



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 14, 2008

CONTACT:
Stephen Saunders, 303-880-4598
saunders@rockymountainclimate.org

End of Lodgepole Forests Are Sign of Warmer Climate

Denver – The U.S. Forest Service and the Colorado State Forest Service today [predicted](#) that mountain pine beetles would kill most of Colorado’s large-diameter lodgepole pine forests in three to five years. Significantly, the agencies pointed out, “Although bark beetles are a natural part of lodgepole pine ecosystems, warm winters and the drought of recent years have intensified the problem — and provided an ideal environment for the beetles to multiply and spread.”

Stephen Saunders, president of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, responded, “Global warming has eroded the winter cold of our mountains and removed the major natural check on bark beetle populations. Without global warming, we would not be losing our lodgepole forests. To protect the magnificent landscapes that make the West so special, we need to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollutants.”

Scientific data show that:

- Warming in North America is statistically significant (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “[Observations: Surface and Atmospheric Climate Change](#),” p. 250).
- The West has warmed more than the East, consistent with climate models of the effects of heat-trapping pollutants (Martin Hoerling and Jon Eischeid, NOAA, [presentation to the Colorado Climate Action Panel](#), slides 21 and 22).
- Warming in the West has been more pronounced in January, February, and March than in other months (The Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, “[Less Snow, Less Water: Climate Disruption in the West](#)” (2005), p. 15).
- High elevations in the West have warmed more than low elevations (H. Diaz and J. Eischeid, “[Disappearing ‘alpine tundra,’ Köppen climatic type in the western United States](#),” *Geophysical Research Letters* 34 (2007), L18707).

The [Rocky Mountain Climate Organization](#) is a coalition of 45 partners: 16 local governments, Denver Water, 17 businesses, and 11 nonprofits. Our mission is spreading the word about what climate disruption can do to us here and what we can do about it.

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