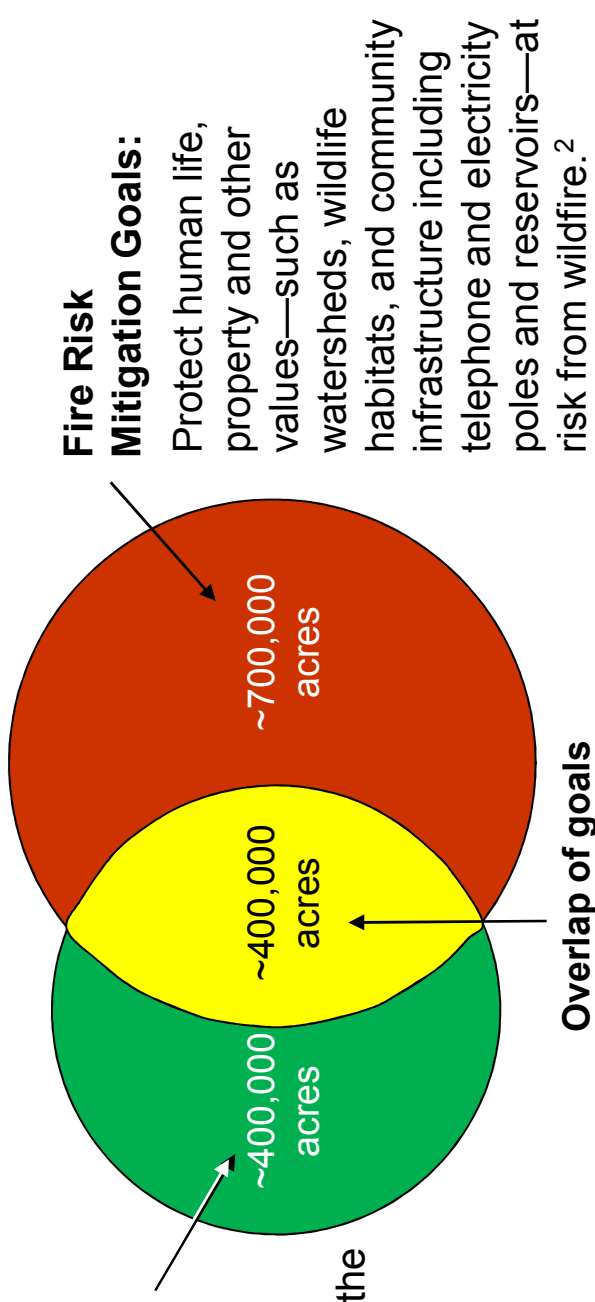


Roundtable Goals

- The Front Range roundtable has reached consensus that 1.5 million acres of Front Range forests require treatments to reduce fire risk.

Ecological Restoration Goals:

Restore an area's natural ecological structures and processes to within the historical range of variability (HRV)¹

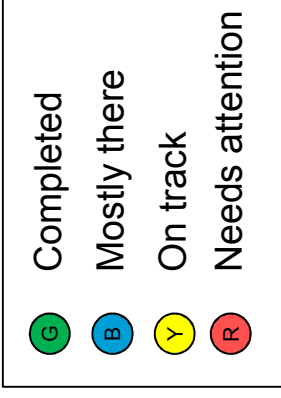


1 HRV is the natural fluctuation in ecosystem structures or processes, and the spatial and temporal variations in these conditions, over time. Ecosystem structures include overstory and understory composition, expected biodiversity and patch sizes / diverse arrangement of patches of forest stands. Ecosystem processes include soil nutrient cycling, riparian sedimentation and the presence of recent wildfires. Because ecosystem structures and processes naturally change over time, areas should be restored so that combined they represent the natural range of ecological structures and processes—versus a one-time snapshot of conditions—for that ecosystem.

2 For the purpose of this analysis, the Roundtable primarily addressed protecting people and houses from wildland fire. Fire risk mitigation requires that buildings be protected with Firewise practices. Fire risk mitigation also requires assessing each of three types of fuels (surface, ladder, and canopy) and then selectively reducing those that are especially dense and pose a wildfire risk.



Progress against 2006 Roundtable Recommendations



Roundtable goals

Increase funding for forest treatments

Recommended initiatives

1. Identify new state and local funding sources for treatments on state and private land. **B**
2. Increase forest treatment incentives for private landowners. **Y**
3. Advocate for additional federal funding for Front Range forest treatments. **Y**

Reduce the cost of forest treatments

4. Increase appropriate application of prescribed fire and wildland fire use as a management tool. **R**
5. Increase utilization of woody biomass for facility heating. **R**
6. Increase contract sizes and durations with stewardship contracts on federal land. **Y**

Ensure local leadership and planning

7. Limit the growth of fire risk in the Wildland-Urban Interface. **Y**
8. Promote the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Front Range communities-at-risk. **B**

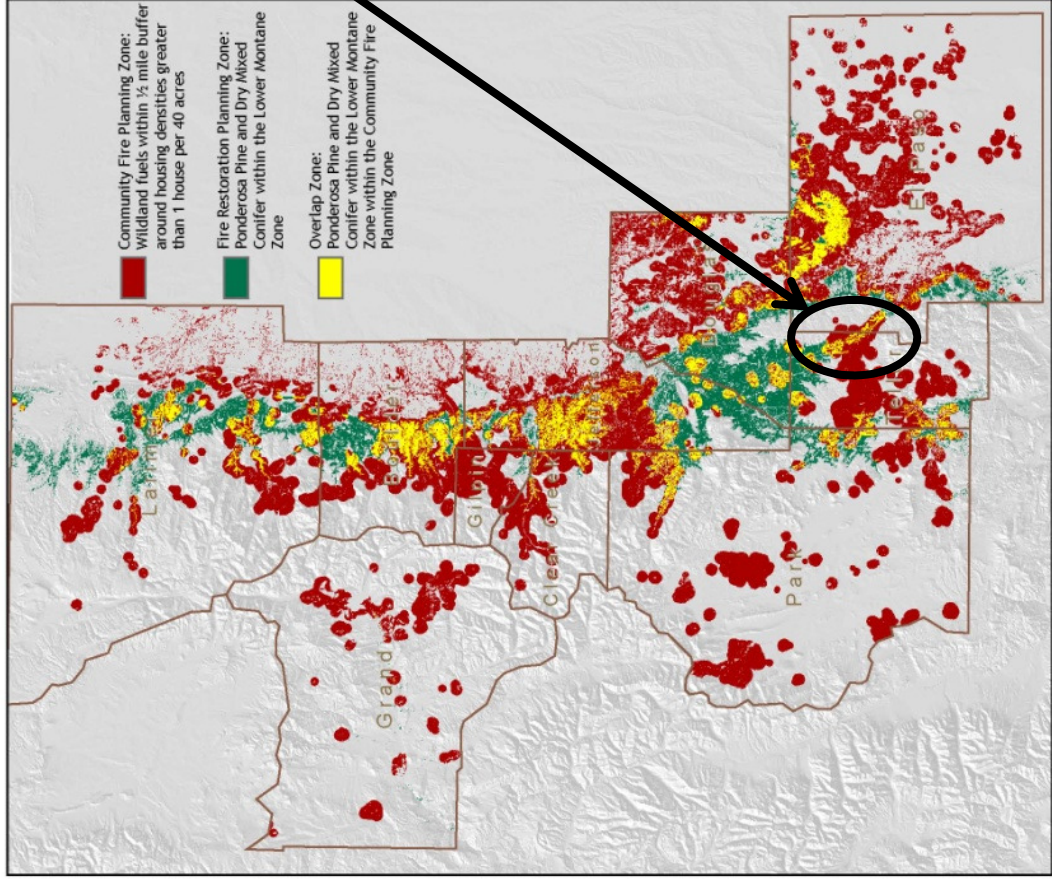
Set clear priorities and ensure progress against common goals

9. Adopt a clear and common framework for prioritizing treatments. **R**
10. Convene follow-on Roundtable to ensure implementation of recommended initiatives. **G**



Successes—Direct and Indirect

2006 Map of Roundtable Priorities



Direct Roundtable Successes

1. Consensus that treatments in the Lower Montane ecoregion would achieve both fire risk mitigation and restoration
2. Consensus on a map of prioritized areas for forest treatments (and funding needs) to guide implementers and to measure future results
3. Passage of state legislation authorizing the creation of local Forest Improvement Districts.
4. Launched the Woodlands Park Healthy Forest Initiative (WPHFI)
5. Increased public and political awareness: 3 County workshops held (biomass, grant writing)
6. Continued on-the-ground implementation

Partners' successes consistent with recommendations

1. Biomass utilization: Gilpin, Boulder, planned in El Paso
2. Slash sites for private landowners in many counties
3. Long term stewardships contracts: Arapaho-Roosevelt and Pike-San Isabel (3,000 acres/yr for 10 years)
4. Increased federal funding for on the ground treatments: \$1.8 mm more in 2008 than in 2006
5. 75 Front Range CWPPs approved (out of 151 completed in Colorado)



2010 Roundtable Priorities

 Current teams

Phase of Implementation	
Higher	Lower
<p>3rd tier priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Redefine purpose: stay focused 6. Clarify relationship with FRFTP 7. Clarify relationship with FRWWPWG 8. Clarify relationship with NFRMPBWG 	<p>1st tier priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation project (supported by mapping) 2. Outreach to elected officials supported by external communication
<p>4th tier priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Clarify/improve organizational structure 10. Improve Roundtable operations 11. Acknowledge/celebrate progress 12. Expand membership diversity 13. Incorporate into a nonprofit 	<p>2nd tier priorities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Biomass utilization and slash sites 4. Science education, collaboration, and monitoring (including expanding area of consensus by defining terminology)

Lower

Higher

Importance to Roundtable Members



How the FHAC Can Help

1. Help raise awareness of Front Range forest health issues and threats
2. Continue to support efforts to access FRLA funding
3. Create and support a state-wide legislative agenda to support forest health