



Wilderness Ranch GNA Fuels Reduction Project

Project Overview

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Wilderness Ranch LOA, is planning a fuels reduction project on both National Forest and private lands along the shared boundary between Wilderness Ranch and the National Forest.

The project has environmental approval to treat up to 500 feet on the USFS side of the property line. Due to current funding, the treatment width will likely be reduced to approximately 300 feet on the Federal Land.

On the Wilderness Ranch (private land) side, we are seeking participation from willing landowners along this boundary to treat a 100-foot-wide buffer adjacent to the National Forest. This also includes the common space hunting reserve.

Project Goals

- Reduce wildfire risk and create a more fire-resilient landscape within the Wilderness Ranch wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- Improve firefighter access and increase the likelihood of safely containing future wildfires.
- Enhance wildlife habitat.
- Improve watershed health by increasing snow retention and protecting water quality.
- Connect with other fuel reduction projects to create a larger, more effective fuel break across the Bears Ears area.

What the Treatment Will Look Like

Treatments may include a combination of hand crews and/or mastication equipment, depending on terrain and site conditions.

The prescription will generally include:

- Cutting of standing dead trees and downed woody material.
- Thinning of smaller understory trees to reduce ladder fuels.
- Selective thinning of some mature trees where needed to reduce continuous tree canopy and improve forest resilience.

The objective is to create a shaded fuel break and is not to remove all vegetation along USFS boundary. Instead, treatments are designed to create a healthier, more open forest that is easier to walk through while maintaining its natural character. Small patch cuts may be used in select locations where they will improve forest health and long-term resilience.

By reducing fuel loads along this corridor, firefighters will have a much better opportunity to slow or stop a wildfire before it reaches homes and other infrastructure.

Cost

Work completed on participating Wilderness Ranch properties will be funded through a Community Assistance Funds Adjacent to National Forest System Lands (CAFA) grant. There is no cost to participating landowners, and no matching funds are required.

All work on National Forest lands will be funded by the USFS.

How You Can Help

If your property is along the southern edge of the subdivision and borders National Forest land and you are interested in having approximately 100 feet of your property along this boundary treated, please contact the LOA Board as soon as possible.

Also, those same landowners who are willing to provide crews access across your property to access USFS treatment areas, please let the LOA Board know.

Early participation is important to keep the project moving forward.

Project Timeline

While this project is in the planning phase, and some details may change, CSFS will be communicating and coordinating project details through the LOA Board.

Our goal is to award the contract this fall so work can begin as early as spring/summer 2027.

Thank you for your support as we work together to reduce wildfire risk and improve the long-term health of the forests surrounding Wilderness Ranch.

Bears Ears GNA (Wilderness Ranch) - Overview



0 550 1,100 2,200 3,300 Feet
 1 inch equals 1,100 feet
 Datum: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N

Prepared By:
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Legend
 Shaded Fuel Breaks — USFS, 300 ft — USFS Roads USFS Fuels Project Areas
 Private, 100 ft — Private Access Roads — Bears Ears Mech Treatments
 Private, 200 ft — Local Roads — Bears Ears Prescribed Fire Target Areas

