



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



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Firefighters planning to implement Cattle Creek Prescribed burn Thursday

EL JEBEL, Colo. –Pending favorable weather conditions, firefighters with the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire and Aviation Management Unit (UCR) are expecting a window of opportunity tomorrow to conduct the Cattle Creek prescribed burn. The prescribed burn will reduce hazardous fuels and improve wildlife habitat on up to 1,800 acres of National Forest Lands.

The Cattle Creek prescribed burn is located nine miles north of El Jebel near Cottonwood Pass on the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District in Eagle County. This will be the third time prescribed burn operations have been conducted in the Cattle Creek project area. Land Managers conduct prescribed burning to reduce hazardous fuels and improve wildlife habitat.

Proactive prescribed burn treatments played an important role during the 2018 Lake Christine firefighting operations. Past prescribed burning conducted in 2015 on the northwest side of Basalt Mountain led to moderated fire behavior during the Lake Christine wildfire. Moderated, or less active, fire behavior gave firefighters the opportunity to safely engage the Lake Christine Fire and protect the community of Missouri Heights from the advancing fire front.

“The Lake Christine Fire was exhibiting active, crowning fire behavior,” said Karen Schroyer, District Ranger. “When the fire front reached the previously treated prescribed burn project area, fire behavior immediately changed to a slow-moving, creeping fire which was much safer for firefighters to engage and successfully suppress fire in that area.”

Thursday’s prescribed burn operations will be implemented by helicopter and on the ground by hand. Smoke from the Cattle Creek prescribed fire may be visible from Carbondale, Basalt, El Jebel, Gypsum, and Eagle.

Firefighters and engines will be on-scene and will closely monitor conditions during and after ignitions. 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. Springtime conditions, including wet slopes and snowpack, are favorable control features that will be utilized on this prescribed burn.

The Cattle Creek prescribed burn is part of the ten-year Aspen-Sopris wildlife habitat improvement 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.