

Sugarloaf Fire Update

July 31, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.

Rocky Mountain Complex Incident Management Team Three

Bill Waln, Incident Commander

Information Center: (307) 314-2244

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.



Fire Activity Increases as Warmer Weather Dries Fuels

Current Situation: Warmer and drier weather continues to move into the area, leading to an increase in smoke production on Saturday. Fire activity remained minimal with primarily creeping and smoldering as lighter fuels begin to dry, isolated single tree torching was observed. Similar conditions are anticipated today. The fire is 524 acres and is 19% contained.

Firefighters and bulldozers have spent the past several days constructing and improving indirect containment line and installing a hose lay which will deliver water to the indirect line along the east and south sides of the fire. This was done in preparation for a possible planned firing operation, which would involve the use of a PSD system (Plastic Sphere Dispenser) that drops spheres similar to ping pong balls out of a dispenser attached to a helicopter or drone which controls the output of these spheres. The spheres contain a mixture that combine on impact and ignite the vegetation on the ground which allows the fire to slowly back down to meet the fireline securing the edge of the fire. These spheres are used to introduce fire in remote areas or where the terrain is too dangerous to insert firefighters.

In Division Zulu, on the west side of the fire above Cow Creek, a Hotshot crew is planning to utilize PSD to introduce a small amount of fire near the top of the drainage, just below the existing fire edge. This is being done as a test for a potential planned firing operation tomorrow. This operation is an effort to bring lower intensity fire down the slope to Cow Creek. Sphere introductions will cause an increase in smoke which may be visible from far away.

In Division Alpha, on the east side of the fire, several days of precipitation have led to a decline in the amount of heat and fire being detected. Due to the steep, rocky, and rugged terrain, an unmanned aircraft will be flying over the fire perimeter today to locate remaining pockets of heat. If "hot spots" are located, hotshot crews will be hiking into those areas in an effort to extinguish them, if safe to do so. A risk versus reward assessment will be conducted based on location and fire conditions, before sending firefighters to the location. If these crews are successful in eliminating these "hot spots," the planned firing operations along the east side of the fire may not be necessary.

Firing operations are conducted to introduce lower intensity fire under specific conditions. Low intensity fire is less damaging to the land and allows firefighters to strengthen containment along the perimeter by reducing the amount of vegetation available to burn. Weather conditions, such as humidity levels and winds, and the availability of qualified personnel to coordinate the firing are two factors that determine if these operations can be undertaken. If any of the required conditions cannot be met, firing operations will not occur.

Weather & Fuel Conditions: Warmer temperatures will combine with lower humidity values over the next 24 hours as afternoon showers are isolated thunderstorms become possible. Brief heavy rain, small hail, gusty outflow winds to 35-40 mph and dangerous cloud to ground lightning will remain a threat from any thunderstorms that pass over or near the fire. Temperatures will be warming by 2 to 3 degrees a day through Monday with humidity levels possibly dropping below 20 percent on Monday.

Evacuations: An evacuation notice is in place for Bear Creek Road between the Garrett intersection and Friend Park. Pre-evacuation for Friend Park, and Fetterman to Garrett Ranch. If you are evacuating the Sugarloaf Fire area and need assistance with temporary housing, please contact Albany County Emergency Management at (307) 721-1815 or (307) 721-1896.

Fire Restrictions: Stage 1 Fire Restrictions are in effect for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and the Thunder Basin National Grassland https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1045796.pdf

Temporary Flight Restrictions: A TFR is in place over the fire area. This restricts aircraft, including drones, from entering the area without permission. Please remember; **If you fly, we can't!**

For More Information:

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8279/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FSMBRTB>

Fire Info Line: (307) 314-2244

Location: 7 miles SW of Laramie Peak, Albany County, WY.

Sugarloaf Fire Statistics:

Size: 524

Containment: 19%

Total Personnel: 402

Cause: Human