



UPPER COLORADO RIVER INTERAGENCY FIRE MANAGEMENT

**NPS Colorado National Monument
BLM Grand Junction and Colorado River Valley
USFS White River, Grand Mesa and
Uncompahgre National Forests**



http://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2gjc/

Middle Elk Fire near Buford New Castle Road

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Junction, Colo. (Sept. 23, 8:30 p.m.) – The Middle Elk Fire increased from 100 acres yesterday to 212 today. It is burning in rough terrain in thick mixed conifer and aspen on the west side of the Buford New Castle Road near Hiner Spring on the Flat Tops. The public is being asked to avoid the area at this time in order for firefighters and equipment to move safely when needed. Closures and roadblocks of roads in the area, including the Buford New Castle Road, may occur at any time over the next few days.

Very dry conditions and the fact that mature and thick timber is igniting, torching, then throwing multiple spot fires in advance of the fire front are producing dangerous conditions for the firefighters. Such fire behavior also caused a precautionary evacuation for all side roads east of the Buford New Castle Road at Hiner Spring as well as Meadow Creek Campground. These areas remain closed until further notice. Deputies from both Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties are assisting with closures and roadblocks.

Under the supervision of Incident Commander Ross Wilmore, personnel on the fire include the two Juniper Valley and one Cheyenne River Hand Crews along with three engines plus one engine Strike Team and a light helicopter staffed by Rifle and Mesa Verde Helitak. Additional resources that are needed and have been ordered are three type 1 (“Hotshot”) hand crews. Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs) and Air Attack worked on the fire while cooler temperatures and cloud cover helped modify the fire spread.

Predicted high winds did not occur with the passage of a front on the fire today. Moisture is predicted over the fire within the week.

The cause of the fire is under investigation by Law Enforcement Officers.

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