

# **WALDO CANYON FIRE AREA CLOSURE BURNED AREA EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Fire Name:** Waldo Canyon   **Month/Year:** 7/2012  
**Authors Names:** Judith Kittson: Civil Engineer ARP  
Frank Landis: Recreation Specialist PSICC

## **I. Potential Values at Risk**

Potential values at risk identified are identified in specialist reports. This report addresses requirements and costs for emergency closure to allow implementation and maintenance of emergency treatments.

## **II. Resource Condition Assessment**

### **A. Resource Setting**

- Primary developed recreation use within the burned area occurs near the northwest end of the burned area at Rampart Reservoir, at the campgrounds, picnic area and shore line trail. This area is accessed from Rampart Range Road.
- Another popular area that has been significantly impacted by burned area is the Waldo Canyon trail accessed from Highway 24 north of Manitou Springs, toward the southeast part of the burn. Closure of the Waldo Canyon trail is included in the specialist report for trails. CDOT has offered to close the trailhead parking using concrete jersey barriers.
- The Colorado Springs Utility has several facilities within the burned area that are accessed from Forest Service roads off Rampart Range Road through special use permits.
- Numerous non-system trails also access the burned area from private property surrounding the forest along Highway 24 and from subdivisions to the west, a few of the higher use non-system access occurs at Cave of the Winds, Cascade area, Glen Erie and other locations.
- Rampart Range Road from north to south is a highly used road for forest access and recreation and provides some access to private property.

### **B. Findings of the On-The-Ground Survey**

1. Resource condition resulting from the fire:
  - a. Numerous hazard trees were observed along the impacted roads trails and at recreation facilities.
  - b. Burned slopes and drainages impact system and non-system roads, trail and recreation sites.
  - c. The larger drainages in the burned areas pose a life/safety hazard due to potential for sediment laden flows and flash flooding off burned areas.
2. Consequences of the fire on values at risk:

The Values at Risk in the Waldo Canyon burned area include:

  - a. Threat to life and safety
  - b. Threat to infrastructure

## **III. Emergency Determination**

The BAER team has concluded these risks pose an emergency due to:

- Risk to life and safety
- Risk to property

#### **IV. Treatments to Mitigate the Emergency**

##### **A. Treatment Type:**

Treatment Objectives: Control access to minimize risk to life, and risk of conflicts between treatment implementation teams and public, through emergency closures of areas at risk.

Treatments Description: An emergency determination was made that the following BAER treatments are required to implement emergency closure at the Waldo Canyon Fire burned area to reduce life/safety hazards:

- Warning Signs at road and trail closures.
- Temporary trail closure (included in trails report – not costed in this report)
- Installation of closure gates on FSR 303 at junction with Rampart Range Road and at two locations on Rampart Range Road to facilitate implementation of treatments without public conflict.
- Installation of fencing at non-system roads off FSR 305 and at off-site non-system trails to reduce uncontrolled forest access.

#### **IV. Discussion/Summary/Recommendations**

In summary, the prescribed treatments for emergency closure are designed to control access to preserve life and safety. Monitoring will be provided by District LEO and FPO personnel. The warning signs and gates are temporary in nature and will be removed when the treat is mitigated and the closure is revoked. The fencing to prevent access to/from non-system roads and trails may be left in place until decommissioning of these trails and roads is completed by the District.