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# News Release

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## **Spruce Creek Fire News Release** **Lightning-caused Fire on Haycamp Mesa**

**Dolores, Colo.,** May 18, 2024 – Fire managers are using a network of roads and other potential control lines to manage and secure the Spruce Creek Fire in Montezuma County. The fire was started by lightning on May 14<sup>th</sup>, just off Forest System Road 556 on Haycamp Mesa. It is burning in a mix of ponderosa pine, Gambel oak and aspen, about 11 air miles NE of Dolores and is 35 acres in size. Two Interagency Hotshot Crews and two Wildland Fire Modules are assigned to the fire and additional resources have been ordered. Fire managers plan to contain the fire within roads and other pre-identified control lines to protect values at risk and achieve objectives for the fire. Crews have been doing prep work over the past several days to protect fences, corrals, and other values in the area.

“This fire started in an area that our fire and resource management personnel have studied closely for years,” says Dolores District Ranger Nick Mustoe. “And they have already put a lot of thought and effort into determining the best ways to contain a wildfire there, in ways that reduce the risk to our communities over the long term.” Fire managers are working on securing indirect boundaries along natural features and existing road systems that enable firefighters the highest probability of success to contain the fire. “Our approach here will be to take advantage of favorable weather conditions to keep fire to where it is having positive effects on the ground.” Mustoe said.

“This is a great opportunity to further reduce the long-term fire risk in this area,” added Pat Seekins, the Fuels Program Manager for the San Juan National Forest. “It’s early in the fire year and we have the fire resources available, in terms of engines, hand crews, and helicopters, that will help us keep the fire within pre-identified boundaries of our existing road network and other features that exist as control lines.” Seekins said. This effort aligns with the US Forest Service’s 10-year Wildfire Crisis Strategy, which aims to increase the use of fire and other treatments to improve forest resiliency for generations to come, Seekins added.

If weather conditions continue to be favorable in the coming days, firefighters will use drones, a helicopter and hand ignitions within pre-existing potential operational delineation boundaries, where fire behavior modeling and local experience suggest operations have the highest chance of successfully containing the fire. An Incident Meteorologist from the National Weather Service has also been brought in to provide a hyper-local forecast to aid Fire Management decisions.

Smoke will be visible to travelers along Colorado Hwy. 184 between Mancos and Dolores, and to residents of Montezuma County throughout next week. Please watch for extra fire traffic in the area, especially on FSR 556, Haycamp Mesa Road.

An incident webpage has been set up for the Spruce Creek Fire at: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/cosjf-2024-spruce-creek-co>

Wildfire smoke may affect your health. For more information, please go to: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>

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