

West Fork Complex Fire Update



Eastern Great Basin Incident Management Team 1 – Beth Lund, Incident Commander
Central Coast Interagency Incident Management Team 7 – Mark Nunez, Incident Commander
East Zone Phone: 719-569-4149
West Zone Phone: 970-731-2745
Hours of operation: 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
East Zone Email: WestForkFire.EastZone@gmail.com
West Zone Email: westforkfire@gmail.com



July 9, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Special Messages: A community meeting will be held in Creede, Colorado this Wednesday evening from 6-7 p.m. to give a fire update and address any questions from citizens. It will be at the Creede High School, located at 308 La Garita Street (map: <http://goo.gl/maps/Dagip>). With monsoon rains expected soon, there may be an increased risk of flash flooding, debris flows and other impacts within and downstream of the burned areas. Residents and visitors are urged to stay aware of their surroundings during rain events and do not drive or walk through areas that have flooded.

Current Situation

Weather (East Zone): Today is expected to be drier than the previous few days, with relative humidity in the 20-30% range, and a chance of scattered dry afternoon thunderstorms. Wind is expected to be 9-15 mph from the west/northwest, with gusts to 20 mph.

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

Papoose Fire: As weather conditions become drier and warmer, fire is likely to become more active. Steep and inaccessible terrain and beetle-killed timber make it unsafe for firefighters to use direct attack tactics on the fire. Falling snags are an additional safety hazard. Helicopter water drops continue to assist ground forces in cooling off hot spots and slowing fire growth on the northwest side and on the southeast flank. The remainder of the northeast side is in patrol and monitoring status, with structure protection in place where appropriate.

Eastern Part of West Fork Fire: There is minimal activity on this portion of the complex. A small spot fire was found yesterday, and was contained at ¼ acre with the use of water drops from a helicopter.

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

Firefighters will be diligent maintaining the safety practices in these changing weather conditions. Main objectives today will be continuing to patrol and monitor for fire activity and readiness for any new attacks. Weather permitting, aerial monitoring will continue.

Weather (West Zone):

A stagnant and strong high-pressure system over the area is continuing to make slow westerly movement over this region. Local Red Flag Warning is issued for the West Fork Fire Complex – West Zone, due to extremely dry air, dry fuels and poor maximum relative humidity recovery. The warning is valid from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

West Zone West Fork Fire: 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.

Windy Pass Fire: Eastern side of the fire continues to hold some heat. Monitoring by air will continue today as well as Firefighters continue to patrol and monitor the fire area.

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 or <http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/wildfire.aspx> for more information.

Evacuations and Closures:

On Monday, July 8, several additional communities were removed from Mandatory Evacuation areas. Spar City remains in a Pre-Evacuation Status. Wirtz Property, Rio Grande Reservoir (Forest Road 520), S Lazy U/Wilderness Ranch, Hermit Lakes all remain under a Mandatory Evacuation.

For the most current list of Evacuations and Pre-Evacuations, visit: <http://westforkfirecomplex.blogspot.com>

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: 109,049 acres

Windy Pass: 1,417 acres

Papoose: 49,056 acres

West Fork: 58,576 acres

Start Date: 06/05/2013

Percent Contained: 19%

Cause: Lightning

Total Personnel: 727

Resources Include: 3 Type-1 hand crews, 6 Type-2 hand crews, 32 engines, 2 dozers, 12 water tenders, and overhead personnel

Air Resources: 4 Type-1 helicopters, 2 Type-2 helicopters, and 4 Type 3-helicopters.

For more 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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