

# Hamilton Creek Metropolitan District

April 2007

[www.hamiltoncreek.org](http://www.hamiltoncreek.org)

**FOREST MAINTENANCE** The pine beetle issue is certainly a hot topic in Summit County and Hamilton Creek. The Metro District began a forest management plan in 2000. Residents are encouraged to review the 2003 forest plan study prepared for the District that is available at [www.hamiltoncreek.org](http://www.hamiltoncreek.org). The Metro District continues to follow the plan and adjusts annually to best focus on the current forest situation with an emphasis on long-term forest health.

As with most forested areas in Summit County, the evergreen trees in Hamilton Creek are mostly aging lodgepole. Age and drought have made the trees susceptible to pine beetle attacks. Most lodgepole in Hamilton Creek are between 100 and 120 years old. The average life of a lodgepole is 120 years. The forest management plan indicated the forest needed to be thinned by about half the trees to develop a healthier more fire resistant forest.

The selection of which trees to thin has been dictated by the pine beetle in recent years. For the last three years the District has sprayed over 1,000 common trees with owners spraying about 400 more. The role of spraying is to extend the life of desirable trees both for appearance next to homes and to help diversify the age of the forest. Beginning in 2007, the District will begin tree seedling planting.

Prudent thinning of the forest, including removal of beetle kill, is a multi-year process. Benefits to leaving trees, even dead trees include wildlife habitat, soil conservation, wind protection and seedling shading. Fire mitigation is an important goal of the forest management plan. However, dead or dying trees are not necessarily detrimental to fire management. A recent aerial review of the Hamilton Creek forest and surrounding Forest Service areas indicates the natural fire breaks are better than originally thought. Fire mitigation involves both protection from fires moving into Hamilton Creek and from potential house fires spreading from within Hamilton Creek.

## 2007 Forest Policy Summary

- If you have trees on your property that you would like to provide as much defense as possible from the pine beetle please have them sprayed. Trees must be sprayed each year. Residents who have sprayed in prior years or requested spraying for this year have already been scheduled for spraying beginning in late May.
- In recent years the forest area has been cleared of most of the dead down or standing trees. A balanced forest can benefit by down or standing dead wood. The District requests residents not remove any wood from the common area unless authorized by the District.
- There will be no District pickup of dead wood or slash this year. There will be weekly pickup / chipping of trees removed for pine beetle control or thinning from designated areas. Please do not add to these piles or start new ones unless participating in one of the forest management efforts to be coordinated by the District.
- Residents can participate during the clean up day in designated forest areas to help remove slash or prepare slash piles to remain in the forest.
- Residents interested in assisting in the forest thinning work can assist at times other than the clean up day. Contact the District for more information.
- The Metro District can work with homeowners in the management of trees on your property. The District suggests owners consult with our forester prior to having trees cut on their lot to insure the removal is in coordination with the overall forest management plan.

If you have any question regarding the forest management plan, maintenance of your trees or contacts for foresters, please contact the District.

The next Metro Meeting will be a tour of the forest focusing on the management plan. The tour will be with the management planner and the wildfire mitigation officer. All owners are invited. Thursday April 26<sup>th</sup> @ 10 AM – meet at the intersection of Hamilton Creek Road and Nordic Trail

**SEPTIC PUMPING.** Your septic tank is pumped every third year by the District. Included with the quarterly billing is a list of addresses scheduled for pumping this year. Pumping will be from Black Cat Pumping and should begin in May and be completed by the end of June. The cost of pumping is included in the quarterly Metro fee. Extra costs including uncovering lids, pumping boost and/or extended distances for difficult to access systems are billed to owners. If you are on the list you will need to do the following:

- All septic tank lids need to be exposed. If they are only covered by a small amount of dirt or stones, the contractor will uncover them at no additional cost. The contractor is already familiar with the location of the tanks.
- If you would like to be present for the pumping, please contact the District and the contractor will be requested to contact you to schedule the pumping.

You will be contacted if there is any problem with your system. Problems with systems in Hamilton Creek have been rare.

**Noxious Weeds.** The Metro District will conduct noxious weed spraying along road shoulders for the second year in 2007. Spraying will be done in June and late fall. Residents will be notified via email regarding the day spraying will be done. The contractor has indicated he felt the 2006 spraying was quite successful. Work in 2007 may extend to selected common areas. Problem infestations on private property will be identified and the owners notified.

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