

Wildfire risk mitigation and environmental justice in Colorado's forest landscapes

Faculty co-mentors

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Extension mentor

Susan Carter, Mesa County Extension

Location

CSU campus and forested counties across the Front Range and Western Slope

Project description

Colorado forests are representative of landscapes throughout the American West characterized by rapid demographic and land use change coupled with increasing risk of high-intensity wildfire. Mitigating risk of wildfire along with building more resilient landscapes fundamentally requires the engagement of diverse actors and institutions, from private landowners to local organizations to state and federal management authorities. However, disparities in risk mitigation capacity separate resilient from vulnerable communities, and such disparities appear to be widening.

The goals of this internship are to conduct fieldwork in both wildfire-resilient and -vulnerable communities, contributing to a larger project investigating how social networks can help support collaborative wildfire risk mitigation. Working closely with a graduate student, the Extension Intern will collect qualitative and quantitative data from community workshops conducted across Front Range and Western Slope counties, and analyze these data to support both an independent internship project and broader research objectives. Outcomes of the project will be focused on supporting low-capacity communities to improve wildfire risk mitigation.

The intern have the opportunity to gain skills in research design, social science data collection, workshop facilitation, data processing (R), spatial analysis (GIS), and outreach and dissemination through a variety of research products. The intern will work as part of multi-university team and alongside the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Center for Collaborative Conservation, and Colorado State Forest Service. In addition to this team and CSU Extension, the intern will engage with professional networks including management agencies and land-based collaboratives throughout the state.