

# West Fork Complex Fire Update



Eastern Great Basin Incident Management Team – Beth Lund, Incident Commander  
Central Coast Interagency Incident Management Team 7 – Mark Nunez, Incident Commander  
East Zone Phone: 719-569-4149  
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Hours of operation: 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
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**July 7, 2013**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**Special Messages:** Heavy holiday traffic is expected throughout the fire area today. Drivers are cautioned that there continues to be heavy fire traffic as well. A community meeting will be held in Creede, Colorado this Wednesday evening to give a fire update and address any citizen concerns. The exact time and location will be in tomorrow's update.

## **Current Situation**

**Weather:** Scattered thunderstorms are expected to develop by early afternoon, moving to the east to northeast at about 20 mph. A drying trend is expected Monday and Tuesday.

### **East Zone of the West Fork Complex (Includes Papoose and Eastern Part of West Fork Fires)**

High humidity and light rain has allowed firefighters to make good progress improving containment lines and checking the fire's spread. However the fire continues to smolder in many places and "with sunshine, warmth and wind, the fire still has the potential to become active again," according to Jeff Surber, Planning Operations for the incident management team. Fire potential remains high in areas where a majority of the spruce trees have been killed by beetle infestations. The firefighting strategies include protection for homes and businesses and other high value resources, such as the Rio Grande Reservoir Dam.

**Papoose Fire:** Some single and small group torching of trees was reported Saturday, although some areas of Papoose did get light rain during the day. Work will continue today in the Red Mountain Ranch area to prevent the fire from spreading north back towards Highway 149.

**Eastern Part of West Fork Fire:** Firefighters are continuing fire line construction in the Elk Mountain area where smoke continues to be visible and the fire is most active. Forecasted rain may help mop-up operations but gusty and erratic winds also increase the danger from falling trees (snags), as well as the potential for rapid fire growth.

### **West Zone of West Fork Complex (Includes Western Part of West Fork and Windy Pass Fires)**

Weather for the west zone is expected to hold a similar pattern as the last two days: mostly cloudy and scattered thunderstorms especially in the afternoon. Temperatures will be in the mid 70's with winds from the Southwest. The inversion that has kept the smoke in the low elevations the last few days is expected to be lighter.

Minimal fire growth occurred last night. Firefighters will continue to patrol and monitor and are ready to respond to any new fire activity. Weather permitting, aerial monitoring will continue. The new starts that occurred yesterday near Shaw and Bear Creek on the western side of Williams Lake Reservoir area are contained.

**West Zone West Fork Fire:** There was very little activity last evening. The West Zone of the West Fork fire is the portion of the fire burning south of the continental divide. Structure protection is still in place for the Wolf Creek Ski Area, Borns Lake Cabins, and Bruce Spruce Resort. The West Fork Campground is open.

**Williams Creek Contingency Group:** Firefighters will continue structure protection, patrol and monitor for new starts.

**Public Health and Safety:** Smoke monitors are in place in Pagosa Springs, Freemon's Ranch, Creede, and South Fork. The monitors are identified as #78 (Creede), #69 (Freemon's Ranch), #25 (South Fork), and #65 (Pagosa Springs). All monitors can be accessed through the map located at: <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/smoke.pl>. Times displayed are in GMT – subtract 6 hours to get local time (MDT). For the Colorado Smoke Outlook, visit [http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/colo\\_advisory.aspx](http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/colo_advisory.aspx) or <http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/wildfire.aspx> for more information.

**Evacuations and Closures:** Some areas remain under evacuation, others on pre-evacuation notice. Residents are reminded to remain vigilant and be prepared to evacuate in the event that fire activity changes. Visit <http://westforkfirecomplex.blogspot.com/> for a list of areas currently under evacuation or pre-evacuation.

For additional information on road and trail closures and fire restrictions affecting the **San Juan** National Forest go to: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/sanjuan/alerts-notice>.

For additional information on road and trail closures and fire restrictions affecting the **Rio Grande** National Forest go to: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/riogrande/>.

**Fire Statistics:**

**Location:** 14.5 miles north/northeast of Pagosa Springs, CO

**Complex Size:** 110,028 acres

Windy Pass: 1,417 acres

Papoose: 48,652 acres

West Fork: 59,959 acres

**Start Date:** 06/05/2013

**Percent Contained:** 25%

**Cause:** Lightning

**Total Personnel:** 949

**Resources Include:** 5 Type 1 hand crews, 9 Type 2 hand crews, 50 engines, 2 dozers, 16 water tenders, and overhead personnel

**Air Resources:** 5 Type 1 helicopters, 1 Type 2 helicopter, and 3 Type 3 helicopters.

**Places to get information:**

**Blog:** <http://westforkfirecomplex.blogspot.com/>

**Website:** <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3436/>

**Twitter:** @RioGrandeUSFS

**Photos:** <http://s1286.photobucket.com/user/WestForkComplex/library/>

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