

Town of Poncha Springs CWPP

Where: South Park Recreation area in Poncha Springs CO
River Corridor, Picnic Area, and Town Frisbee Golf Course

Requested by: Homeowners of Hot Springs Rd in Poncha Springs
Town of Poncha Springs

Acreage: Approximately 20 acres to be treated

Vegetation: Riparian area with high grasses, cottonwoods, alder, gamble oak, juniper, pinon pine, Virginia creeper, and wild rose

The town of Poncha Springs and an adjacent homeowners group request grant monies to improve the recreation area of South Park. The reasons for improvement include the following:

Wildfire Safety: The Poncha Creek corridor has an extreme fuel load with a large amount of ladder fuels, fine/flashy fuels, heavy dead and down trees, and volatile fuels. Currently there is no fire-break and the fuels are continuous and very dry. The prevailing wind would push a fire down the canyon and right into the town of Poncha Springs. Homes lie in the corridor towards the end of the canyon. The town of Poncha Springs has a history of fire. There have been two events that have burned the entire town of Poncha with a wildfire.

Watershed Protection: Poncha Creek flows directly into the South Arkansas River, which is the water supply for the town of Salida and Poncha Springs. A wildfire event in this corridor would highly damage the water quality as a result of sedimentation in the creek. The creek also supplies the water to Harrington ditch, which is a water source for ranch lands and open space. Aquatic habitat would also be highly compromised and possibly destroyed.

Public Safety: The area is a high use recreation area. It is frequented by Frisbee golfers, picnickers, and traveling public that could be unfamiliar with our wildfire danger and the hazard tree danger that exists here. The high public use is evident by the existence of fire rings, vehicle parking areas, and picnic tables.

Hazard Tree Removal: There is an extreme risk of danger with the hazard trees that exist in the area. There are many "widow-makers", standing-dead, leaners, snapped trees, and top-heavy/rotten cottonwoods. This poses a very large liability risk for the Town of Poncha Springs.

*****This area has been examined by the State Forest Service and is deemed a high fire priority and safety issue.**