

News Release



USDA Forest Service
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kannah Creek Watershed Burning Planned

Grand Junction, CO., (April 28, 2008) – The USDA Forest Service and the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit are planning to perform a series of prescribed burn treatments in the Kannah Creek Watershed near Grand Junction sometime between May 1 and 8th. This is an anticipated burn “window” where ground, weather and fuel conditions may allow the burns to occur within the prescribed parameters that are needed to accomplish the desired goals for treating fuels. A helicopter and either a “helitorch” or “sphere dispenser” will be used to ignite the fires and ground crews and resources will be staffing the burn area to ensure safety and control.

The burning is part of a partnership plan between the City of Grand Junction, the USDA Forest Service and the Colorado State Forest Service to treat several areas of primarily oakbrush vegetation through prescribed fire over the next six to ten years. The City of Grand Junction and the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest—Grand Valley Ranger District partnership was most recently awarded \$196,000 through the Colorado Forest Restoration Grant Program (HB1130). This grant is in addition to a \$52,000 Stevens Grant awarded to the City last year for watershed restoration projects. Money from these grants has been combined with matching funds from the City of Grand Junction (\$52,000) and the USDA Forest Service (\$71,000) to accomplish needed work within the Kannah Creek Basin Watershed.

“It’s important to note that before a burn is planned and/or started, weather, ground, fuel conditions, appropriate staffing and access conditions must be within specified parameters in the burning plan to ensure safety of the burn and staff, and to achieve the desired outcomes,” stated

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Burn Boss Tim Foley. “In the case of these treatment areas, they are only planned for the Spring in order to take advantage of snowpack outside the burning unit to assist in the control and manageability of the burning. Meanwhile, the use of a Heli-torch allows burning in areas without the need to build roads.”

The Grand Junction City Municipal Watershed Fuels Reduction Project is designed to develop a multi-jurisdictional approach to modify, reduce and remove naturally occurring fire fuels in the Kannah Creek Basin Watershed. It builds upon previous work accomplished by the USDA Forest Service and the City of Grand Junction to develop a management plan in the Kannah Creek Watershed to promote land stewardship and maintain clean water. The purpose of the multiyear treatment plan is to limit fire intensity, severity, movement of ash into the City of Grand Junction’s water supply system and to improve the Kannah Creek Basin toward a healthier ecosystem.

“When the work begins this Spring with burning units, citizens and landowners within the area will see the smoke and we want them to understand that this is a controlled burn; why this is occurring; and the purpose it serves in the continued effort to provide clean drinking water to the City of Grand Junction,” stated Grand Valley District Ranger Connie Clementson. Greg Trainer, City of Grand Junction Utility and Streets Director, agreed and added, “The resource work in Kannah Creek is exciting and it provides great opportunities for citizens to see and learn about land stewardship and the importance that healthy forests play in providing clean water.

The burns will be followed later by contract work in other areas of the watershed this summer to provide hand-thinning in sensitive areas and mechanical treatments using either a “Hydro-Axe” or a “roller-chopper” in other areas of the watershed. These contracts will be administered by the Forest Service. Overall, the work planned within the watershed will include approximately:

- 296 acres of hand thinning
- 1073 acres of mechanical fuels treatment and seeding
- 3751 acres of prescribed burning
- 670 acres of mechanical fuel treatment with no seeding
- 291 acres of additional treatment by either burning or mechanical
- Seeding treatments in previously chained areas to combat cheat grass and help improve

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wildlife habitat.