

# **SPRING CREEK RANCHERS ASSOCIATION, INC**

## **POLICY FOR FIRE MITIGATION**

**September 25, 2009**

### **PURPOSE**

This policy is meant to aid in the prevention and suppression of fires and lessen the hazards to structures from wild fires as well as the hazards to land from structure fires within Spring Creek Ranch Subdivision.

**EXCERPTS FROM SUMMIT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN  
DATED NOVEMBER 16, 2006**

#### **THE GROWING PINE BEETLE EPIDEMIC**

“Over the last several years Summit County has experienced an epidemic of mountain pine beetles. The area and number of trees infected has increased significantly since 2002. In 2002 a cooperative aerial survey conducted by the US Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service showed about 8,000 dead trees in just less than 6,000 acres. In 2003 the aerial survey showed over 26,000 dead trees in an area just less than 10,000 acres. For 2004 these estimates show over 100,000 trees on 38,000 acres and in 2005 104,000 trees on 45, 226 acres. For 2005 the estimated number of trees infected was 1-4,271 on 45, 227 acres.

This is the second pine beetle epidemic in the county over the last 20 to 25 years. The root cause of these epidemics is that the majority of the lodgepole pines in the County are over 120 years old and has reached or surpassed the mature age for lodgepoles. The stands of these lodgepoles are often dense and the average diameter of many of the trees is greater than 8 inches. These factors, combined with years of fire suppression and more recently drought make our lodgepole pine forest of Summit county highly susceptible to mountain pine beetle outbreaks.

#### **Development in Wildlands**

Summit County’s population has more than doubled over the last 15 years and has increased over three fold over the last 25 years. Much of this residential growth has occurred in the WUI where private lands are adjacent to federal lands. These

forested interface areas have seen substantial residential growth, partly due to the beauty, recreational opportunities, solitude and scenery that these forests provide. As development in these areas continue to grow, there is a corresponding increase in the risk that wildfire presents to lives, property, and community resources.

As much Federal Land that surrounds Spring Creek Ranch, and the significant costs that are required to clear cut any specific area- with very little value to the logged timber- it is important to acknowledge the limited resources that are available, if any, from State, Federal or County level. In light of these scarce resources and the size of the problem the SCRA endeavors to manage the Subdivision from those Powers and Authority granted to the SCRA by the Covenants and Bylaws. Section 6 of the Covenants allows the Board of Directors to implement rules and such for the benefit of the Members. At this time the Fire Mitigation Plan of Spring Creek Ranch is a suggestion but may become an actual rule depending on the success of the following action items.

## **POLICY AND ACTIONS**

### **DEFENSIBLE SPACE**

The Defensible space is a designated area 30' in radius from all structures including residences, barns, garages and outbuildings. The following mitigation measures shall be provided:

- A. All slash and flammable debris shall be removed from all areas of a defensible space except firewood may be stored up to 200 cubic feet.
- B. All trees located within 10 feet of the structure shall be removed unless Defensible Space radius starts at the drip edge of the tree.
- C. All beetle kill (dead trees) including dead aspen trees shall be removed annually within the Defensible Space. No fire wood stacks or slash should remain on ground.
- D. It is recommended to thin all live trees adjacent to the Defensible Space to lessen a fuel source in close proximity to structures.

### **FORESTED AREAS**

Most of the 330 acres within the Subdivision have older logging roads that can facilitate access to beetle kill. In the heavily timbered sections of Lots A-F it is very difficult to drop trees without providing a landing area. It is suggested that no new roads be constructed but that neighbors cooperate with each other in order to reach infected areas. Smaller clear cut areas should be created to stage logs and slash for removal in addition to clear cutting specific building envelopes permitted pursuant the PUD.

## **Action**

Each large parcel (greater than 10 acres) contains a specific building envelope, which will ultimately contain an area considered “Defensible Space” around a future structure. An area that is greater than one acre with a maximum of two acres should be clear cut and stumps cut to grade to facilitate removal by equipment. Strategic trees of aspen or pine should be left to create a natural looking meadow. Most aspen groves will immediately repopulate in this area. This clear cut area can be utilized for piling slash and beetle kill removal and burning wood. All useable logs can be stacked for resale or removal. Burn permits must be obtained from Summit County and or the State of Colorado and all adjoining land owners with Spring Creek Ranch, Shadow Creek Ranch and Blue Valley Ranch shall be notified of the proposed burn. To the extent feasible due to the long haul cost, slash can be stored and burned in the third sewer pond.

## **STRATEGIC VISTAS**

All parcel and lot owners shall on an annual basis remove all beetle kill along Spring Creek Road and Blue Spruce Road within 20 feet of the edge of ROW. Wood should be cut to firewood length and stacked. Slash should be removed to the third pond or the nearest clear cut area.

Mountain Parks Electric should be contacted on an annual basis to remove all beetle kill that could disrupt electrical service. All infected trees should be marked with orange paint.

## **GRASS ACCUMULATION**

In 2008 and 2009 the spring snows and rains were substantial to the extent that the meadows and roadside were tremendously overgrown. It is recommended that arrangements be made to bring in livestock in a quantity that can graze the grass throughout the subdivision to an appropriate level. The subdivision is open fencing and this action would require the cooperation of all neighbors.