

# Meadow Creek Fire Facts

## White River National Forest



**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



- The Meadow Creek Fire was started by lightning on June 26 and is located approximately 15 miles northeast of New Castle in the Clinetops area of the White River National Forest.
- A portion of the Meadow Creek fire is burning in steep and inaccessible terrain, unsafe to insert firefighters and expose them to unnecessary risk.
- The fire is burning in a Research Natural Area that was recommended in the 2002 Forest Plan Revision which recognized the need to collaborate on large scale forest restoration and allow fire to play its natural role in the forest ecosystem.
- The Forest's Fire Management Plan also allows some lightning-caused fires to take their natural course under specific conditions and within a predetermined area for resource enhancement and restoration.
- Based on the Forest Plan and Fire Management Plan direction, White River NF managers have chosen a long-term management strategy for the Meadow Creek Fire in order to reintroduce fire and achieve resource enhancement and restoration objectives.
- Fire managers are preparing a long-term implementation plan that provides management direction for long-duration fires. The plan is based on an analysis of all factors affecting firefighter and public safety, values potentially at risk, fire suppression capability and effectiveness, and management objectives for the area.
- The long-term strategy is updated continually as weather changes, fire spread continues, new information comes to light, objectives are met and time passes.
- The Meadow Creek Fire long-term management strategy is expected to:
  - reduce the amount of dead woody material on the southwest flanks of the Flat Tops, creating a natural fuel break that will slow the spread of future fires;
  - promote vigorous growth among oak, aspen, spruce, and fir;
  - improve wildlife habitat, specifically for bighorn sheep; and
  - recycle nutrients and promote decay of dead woody material on the forest floor.
- The current fire management response is using assigned firefighting resources to implement a limited perimeter control and point protection approach in order to meet desired conditions within the predetermined areas while protecting values at risk.
- Firefighters are currently constructing fuel breaks and firelines on the south flank of the fire perimeter in the Main Elk Creek drainage in order to protect homes and values that are closest to the fire's edge.
- Skilled fire managers are also monitoring the fire's progress ensuring that if or when conditions change, additional firefighting air and ground resources are in place to protect communities and other values at risk.
- Smoke is expected to increase at night when air cools and funnels smoke into lower elevations. Communities along I-70 corridor, including Grass Valley, Elk Run, Castle Valley, and Canyon Creek Estates should anticipate limited visibility and smoke at night.

