

Forest Health Guide



The photos above show meaningful mitigation on a property. The top picture shows the property before work and the bottom picture shows the same area after forest restoration work has taken place.

Notice the openings and lack of ladder fuels.

Why remove vegetation from your property?

- The main natural disturbance, fire, has been removed from the ecosystem in our area. Without this disturbance, forests have become overstocked and unhealthy.
- When forests grow without disturbance, trees are forced to compete for finite resources, making them less healthy.
- Unhealthy trees are more susceptible to insect infestations, disease and less likely to survive fire events.
- Unhealthy trees are unable to sequester carbon as efficiently as healthy trees.
- Removing vegetation creates openings and useable space.
- Wildlife evolved with fire as did the forest. Creating openings makes a more suitable landscape for wildlife.

What should you remove?

1. **Remove standing dead and diseased trees.** When removing dead trees pay attention to make sure that trees being used by animals are left for habitat.
2. **Remove trees to create openings between retained trees.**
3. **Remove ladder fuels.** Ladder fuels are any plants that would carry a ground fire into the canopy of the forest. Bushes and smaller trees growing under large trees are examples of ladder fuel.
4. **Leave a variety of species and age classes to maintain diversity.**
5. If you have any questions contact CUSP or visit the Colorado State Forest Service website or office.