The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin Grasslands is headquartered in Laramie, Wyoming. Together, the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests combined with Thunder Basin Grasslands encompasses nearly three million acres from the north and eastern borders of Wyoming, south into north central Colorado and extending to the Colorado River. Due to the landscape and distance, the Forest’s Fire Program has zoned the fire programs accordingly: North Zone, Central Zone, and South Zone. South Zone Fire Program is located in the Colorado portion of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grasslands (MBRTB) in the Rocky Mountain Region. The zone includes three Districts: Hahns Peak Bears Ears, Parks, and Yampa Ranger Districts. This part of the forest was originally the Routt Forest established by Theodore Roosevelt in 1905 as the Park Range Forest Reserve. The Routt portion of the forest comprises of 1,126,650 acres of forest lands in northern Colorado. Within these boundaries lies seven wilderness areas including the popular Flat Tops; Sarvis Creek; Mount Zirkel; Platte River; and Never Summer Wildernesses. Recreation is a major tourist attraction for hiking, hunting, boating, fishing, dispersed and hosted camping, as well as snowmobiling, skiing, snowboarding, and backcountry winter enjoyment. The Yampa and Platte rivers are blue ribbon Rivers with excellent fly-fishing and floating. Elevation ranges from 5,000 feet above sea level to 12,000 feet. Vegetation varies from sagebrush-grasslands, oak brush to mixed conifer forests of pine, spruce, fir, and aspen. Wildlife is abundant with pronghorn, elk, moose, black bear, mule and whitetail deer among the larger species and the newly discovered wolves that have established themselves in the area. Wildflowers are in abundance in spring throughout the summer and the majority of the forest lies within the Atlantic migration flyway, providing year round viewing of a variety of birds.

There are two communication (interagency dispatch) centers that assist with infrastructure for wildfire and emergency response for the MBRTB. In Wyoming, MBRTB uses Casper Interagency Dispatch out of Casper, WY. South Zone communications center is based out of Craig Interagency Dispatch out of Craig, CO. This center is responsible for the southern portion of MBRTB and the majority of Bureau Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction in northwest Colorado. South Zone Fire works closely with BLM, Wildlife Refuge, Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control as well as several municipal and volunteer departments. These relationships are pertinent to the success of fire and fuels management in rural and small communities that are surrounded by federal lands. These relationships also create opportunities for collaborative efforts for education and information sharing within the communities.

Additional information can be found at: Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest & Thunder Basin Grasslands
outh Zone Fire’s organizational structure begins with leadership. Kevin Thompson is the Fire Management Officer (FMO) and oversees the fire program for south zone. Under him are two Assistant Fire Management Officers—Sean Carey, who oversees operations of the fire modules, and Lance Broyles as the zone’s Fuels Specialist. Together, they collaborate, advocate and implement the Agency, Forest, and Fire programs.

Storm Peak Fire Module is a ten person fire crew that works out of the HPBE District in Steamboat Springs, CO. At this time, Storm Peak is working towards their Type 1 status to diversify their skillsets and opportunities. Tim Cusack is the Crew Lead with Sarah Westendorf as his Assistant. Together, they lead a crew that specializes in suppression as well as fire observations for scientific data that assists in the objectives of wildfire and prescribed burn management. Storm Peak also assists in the fuels management of our zone.

Steamboat Springs has a population of 12,690 nestled in the mountains at 6,700 ft. in elevation. It is a major winter tourist attraction for Olympic training and city is internationally known for its ski resort destination among the many other recreational opportunities. Steamboat can be enjoyed outdoors, shopping, exploring the multi-cultural restaurants and quaint shops. The Yampa River runs through town providing a popular conduit for water sports like fishing, rafting, tubing and kayaking. Seasonal recreation provides year round variety of options for tourists and residents alike. Steamboat is the largest community closest to the south zone and forest boundaries. The amenities are vast and varied.

Cost of living, as well as other information, can be found here: Steamboat Springs, CO - Official Website
Chris Green is the Crew Lead for the Silver Creek Fire Module with Wyatt Smeltzer as the crew’s Assistant. This is a ten person module with dual roles—serving as a suppression module as well as the zone’s fuels module. Chris and Wyatt also host opportunities for Rocky Mountain Youth Corps students to join their crew for experience and career development. Silver Creek continues to implement fuels targets along with providing skilled firefighters for implementing wildfire suppression and prescribed burning objectives.

Silver Creek’s duty station is out of the Yampa Ranger District located in Yampa, CO. Yampa sits at 7,800 ft in elevation with a population of 447. Yampa attracts outdoor enthusiasts as it is the eastern gateway to the Flat Top Wilderness. The town is built around an agriculture, railroad and a mining economy. Its history delves into the Ute Native American tribe prior to the mining camps that initiated the growth of Yampa. Don’t forget to enjoy the annual horse polo around the fourth of July amongst other unique events. The town provides a quiet, pristine beauty with opportunities for a variety of recreational activities. Yampa has a few quaint amenities such as restaurants, a mercantile, school and gas station, but it is just minutes from Oak Creek and about a half hour south of Steamboat Springs.

For more information about Yampa, please follow this link: Town of Yampa

Engine 617 is a Type 6 Engine based out of the Parks Ranger District in Walden, CO. The engine is standardized as a 5 person engine with Kristen Thomason as the Engine Captain and Brian Gold as the Assistant Captain. Recently, 617 hired an Apprentice in support of the National Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program that aims to develop the future generations of firefighters. The engine and crew are delegated a variety of tasks from basic engine operations in timber, sage, and grasslands to management of the suppression of wildfires in Roadless and Wilderness areas. 617 also assists with fuels mitigation and management—including prescribed fire operations.

Walden is located in North Park, an alpine desert surrounded by multiple mountain ranges, lakes, and Wilderness Areas. Walden is minutes away from year-round, outdoor recreational activities and accommodate annual fishing and ice fishing tournaments along with the famous Ice Golf Tournament just outside of town. This town is the seat of the
county and provides for K-12 education, a library, courthouse, town hall, two gas stations and a handful of restaurants and gift shops. Festivals and Rodeos are frequently welcomed. Traditional events include the Never Summer Rodeo, Air Balloon Festival, Gould Ski Scramble and the Moose Festival. Steamboat Springs; Laramie WY; and Granby/Winterpark are just over an hour drive away. Denver is located 2 ½ hours away.

This link provides more information on Walden, CO: **Walden Colorado**

Employment opportunities can be found at [USAJOBS - The Federal Government's official employment site](#). All fire positions for South Zone are within the: United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 0462 Series. When applying for South Zone, ensure you select each duty station. These announcements open in early fall and it is suggested to apply for positions even if they are not available due to the Open Continuous Hiring process. MBRTB holds a high standard in duty, integrity and respect for the Fire Program. South Zone is always looking for individuals who possess self and team integrity; high standard in performance for themselves, and honor individualism and equality. These individuals are motivated, enquiring and service-oriented. Our firefighters are proudly acclaimed students of fire and stewards of public lands.

After completing the requirements of initiating a red card, crewmembers are checked out gear and begin the in depth training for safe and successful operations in the field. The incumbent is expected to maintain flexibility and be available for weekend work, assignments of up to 14-21 days, and long hours (up to 16 hours or more). Opportunities to travel nationally and working under other interagency modules exist year around. Bunkhousing is limited, but may available for our seasonal fire employees on request. There is a possibility of recruitment incentives for permanent employees.