



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES
JUNE 29, 2016**

HAZARDOUS TREE MITIGATION PROJECT ON EMERALD MOUNTAIN

The City of Steamboat Springs (City) is collaborating with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to implement a Hazard Tree Mitigation Project on Emerald Mountain this summer. Work is anticipated to begin on Monday July 11 and last through mid-October 2016. The City will be implementing the work plan identified in the Emerald Mountain Forest Management Plan on the Orton and Gossard Open Space parcels. This project will complete the planned tree removal operations of beetle kill trees that began in 2010.

The City received financial assistance from a CSFS Colorado Forest Restoration Grant with City matching funds to treat up to 59 acres of beetle kill and sick and/or diseased trees on Emerald Mountain. The full scope of work, including burning and reclamation of burn piles will be accomplished by the October 2017 grant deadline.

The tree removal project will promote conservation values such as riparian/water quality health, the creation of wildlife habitat and provide safe recreation areas for use by the general public. Additionally, the threat of fire danger will be lowered and renewal of the forest will occur. All disturbed areas shall be promptly reclaimed and revegetated following the 2010 CSFS document "Forestry Best Management Practices to Protect Water Quality in Colorado".

The City will be contracting with the CSFS to assist with the contract bid and supervision, the layout of treatment units and other general project support. Additionally, the City will be contracting with Rogue Resources to execute this removal project. This vendor was identified by the CSFS as the best qualified contractor due to their proposal for treatment, their experience in the industry and their previous work on this parcel in 2010. Additionally, they will be working with a subcontractor (R and R Conner Helicopters) for helicopter logging on the adjacent Gossard Open Space parcel.

The City will be working diligently with the contractor and CSFS to minimize impacts to the general public on the multi-use trails on Emerald. There will be identified trail closures and work will need to be done prior to reopening these trails for public use.

The City will be working with Routt County Riders and planned volunteer work days to get trails reopened as quickly as possible. Additionally there will be opportunities to re-route unsustainable sections of trails (Root Canal, Stairway to Heaven, Abby's, etc.) during this reclamation process. As this project progresses, the City will provide updates and information as available on the timing of closures. Scheduled races such as the Steamboat Stinger and Run Rabbit Run will still occur as scheduled. Logging trucks will be removing logs on Prayer Flag Road, Lane of Pain and Blackmere Trail with public access allowed for most of the duration. A full closure of Emerald Mountain will be required when the helicopter is flying logs from the Morning Gloria Trail (Gossard Open Space) to Prayer Flag Meadow. It is anticipated there will be at least one route open for access to the BLM Ridge/Beall Trailhead for a majority of the project.

The following approximate timeline for the work plan and trail closures may change depending on weather conditions and on the ground challenges:

- July 11 – July 31: Lane of Pain from Quarry Mountain Trail to BLM property boundary, Root Canal, Stairway to Heaven
- July 25 – August 5: Temporary closures of Quarry Mountain Trail, Hudson, Prayer Flag Road, Root Canal, Stairway to Heaven, Wild Rose
- August 1 – October 15: Root Canal, Stairway to Heaven, Abby's, No Mo' Bluez
- August 15 – September 15: Morning Gloria
- August 31 – September 2: One full day closure of the entire Emerald Mountain Trail System while helicopter logging removal in process

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