



Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

## Forest Service News Release

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### Cow Creek Prescribed Burn Planned

*Up to 15,000 acres targeted for treatment with prescribed fire in Mesa County*

**Grand Junction, Colorado, Sept. 22, 2023** — Fire Management Officials from the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' Grand Valley Ranger District plan to conduct the Cow Creek prescribed burn Sept. 24, depending upon weather and appropriate ground and vegetation conditions.

The Cow Creek prescribed burn project area is approximately 9 miles east of Gateway, Colorado and 25 miles southwest of Grand Junction, Colorado. If conditions are appropriate, about 7,000 acres with the potential of up to 15,000 acres are planned to be burned over multiple days, reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfire and improving wildlife habitat. The project area includes Cow Creek, Calamity Creek and Indian Creek.

Prescribed burning is a tool that re-introduces fire into the ecosystem to promote and regenerate healthy trees and habitat conditions. Before conducting a prescribed burn, extensive planning takes place to establish proper parameters such as weather, fuel conditions, smoke dispersion, staffing and other agency coordination. Significant coordinating efforts occur with local landowners, protection partners and other cooperating agencies to ensure the burn is conducted safely. The safety of firefighters and the public are the most important factors considered when planning prescribed fires.

The prescribed burns will be accomplished using joint-agency fire resources utilizing aerial and hand ignitions and will be closely monitored to ensure that they remain within the designated boundaries. Smoke from the prescribed fire will be managed to have minimal impact on neighboring communities. Smoke may be visible in several communities, including Grand Junction, Whitewater, Gateway, Fruita, Delta, Montrose, and Norwood for multiple days. The public is advised not to call 911.

Dispersed recreation in the prescribed fire project areas may be impacted. Staff will be making personal contact with recreationists regarding any temporary closures. Signs will be placed on adjacent roads, notifying the public of the project areas as necessary.

The prescribed fire will aid in decreasing longer duration, unpredictable and hazardous volumes of smoke from wildfires. Fire managers have obtained smoke permits from the State of Colorado and will comply with Colorado State air quality regulations. For more information on how prescribed fire smoke may affect your health, please visit <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>.

Prescribed burn updates will be posted on the [GMUG Fire Info](#) page. For information on prescribed burns, pile burns, wildfires and fire restrictions on National Forest System lands, visit [www.westslopefireinformation.com](http://www.westslopefireinformation.com).

For information and updates on current fire restrictions, conditions, and recreation opportunities on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests, visit the [forest website](#). Connect with us on social media ([Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)).

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*The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests manage approximately 3 million acres of land in Southwest Colorado within Delta, Garfield, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Mesa, Mineral, Montrose, Ouray, Saguache, San Juan and San Miguel counties.*

