

Brian McPeek, Mike Babler and The Nature Conservancy Receive Teammate of the Year Award from the Colorado State Forest Service for their Work on the FRFTP Roundtable

On October 11, Colorado State Forester Jeff Jahnke presented Brian McPeek and Mike Babler, on behalf of The Nature Conservancy, the 2006 Colorado State Forest Service Teammate of the Year Award for their work on the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable.

The FRFTP Roundtable was formed in 2004 to broaden the capacity and expertise of the Partnership and foster greater understanding of the complex issues related to forest management on the Front Range. The Partnership is an interagency program that operates under the leadership of the Colorado State Forest Service, USDA Forest Service and National Park Service to reduce wildland fire risks through fuels treatments on Colorado's Front Range.

Since the formation of the Roundtable, McPeek and Babler have been instrumental in helping to develop a long-term vision and roadmap to restore forest health and protect communities from the risks of wildfire.

In addition to their participation in Roundtable meetings, McPeek and Babler provided leadership to the Roundtable Organizing Committee, which is responsible for providing organizational oversight and support to the Roundtable, identifying financial resources to support the Roundtable's work and tracking the Roundtable's progress.

Since the Roundtable released its report in May, McPeek, Babler and The Nature Conservancy have worked tirelessly on its behalf. They distributed the report to internal and external stakeholders, decision-makers and leaders at the state, regional and national levels to help inform the debate about and generate interest in community protection and forest restoration. They made congressional visits to foster political and financial support to implement Roundtable recommendations, and have made numerous presentations around the state to promote the work of the Roundtable and generate support that leads to timely implementation of recommendations.

Currently, The Nature Conservancy is working with other Roundtable member organizations to integrate the Roundtable's work with existing programs and analyze policy that has the potential to impact successful implementation of the recommendations.

“McPeek and Babler clearly have exhibited integrity, commitment and leadership throughout the development of the Roundtable's findings and recommendations. “They left their personal and organizational agendas at the door and promoted consensus-building among 30 diverse organizations,” Jahnke said. “Because of their efforts, the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable continues to receive significant recognition as a leader in collaboration—collaboration that ultimately will help protect communities and restore forest health on Colorado's Front Range.”