

Mesa Cortina Pile Burning Notification Letter - 09/08/2020



Dear Neighbor,

As part of ongoing efforts to reduce the risk of wildfire to your community, the Summit County Open Space and Trails Department will be conducting prescribed pile burning operations at the Mesa Cortina Open Space, located between Ryan Gulch Rd and Royal Buffalo Dr., in the late fall and early winter of 2020-2021 (see attached map). This pile burning operation is a continuation of the fuels reduction efforts that began in the fall of 2019 with hand piling of hazardous fuels into more than 450 slash piles. Both the piling and burning operations are funded by Strong Futures Funds which dedicated \$1M per year for wildfire mitigation programs and strategies, including fuel breaks around neighborhoods and hazardous fuels reduction.

To complete these efforts, Summit County Open Space and Trails has contracted a wildland fire team from the Forest Stewards Guild for burning operations. The Forest Stewards Guild is a nationwide non-profit organization that practices and promotes responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild engages in education, training, policy analysis, research, and advocacy to foster excellence in stewardship, support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management. For more information on the Guild, please visit <https://foreststewardsguild.org/>. To learn more about the Forest Stewards Guild's Fire Management Program, please visit: <https://www.gpwm.org/>. The team at the Guild will provide highly experienced wildland fire professionals in order to ensure that this pile burn is conducted in a safe, well-planned, and efficient manner.

Burning operations will take place for 2-6 days between late October 2020 and March 2021. Summit County Open Space will communicate the timing of the burn through the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system, Summit County communications and environmental health, and roadside messaging boards throughout the county. During burn operations, smoke will be present in the area. Crews will mitigate smoke impacts to the surrounding community by burning when conditions are ideal for smoke dispersal and rapid pile consumption.

Wildfire smoke can impact your health. The elderly, children, and people with existing health conditions such as heart or lung disease are especially vulnerable to smoke. For more information about health and smoke, see <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>. **If you are a smoke sensitive individual**, please contact Jordan Mead, Resource Specialist with Summit County Open Space and Trails at jordan.mead@summitcountyco.gov or (970) 668-4065. Please include your name, phone number, and email in order to be added to the list of smoke sensitive individuals to be notified individually of upcoming burn days.

Thank you for your support of Summit County's ongoing commitment to community safety, hazardous fuels reduction, and forest health management. Information about Phase 1 of this project and other hazardous fuels mitigation on Open Space can be found at <https://www.summitcountyco.gov/1265/Wildfire-Mitigation-on-Open-Space>.

Sincerely,

Jordan Mead – Resource Specialist
Summit County Open Space and Trails Department

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