



UPPER COLORADO RIVER FIRE MANAGEMENT UNIT

BLM-UPPER COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT

USFS-WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST



NEWS RELEASE

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Prescribed fires planned in Eagle, Mesa, Pitkin counties *Carefully planned fires will reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat*

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. – Fire managers from the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit are planning several prescribed fires on federal lands in Eagle, Mesa and Pitkin counties in the coming weeks.

Prescribed fires are carefully planned burns to reduce dense vegetation and other fuels, which helps lower the risk of large wildfires and stimulates new vegetation growth that benefits wildlife.

“We closely monitor weather and fuels prior to burning, and we will only ignite these prescribed fires if conditions are good for a safe, effective burn,” said **Lathan Johnson, Assistant UCR Fire Management Officer**. “We are also watching weather conditions for optimal smoke dispersal to minimize impacts to nearby communities.”

People in nearby communities and traveling along roads in the area may see smoke. Smoke should dissipate during the day but may remain on the valley floors as temperatures drop.

Fire managers are planning the following burns this spring on the White River National Forest and on Bureau of Land Management-managed lands, if conditions allow:

- **Muddy Sheep Prescribed Fire, Eagle Holy Cross Ranger District (Eagle County):** five miles north of Edwards, up to 600 acres
- **Cottonwood Creek Prescribed Fire, BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office (Eagle County):** four miles north of Eagle, up to 141 acres
- **Battlements Prescribed Fire, Rifle Ranger District (Mesa County):** 12 miles south of Rifle, up to 1,200 acres

- **Farmers Canyon Prescribed Fire, BLM Grand Junction Field Office (Mesa County):** 18 miles south of Grand Junction, up to 80 acres
- **Braderich Creek Prescribed Fire, Aspen-Sopris Ranger District (Pitkin County):** one mile west of Redstone, up to 1,700 acres
- **Sunnyside Prescribed Fire, Aspen-Sopris Ranger District (Pitkin County):** one mile north of Aspen, up to 800 acres

Specific notifications will be made ahead of individual prescribed fires. Timing for individual prescribed fires will depend on a variety of factors including elevation, snowmelt, moisture in the vegetation and soil, and local weather forecasts.

“Fire is as much a natural part of the western Colorado ecosystem as the wildlife and vegetation,” Johnson said. “Prescribed fires and other fuel reduction treatments lessen the intensity of unwanted, large wildfires and give firefighters a place to more effectively engage wildfires when necessary.”

Fire managers have developed a detailed prescribed fire plan and obtained smoke permits from the State of Colorado for each planned burn. Please contact Lathan Johnson at 970-257-4819 for additional information. Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information, visit: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>.

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The Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit (UCR) includes Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service firefighting resources that cover 4.2 million acres along the Interstate 70, Colorado River and Roaring Fork River corridors from the Continental Divide to the Utah state line. The UCR includes the White River National Forest and the BLM’s Colorado River Valley and Grand Junction field offices. The UCR cooperates with other federal and state agencies, local communities, and fire departments on a wide range of activities including fuels treatments, fire prevention, and suppression.