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News Release

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--

Lightning Sparks Fires

June 23, 2008

MONTE VISTA – Recent lightning activity has sparked at least three small fires on the Rio Grande National Forest.

The Gibson Peak Fire, located in the Sangre De Cristo Mountains, about 4 ½ miles northwest of Crestone, was reported on Thursday, June 19th. This 1 1/2 acre fire is being managed as a Wildland Fire Use (WFU) and is not being suppressed. Wildland Fire Use is a form of management that allows, under strict circumstances, for naturally-caused fires to continue burning for ecological benefit. The Gibson Peak Fire is next to the Sangre De Cristo Wilderness and is not a threat to structures.

On Monday, June 23, the Gibson Peak Fire, which is burning on a rocky slope in sparse Pinyon-Juniper fuels, was putting up very little smoke.

A small fire was reported in the Shaw Creek area on Sunday. This lightning-caused fire was located about two miles south of U.S. Highway 160 between South Fork and Del Norte. The fire was suppressed since it was near private land.

A third fire was reported on Monday, in the Mill Creek area, west of Saguache and south of State Highway 114. This ½ acre fire was still being worked on as of Monday afternoon.

Another fire reported over the weekend turned out to be inside the perimeter of the Embargo Creek Prescribed Burn. Prescribed burns often put up smoke for several weeks while not posing a threat to spread.

Fire danger is high below 10,000 feet in the mountains surrounding the San Luis Valley and moderate above 10,000 feet. Fire danger is expected to increase until the monsoons bring consistent moisture to the area. People visiting the mountains are reminded to never leave their campfire unattended and to make sure the coals are cold before they leave their campsite.

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