

Silver Creek Fire Update

Monday, August 22, 10 a.m.

Contact: Lynn Barclay, 970-329-1054 - Western Slope Type 3 Incident Management Team

The Silver Creek Fire was reported Saturday, August 20 at 2:38 p.m., located four miles south of Stagecoach Reservoir in the Sarvis Creek Wilderness Area on the Routt National Forest (RNF). A reconnaissance flight was launched later in the day and confirmed the blaze was burning in thick beetle killed timber on a steep slope in rugged terrain. The fire was initially reported at one acre and is now estimated to be eight acres. Lightning was determined to be the cause based on recent lightning activity in the area and a map showing lightning strike locations. Smoke was visible from surrounding areas including Oak Creek and Steamboat Springs.

Yesterday firefighters reported that the fire was creeping and moving slowly with occasional single and group tree torching. Winds from the west moved the blaze in an easterly direction further into the Wilderness.

Fire managers are implementing a suppression strategy to fight the fire and take aggressive actions where it is effective and safe to do so. Firefighters will not be able to safely fight the fire directly in the Wilderness. They will determine where firelines and suppression actions can be effectively implemented to contain the fire's spread. This will include areas where the vegetation transitions to brush, Aspen stands and meadows or tying fireline into natural barriers such as rocky outcroppings and steams. The top priorities for the RNF are public and firefighter safety, keeping the fire from reaching private land and protecting values at risk.

The component of hazard trees (dead standing trees) is well over 60 percent on much of the Routt National Forest, including the Sarvis Creek Wilderness Area. These weakened diseased trees fall without warning and take lives each year. "We will forcefully fight this fire to keep it on the Forest and off private land," said Fire Management Officer Ich Stewart. "We will do it where we can be successful and without unnecessarily putting firefighters lives at risk."

Included in the planning and support of the Silver Creek Fire are Routt County Emergency Management, Oak Creek Fire Protection District and the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control. The Incident Command Post is located at the fire station in Stagecoach.

Resources assigned to the incident include the Columbine Wildland Fire Module, one U.S. Forest Service engine, one helicopter and a Type 3 fire management organization. Orders for five additional fire engines have been placed.

A public fire information meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 24, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Stagecoach fire station, 23655 County Road 16. Fire personnel will provide current fire information and be available answer questions.

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