



# Pike National Forest

LOCATED ON 3 MILLION ACRES in central and southeast Colorado, the Pike & San Isabel National Forests offer a diverse landscape from short grass prairies to alpine tundra. The forest includes the Windy Ridge Bristlecone Pine Scenic Area, a grove of stunning, ancient bristlecone pine trees. Pike ranks third in the U.S. for recreational visits due to its multiple wilderness areas, numerous scenic byways, vast outdoor opportunities and location. Also, more than 60 percent of the city of Denver's residents depend on water from the forest, which originates as rain or snowmelt.

During the past 20 years, several large wildfires have burned through the forest, including the Buffalo Creek Fire that burned 12,000 acres and the Waldo Canyon Fire that burned more than 18,000 acres. The most damaging was the 2002 Hayman Fire—the largest in Colorado's history, burning 137,000 acres. These fires devastated the South Platte watershed, the primary water source for the city of Denver and surrounding communities. In moderate- to high-intensity burn areas, 100 percent of the trees were lost, along with future seed sources for natural regeneration.

Planting on the Pike began on April 6 using the same planting crew as in years past. The crew of 15 worked side-by-side with Forest Service staff and inspectors to make sure the newly planted trees will survive that critical first year of growth. The team focused on working in three project/burn areas (Hayman, Buffalo and Waldo Canyon), and the acreage planted was approximately 850. The project took three weeks and was staged out of the Manitou Experimental Forest Lodge. With help from Arbor Day Foundation partners, this at-risk watershed is on its way toward recovery!

