

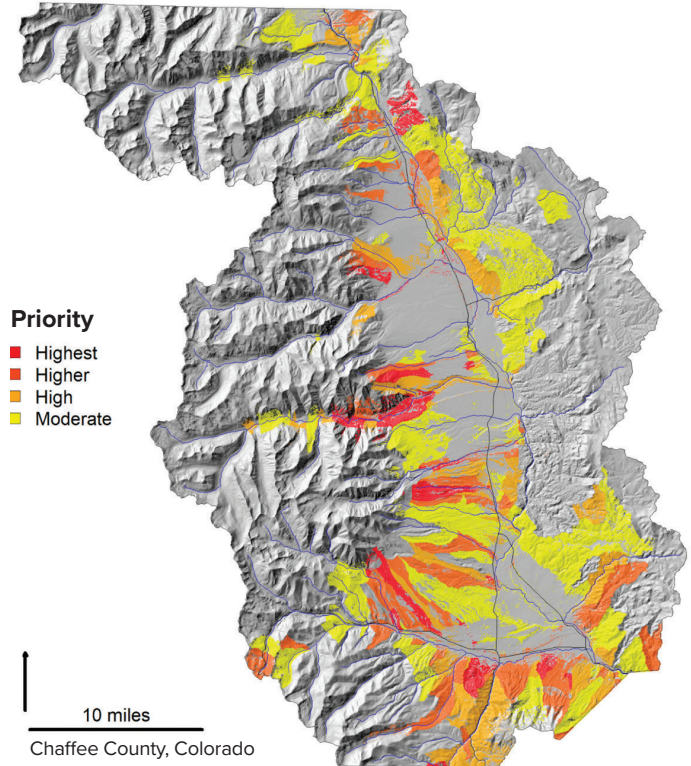


## Risk Assessment Decision Support (Rads) In Chaffee County, Colorado: Executive Summary

Increasing wildfire impacts across political, social, and ecological boundaries throughout the Western USA has necessitated collaborations between government agencies, communities, and their partners to co-develop and co-implement proactive wildfire risk reduction strategies. Outcome based collaborative prioritization frameworks can help articulate shared goals and create roadmaps for communities to implement their collective strengths across organizational and community boundaries. This case study details an application of CFRI's Risk Assessment and Decision Support (RADS) outcome based planning framework used during the development, revision, and implementation of Chaffee County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) 2020 update. The CWPP developed in Chaffee County resulted from integrating a rigorous science based modeling approach with a robust community-driven social process to inform where risk reduction per dollar invested is greatest (see figures on this page). Through participant interviews and review of meeting notes, this report details the collaborative framework and highlights the social collaborative outcomes from this effort. This case study is instructive for communities interested in developing or updating their CWPP or other wildfire risk planning efforts. It highlights the importance of social outcomes of the collaborative planning process integrated with the latest science to drive changes in how our communities and forests interact with wildfire.

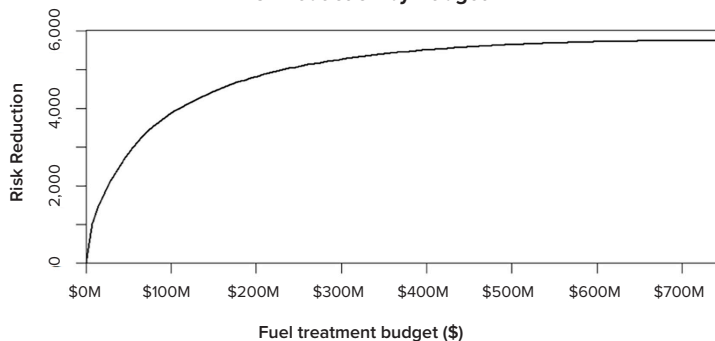
Since completing the CWPP in early 2020, key outputs in the first year and a half include raising over \$19 million to fund wildfire mitigation work, implementing 3,136 acres of forest management, and multi-jurisdictional projects covering 21,000 acres are in the planning pipeline. While the CWPP expedited fundraising and forest management actions to achieve these critical accomplishments, the collaborative

### Fuel Treatment Priorities



planning process also enabled a broad social understanding of shared values, how those values interact with wildfire, and prioritized where and what kinds of forest management leads to the best bang for the buck to achieve wildfire risk reduction outcomes. Identifying shared wildfire values, combined with a communal understanding of the strengths and limits of different tools Chaffee County can deploy to co-exist with wildfire, helped clarify how each agency and community can best deploy their tools for the collective good. The CWPP process also identified limits of forest management to reduce wildfire risk, and inspired the need for additional activities that complement and enhance forest management to promote positive wildfire outcomes. This included fire adapted communities engagement and education, recreation planning, collaborative capacity building, land use planning, enhancing defensible space around structures, and aligning vegetation management strategies across different agencies and land ownerships. This case study illuminates that when the right ingredients of science and collaboration come together, a roadmap for social change to better co-exist with wildfire can be developed.

Risk Reduction by Budget



# RADS Keys to Success

## Science Informed, Locally Relevant

Applying the best available science and spatial data provides scaffolding that builds group consensus. Co-verification of data augmented with local expertise fuses knowledge of the group with complex science to establish trust in outputs, catapulting colleagues and partners into shared action and understanding. Collective ownership of the where and why.



## Tech-leads Team

Identify key leadership and subject matter experts to make tough decisions in a shared capacity that leads the larger group towards a final cohesive product.

## Expectations for Momentum

Co-develop a schedule from start to finish that outlines expectations, roles, and identifies opportunities for participants to engage throughout the process. A designated neutral facilitator helps build trust, maintain momentum, and triangulates the location of the group on the roadmap to the finish line. Offering a roadmap extends meaning and motivation for seemingly tangential exercises and sets the stage for both frequent and irregular participants to collectively sustain momentum rather than rehashing past decisions.



## Transparent Tradeoffs

Assess all values and priorities even if at first they seem challenging or incompatible with the process. Considering priorities from all perspectives helps participants feel their values are included, even if they end up only being indirectly utilized in the technical analysis. Structuring the process to identify unique values integrated with the latest science facilitates transparency in tradeoff decisions that yields acceptance and support for final outcomes.

## Structured Inclusivity

Reach out to key partners, including potential advocates and roadblocks. An open, structured collaborative process buffers any one person or organization from having undue influence and offers incentive for broad participation.



## Shared decision-space for the win-win

Collaborative risk assessment and decision support processes like the Chaffee County CWPP can expand decision-space for both leadership and communities. Prioritizing the actions needed to sustain shared values highlights responsibilities where each group member can best leverage their unique strengths, rather than choosing winners and losers where all resources will or won't be invested; the most bang for the buck.