



# Private Land Rehabilitation

## Landowner Considerations during the Second Summer Post-Fire

Immediately following the fire, the **Fourmile Fire Rehabilitation Outreach Team** created the Land Rehabilitation FAQs as a “how to” guide to help property owners find answers to their most common land rehab questions. We recommend that you continue to consult this guide for answers to your common land rehab questions. It can be found by searching for “**Fourmile Fire Rebuild FAQ**” on [www.bouldercounty.org](http://www.bouldercounty.org).

## What land rehabilitation practices should private landowners focus their attention on during the second growing season after the fire?

### Reforestation

In the burn area, landowners have an opportunity to replant the forest with a focus on returning it to a healthy, fire-resistant and diverse ponderosa pine ecosystem. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) and Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts offer seedling tree sales and planting workshops each year. Always replant with native species of trees. Reforestation is a long-term venture that should be worked on incrementally over the coming decades and not as a one time planting project.

Focus on replanting trees in small clumps/groups of trees with a great degree of variation of both distances between individual trees within a single clump and also distances between each clump of trees. Ideally, individual clumps should have a diversity of ages of trees, which is why you should replant over the coming decades and not just the first few years following the fire. Call the CSFS at 303-823-5774 for help developing a long-term forest management plan.

Bark beetle infestation continues to be a concern in heavily fire damaged trees. Thus far, large increases of tree damaging bark beetles have not been observed in the burn area. However, both mountain pine beetle and pine engraver (Ips) beetle populations remain high in the county and you should survey all living trees on your property for beetle infestation each spring and fall. For help identifying infested trees search for “**Bark Beetle Inspector Identification and Treatment Field Guide**” at [www.bouldercounty.org](http://www.bouldercounty.org) or contact Ryan Ludlow, Boulder County Outreach Forester at 720-564-2641.

### Soil Stabilization

Private landowners should continue to monitor their land for signs of major soil erosion. Follow-up treatments during the second and subsequent years after the fire might be necessary on select heavily burned slopes. When controlling erosion on your land always begin work on the uphill portion where runoff would start and work your way downslope. Hand mulching and chipping burned trees back onto bare slopes continues to be an effective strategy to help reduce erosion.

You can also continue utilizing contour log felling to help stabilize problematic slopes, but it is very important that logs be installed correctly. If you placed contour logs on your hillside last year, you should re-anchor those logs, since they tend to shift from the freeze-thaw over the winter. The logs **must be anchored** into the hillside with a stake or rock at each end of the log along the contour, and a seal created with soil on the uphill side of the log between the log and the soil surface. Lastly, you might consider installing “check dams” in major gulches to help slow erosion, but you must follow specific installation guidelines. For more information on how to reduce erosion on your land contact Natural Resource Conservation Services at 303-776-4034 Ext. 3.

## Noxious Weed Control

Noxious weed management continues to be a priority for landowners during the second year after the fire. Noxious weeds establish easily and expand in populations after a wildfire. You should survey your land for noxious weeds each summer. Specifically, the following species are priorities for eradication in the burn area: orange hawkweed, knapweed (both spotted and diffuse), thistles (both Canada and biennials), leafy spurge, common mullein and cheatgrass. For further information, contact Sharon Bokan, CSU Extension, Small Acreage Coordinator at 303-678-6176 or Steve Sauer, Boulder County Weed Coordinator at 303-678-6110.

## Re seeding

After one growing season, native plants have begun reestablishing on their own in many locations of the burn area. However, some of the most severely burned slopes and areas with limited native vegetation before the fire have not seen as much native plant establishment as expected. If your land has large areas devoid of vegetation then you might consider re seeding. It's very important to check the origin of the seed you purchase to be sure it's truly native to this part of Colorado. For more information about native seed mixes contact Sharon Bokan, CSU Extension, Small Acreage Coordinator at 303-678-6176.



## Has the native vegetation reestablished as expected on private land?

Overall, yes, native vegetation has responded as expected post-fire. Overall, yes, native vegetation has responded as expected following a destructive wildfire. During the spring and summer of 2011, the first seasonal growing season post-fire, many native shrubs, grasses and flowers began to rebound and flourish on once-blackened hillsides. However, on some of the more heavily forested burned slopes native vegetation has been slower to recover and it may take several growing seasons before native plants reestablish in the disturbed area. Unfortunately, trees will take much longer to recover from the fire and it will take multiple decades or longer before trees naturally reestablish on the burned slopes.

## Have landowners' rehabilitation efforts on private land helped the landscape recover from the fire?

Yes, many landowners have done a great job implementing rehab on their own land and have helped reduce the level of erosion moving down canyon. Landowners have also done a great job making the community safer by removing hazardous trees that could fall on roads and buildings.

In some areas of the burn, landowners have unintentionally added to the flooding risk by tossing loose logs and slash into gulches. Any material that is not properly anchored into drainages has the potential to be swept downstream during rain events. It cannot be stressed enough that you should help reduce the impacts to your downstream neighbors by clearing loosely piled debris out of your gulches.

## How can the Land Rehabilitation Outreach Team continue to help you?

Please stay in contact with our team and let us know what assistance you need as you manage your land. Continue to consult the "*Land Rehabilitation FAQs*" guide on [www.bouldercounty.org](http://www.bouldercounty.org). Contact information for the entire Land Rehab Outreach Team is available on the last page of the FAQ.