



# Norton Point Fire - 8/4/11

Unless increased fire activity warrants, this will be the last update about the Norton Point Fire.

**Location:** 24 mi. N of Dubois

**Area, Trail and Road Closures are in place.** Please see the map on Inciweb.

**Community Meeting** on Saturday Aug 6 at 7 p.m. in Dubois as Headwaters.

**Fire Status:** As crews finish preparing contingency line south of the Norton Point fire, related planning works winds up today. Tomorrow morning Rocky Mountain Team 2 A will return responsibility to local firefighters to implement Forest direction for managing the fire.

**Fire Effects:** Aerial photos of the Norton Point fire in some ways look like the most severe of fires, ones that leave behind no live trees. Much of Yellowstone burned that way in 1988 because nearly all the trees were lodgepole pines whose life cycle favors high-intensity fire.

The lack of green trees where the Norton Point fire has burned is deceptive because so many were dead *before* the fire. The ground underneath shows a different pattern. There are indeed places the fire burned very hot and killed nearly every plant in its path. In a fine-grained mosaic there is also a lot of area that didn't burn at all, plus everything in between.

All the fire area will grow back within a decade or two. What comes behind it, however, will vary with fire intensity. Where the fire burned hottest, there will be only small, young trees amid rejuvenated grasses and, in places, vigorous aspen sprouts. Elsewhere more unburned logs remain on the soil, providing hiding cover for small mammals and nesting sites for birds.

It has taken years for fire managers to stop judging individual fires as 'all good' or 'all bad.' The Norton Point fire destroyed a crumbling historic cabin that housed decades of memories. And it has allowed fire, an ecosystem process as important as rain, to play its natural role.

**Vital Statistics:** 86 firefighters 13,192 acres; increase of 17 acres in 3 days

**More Information:** [www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org). To contact us or to receive Norton Point Fire updates via email send your address to [nortonpointfire@gmail.com](mailto:nortonpointfire@gmail.com) or call 307-455-1801.



View near the ground in Caldwell Creek while the fire is creating a mushroom cloud. The flames pull attention but in the upper left and center right fire remains on the surface and is less intense. This view also shows small spot fires growing, one way the Norton Point fire is spreading. Photo by Jeff Geiger, Rocky Mountain Type 2 IMT A