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Dear interested party,

In response to the spruce beetle epidemic, the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) is developing a strategy to increase active management of spruce/fir forests within our overall vegetation management program.

We are extending an invitation for you or your group to attend an upcoming informational meeting entitled "Meet the Beetles." We will discuss the biology of the spruce beetle and the current situation within the San Juan's forests. The meeting will be on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 in the Vallecito Room in the Student Union Building at Fort Lewis College, Durango. Foresters, resource specialists and I will be available to meet informally starting at 5:30 PM. The meeting will be held from 6:00-8:00 PM.

The expected outcome of the meeting is that everyone gains a baseline understanding of the epidemic. Tom Eager, U.S. Forest Service Gunnison Research Center insect and disease expert, will lead the discussion on spruce beetle biology. SJNF foresters and resource specialists will lead the discussion about the current situation on our Forest. No specific projects are proposed at this time. We will have additional public meetings to discuss potential treatment areas and ask for suggestions and concerns.

Spruce/fir management on the San Juan National Forest will be guided by three priorities:

- **Safety** actions will focus on removing hazard trees in areas near people and values at risk, such as power lines, communication towers, water structures, recreation sites and others.
- **Recovery** actions will focus on reforesting areas which have experienced severe mortality.
- **Resilience** actions will focus on creating more diverse stand structure in order to position forests to be more resilient to future infestations.

One component we are considering involves meeting demand for forest products now and into the future by supplying timber to our local mills. By doing so, we will create funding for reforestation of beetle-killed forests and help sustain the mills needed to implement effective management. Another component involves reforestation without removing timber.

We are asking you, as an individual or group that has expressed interest in spruce/fir forests, to let us know what topics you would like discussed at the meeting. Please contact Cara Gildar with your questions by March 6 at 970-882-6854 or cngildar@fs.fed.us. Please share this invitation with your mailing lists and with anyone you think would like to attend. As a teaser, you may enjoy watching this video about spruce beetles on the neighboring Rio Grande National Forest: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyPsYY7Ghns>

Thank you for your interest and we hope you can join us on March 17.

Sincerely,

Kara L. Chadwick
Forest Supervisor

