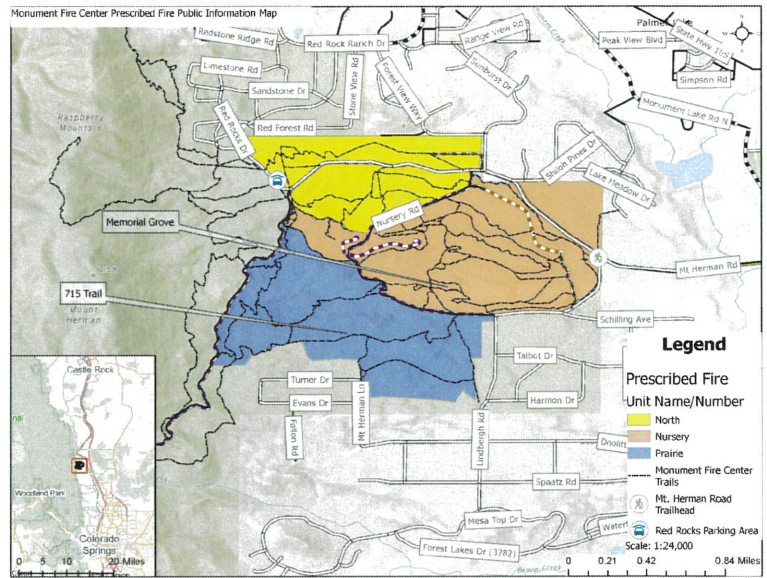


The Monument Fire Center Prescribed Fire, located West of Monument, CO, is planned to take place sometime during the month of June, weather depending. The planned project is 1000 acres, broken into three different units to be treated one at a time to reduce impact of smoke being produced from acres being burned.



Monument Fire Center Prescribed Fire 2024

Objectives of the project include reducing the amount of pine needles, leaves, small branches, and oak brush as well as reducing woody debris left over from earlier stages of the project. Historically, low-elevation Ponderosa Pine ecosystems such as those at Monument, are estimated to have burned every 10 years. Prescribed fire will help mimic the natural fire regime and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.



The US Forest Service works with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to conduct prescribed burns when conditions will minimize smoke impacts to communities. However, some smoke is inevitable and part of living in a fire-dependent ecosystem. More information about smoke impacts and how to prepare can be found at fire.airnow.gov. The good news about the smoke from a prescribed fire is that you will know when it happens so you can be prepared.



The Monument Fire Center project is part of an ongoing, collaborative restoration project developed with partners including the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, The Nature Conservancy, and neighbors.



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Monument Fire Center Prescribed Fire Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q. Why was Monument Fire Center chosen for treatment?

A. The prescribed fire on the grounds of the Monument Fire Center is a continuation of an ongoing project (2021-2023) that has included mechanical thinning, mastication and pile burning. The project is part of a much bigger picture called the National Wildfire Crisis Strategy. The Colorado Front Range Landscape was chosen as part of this national strategy.



Q. What is the Wildfire Crisis Strategy?

A. The Wildfire Crisis Strategy identifies the highest risk fire sheds, those most capable of generating large wildfire disasters and the highest risk of community exposure to wildfires. To protect the communities and natural resources in these high-risk areas, we need to restore healthy, resilient, fire-adapted forests by using mechanical thinning and returning beneficial fire in these landscapes. The US Forest Service has committed itself to increasing forest treatments up to four times historic levels under the 10-year strategy.



Q. What is the Colorado Front Range Landscape?

A. The Colorado Front Range Landscape encompasses 3.5 million acres stretching along the entire Front Range from the Wyoming border south to Hwy 50 near penrose, CO. The Colorado Front Range project focuses on cross-jurisdictional, strategically important fuels treatments and will maximize collaboration with communities and partners to prevent devastating wildfires throughout the high-risk front range.



Q. Why doesn't the USFS focus more on preventing wildfires rather than masticating/burning?

A. The project is intended to manage a fire dependent ecosystem. It is imperative to reduce the existing fuel loading to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, both natural and human caused. Banning campfires is a much different issue and the Pikes Peak Ranger District continues to work on way to educate the public and reduce the risk of unwanted human caused fires.



Q. What is going to happen to the trails that are inside the treatment units?

A. There might be some minimal damage and debris on the trail system. This is expected and something that will be able to be cleaned up and maintained.



Q. Will there be closures in the area during the prescribed fire?

A. Yes there will be road and trail closures during the operations. Road closures will be intermittent and will be done to keep firefighters and the public safe while there is fire, firefighters and equipment on the road. The US Forest Service will be working with the El Paso County Sheriff's office and other local agencies for these closures.

Trail closures will be a little bit longer term than the road closures. The trail closures will be included in the closure of the units a few days prior to ignition and a few days after ignitions until the burn boss deems it safe to return back into the area. There will be signs posed with current information and closure status. You can also find the closure announcements on our X (formerly Twitter) page at @PSICC_NF. We ask that you stay away from these areas during these closures for your own safety.

Q. Are there plans for possible escape of this prescribed fire?

A. While there is no anticipation of this burn escaping the control lines, we are prepared to take action if this fire was to escape. Your local fire department will be on scene with us during the firing operation and will also have units available to assist if needed. Other local agencies such as the humane society are contacted by El Paso County Health Department, who we work with to manage smoke impacts.