



**UPPER COLORADO RIVER**  
**FIRE MANAGEMENT UNIT**  
BLM-NORTHWEST DISTRICT  
BLM-SOUTHWEST DISTRICT  
USFS-WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST



### **Cattle Creek prescribed burn expected to happen this week**

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**GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. – Oct. 16, 2017** - Pending favorable weather conditions, firefighters with the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire and Aviation Management Unit (UCR) are expecting a window of opportunity within the next few days to conduct the Cattle Creek prescribed burn. The prescribed burn will target 50-75 percent of the vegetation within a 1,200-acre area located nine miles north of El Jebel near Cottonwood Pass on the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District in Eagle County.

The Cattle Creek prescribed burn is part of the ten-year Aspen-Sopris wildlife habitat improvement project which is a landscape-level project that uses prescribed fire and mechanical treatments in key forest, shrubland and grassland vegetation types across the district to improve habitat and benefit wildlife. Areas identified during the analysis are vegetation communities adapted to fire; fire serves to rejuvenate growth of vegetation that wildlife use for food and cover.

“Prescribed fire is a cost-effective tool to improve wildlife habitat and reduce hazardous fuels,” said Karen Schroyer, Aspen-Sopris District Ranger. “The Aspen-Sopris Wildlife Habitat Improvement project is a district-wide project which gives us the opportunity to put good fire on the ground to benefit the resource, and carry out our Multiple Use mission.”

The Cattle Creek prescribed fire will occur in aspen and shrub vegetation that is used by elk and mule deer as winter range and as a place to give birth to young in early summer. The area is also home to raptors, songbirds, and other native wildlife during the summer months. The prescribed fire will benefit both big game and smaller wildlife and improve habitat conditions by utilizing low-intensity flame to consume fuels, clearing patches of decadent and dense vegetation as well as dead grasses and leaf litter. This will promote existing vegetation to sprout and regenerate leafy forage during the next growing season. A secondary benefit of prescribed fire is hazardous fuels reduction in areas adjacent to communities.

Although this is the first year prescribed fire operations have been conducted in the Cattle Creek area, firefighters have been implementing prescribed burns for wildlife habitat improvement across the District for several years. Prescribed fires are implemented in accordance with a written burn plan that prescribes specific weather and smoke dispersion conditions to exist before crews are able to proceed. Crews are responsible for igniting vegetation, monitoring control and spread of fire and smoke, ensuring fire is held by control features and monitoring fire behavior. Approximately 20 firefighters, and 2 engines will be used to assist in the operation. The prescribed burn operations may be implemented using either hand or aerial ignitions.

Smoke is expected to be visible from Carbondale, in Garfield County; Basalt in Pitkin County, and the towns of El Jebel, Gypsum, and Eagle in Eagle County. Please do not call 911. Most of the smoke will dissipate during the day, although some nighttime smoke may remain in valley bottoms as temperatures drop.

Those who are sensitive to smoke are encouraged to call the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District Office for additional information 970-963-2266. For more information on how prescribed fire smoke may affect your health, please visit: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health> . For the latest updates follow us on twitter @WhiteRiverNews or on Facebook here: [U.S. Forest Service – White River National Forest](#).

**Photo Caption:** Photo of the Basalt Mountain prescribed fire that was implemented in Spring of 2015.