

FOREST THINNING FOR RESILIENCE

Create space for healthier trees and a safer forest.

Thinning can reduce competition, interrupt continuous fuels, and favor stronger trees. A good treatment responds to forest type, terrain, wildlife habitat, wildfire exposure, and landowner goals rather than applying one spacing rule everywhere.



Thoughtful thinning leaves an irregular pattern of trees, groups, and openings—not a uniform park or a clearcut.

● THIN WITH PURPOSE

START WITH GOALS

Decide what the treatment should improve before choosing trees to remove.

- ✓ Identify priorities for forest health, wildfire risk, habitat, views, and access.
- ✓ Use site conditions and forest type to shape the prescription.
- ✓ Treat high-consequence areas first, then connect work across the property.

● CHOOSE LEAVE TREES

FAVOR VIGOR AND DIVERSITY

Retain trees that support the desired future stand, not simply the largest stems.

- ✓ Favor healthy crowns, stable form, suitable species, and good growing space.
- ✓ Keep varied ages, sizes, tree groups, openings, and valuable habitat features.
- ✓ Remove hazardous, declining, poorly formed, or competing trees where appropriate.

● FINISH THE TREATMENT

SLASH AND FOLLOW-UP

Cutting trees is only one part of successful thinning.

- ✓ Lop, scatter, chip, remove, pile, or otherwise treat slash for the site and season.
- ✓ Avoid leaving fresh green pine material near valuable trees during beetle activity.
- ✓ Monitor wind exposure, regeneration, remaining fuels, and tree response.

✓ START HERE

- ✓ Walk the property and identify dense patches, ladder fuels, hazards, and special features.
- ✓ Mark leave trees first so the desired forest guides every removal.
- ✓ Plan equipment access and slash treatment before cutting begins.
- ✓ Review the prescription with a forester or qualified contractor.

▲ THE RAVEN WORKS PERSPECTIVE

The goal is not a fixed number of trees per acre. It is a resilient pattern that gives selected trees room to grow, breaks up fuel continuity, protects important habitat, and remains appropriate for the land. Good forestry preserves complexity while reducing avoidable risk.

Thin deliberately. Retain diversity. Plan for what happens after the cut.

Sources: Colorado State Forest Service forest-management and resilience guidance.

◎ IN THE FIELD

Three practical realities shape effective thinning:

PATTERNS VARY

Spacing should respond to tree groups, openings, slope, species, and treatment goals.

FUELS CONNECT

Surface, ladder, and canopy fuels work together; address the whole vertical profile.

FORESTS RESPOND

Return after treatment to watch wind exposure, insects, regeneration, and new growth.