



CAMERON PEAK FIRE AREA



One-Year Anniversary Edition
August 13, 2021



Para obtener información en español sobre los esfuerzos de recuperación y los recursos para el incendio de Cameron Peak, comuníquese con Ricardo Perez al (970) 498-7142 o por correo electrónico a perezri@co.larimer.co.us.



ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

THANK YOU!

The Cameron Peak Fire was reported on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at approximately 1:48 PM. The fire began in steep, rugged terrain, approximately 25 miles east of Walden and 15 miles southwest of Red Feather Lakes near Cameron Pass. The fire would not be fully contained until December 2, 2020 and called controlled on January 12, 2021. It would become the largest fire in Colorado history.

In the months that followed, multiple efforts were made by community members, volunteer groups, non-profits, non-governmental agencies, local governments, and state and federal partners to both respond and recover from this catastrophic fire.

We have seen an enormous amount of effort in the last year in erosion control and flood preparedness efforts. On this one-year anniversary, we wanted to highlight all of the community efforts that have gone into recovering from the fire and preparing for post-fire impacts.



**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT HAS HELPED IN AND AROUND
THE CAMERON PEAK FIRE AREA IN THIS LAST YEAR.**

CAMERON PEAK FIRE RECOVERY

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RESTORATION EFFORTS

The Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, Larimer County Conservation Corps crews, and volunteers from Nutrien worked to install wattles, remove hazardous trees, and seed severely burned slopes in the Cameron Peak burn area. This work is helping to reduce erosion within Monument Gulch, an important tributary of the Little South Fork of the Poudre River.



BELEW PROPERTY



CAMERON PEAK FIRE RECOVERY

CAMERON PEAK FIRE

NORTH FORTY MOUNTAIN ALLIANCE

A great example of neighbors supporting neighbors happened shortly after the fire in the Red Feather Lakes and Glacier View communities.

Community members in this area have demonstrated a strong desire to support one another and build resilience for several years, having been one of the pilot groups to participate in the Larimer Connects Program and having built the N40 Mountain Alliance; a grassroots-led group of neighbors who support neighbors during times of crisis and recovery. Community members can volunteer to be part of the organization and share information and resources, and it is also a place where community members who need support can request help and be connected to a network of resources.

Between COVID-19 and the Cameron Peak Fire, our mountain communities experienced great adversity. Challenges such as financial hardship initiated by COVID were exacerbated by lengthy (sometimes weeks to months), or repetitive evacuations for the fire. Additionally, the fire was most active during the fall months, which tends to be a very important time for harvesting firewood for the upcoming winter.



An example of neighbors supporting neighbors comes from the N40 Mountain Alliance connecting a local community member who had a side business of harvesting and selling firewood to aging community members or community members experiencing financial hardship that were otherwise unable to get their own firewood and had significant fears about the upcoming winter and being able to stay warm. The community member offered these services for free, and was a helping hand when it was needed most.

Community resilience is reflected in examples like this, that may not be talked about in newspapers, when neighbors show up and support one another when it is needed most and in the most generous of ways. More information on the N40 Mountain Alliance can be found by visiting www.n40alliance.org



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WILDLANDS RESTORATION VOLUNTEERS

WRV has helped reduce flooding and mudslides that follow high-intensity fires like Cameron Peak. WRV has deployed volunteer teams to seed damaged areas with quick-growing native grasses, wildflowers, and other vegetation. Volunteer sawyers have cut dead trees and placed them across drainages to catch ash and soil and prevent streams from choking with sediment.



Wildlands Restoration Volunteers has engaged 410 volunteers that have contributed over 3,100 hours on wildfire restoration work.



Wildlands Restoration Volunteers also trained the staff of 6 non-profit organizations and dozens of landowners on how to do fire restoration well.



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LARIMER COUNTY CONSERVATION CORPS

The Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) dedicated ten weeks this summer to post-fire recovery and restoration efforts in multiple places throughout the burn area. The LCCC promotes individual development through service for the benefit of our environment and community. LCCC is housed within and administered by the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development



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SERVE 6.8 VOLUNTEERS

SERVE 6.8 has been active in working with property owners with financial and projects needs and has been helping prepare for potential flooding due to soil resistance and changing landscape. SERVE 6.8 is also responsible for all of the free sandbags that have been delivered throughout Larimer County for post-fire flooding.



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TEAM RUBICON

Team Rubicon serves communities by mobilizing veterans to continue their service, leveraging their skills and experience to help people prepare, respond, and recover from disasters and humanitarian crises. Team Rubicon's mission is providing relief to those affected by disaster, no matter when or where they strike. Team Rubicon has worked tirelessly in the Cameron Peak Fire burn area on multiple community projects.



CAMERON PEAK FIRE RECOVERY

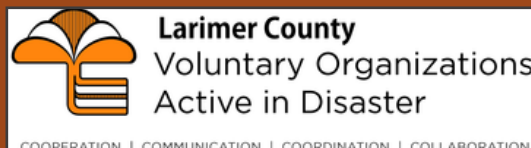
CAMERON PEAK FIRE

BIG THOMPSON WATERSHED COALITION & VOAD PARTNERS

Restoration activities through the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition and the Larimer Volunteer Agencies Active in Disaster (VOAD) have focused on landowner restoration trainings and volunteer programs. Trainings have provided 7,000 linear feet of wattles and 40 pounds of native seed to landowners. Volunteer programs have engaged over 80 volunteers in approximately 400 hours of erosion control work and will continue two Saturdays a month through the end of the year.



Volunteers with the Big Thompson Watershed Coalition worked on erosion control projects with assistance from Volunteers of America, Larimer County VOAD and United Way of Larimer County.



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COALITION FOR THE POUUDRE RIVER WATERSHED (CPRW)

CPRW's mission is to improve & maintain the ecological health of the Poudre River Watershed through community collaboration. CPRW has partnered with multiple organizations on river restoration efforts and wildfire recovery since the Cameron Peak Fire last year.



CPRW have also provided support to the aerial mulching efforts aimed at protecting the watershed and surrounding communities.



CAMERON PEAK FIRE RECOVERY

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

A Look at Cameron Peak Fire a Year Later: News Release from the USFS 8/12/2021

When the Cameron Peak Fire began on August 13, 2020, no one would have predicted the immense impact it would have on our communities, our forest, or our lives. No one would have predicted it would grow to become the largest fire in Colorado history with ten Incident Management Teams over the course of many months. What one could predict, however, is that the people of northern Colorado and Larimer County would join forces to recover and demonstrate incredible strength.

From that first day, the Cameron Peak Fire put up challenge after challenge for fire managers from drought conditions to rugged terrain to extreme weather conditions, fueling its growth to 208,913 acres. The fire was ultimately contained December 2, 2020, and called controlled January 12, 2021. The damage done by this historic fire took five months. The recovery will take longer and be accomplished by partners working shoulder to shoulder.

Below is a summary from a few of those amazing northern Colorado partners and the recovery work already accomplished or anticipated. This work shows the resiliency of the people and the land. It is long, hard work to recover. We are all in it for the duration.

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland is addressing recovery in three phases. Fire suppression repair work continues across the landscape. More than 140 miles of fire hand line and dozer line have been repaired. A semitrailer load of 16,000 feet of hose, seven pumps, fuel cans and other suppression items were collected within the fire area and returned for future use.

Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) work is the second phase. Information on Cameron Peak Fire BAER is available at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7210/>. Volunteers and crews have cut approximately 4,000 hazard trees from trails, removed bridges so they will not wash away, installed 455 erosion control structures (like water bars or retaining walls), repaired 661 erosion control structures, and replaced over 60 signs within the burn area. We thank our incredible volunteers – Poudre Wilderness Volunteers, Overland Mountain Bike Association, Cameron Pass Nordic Rangers, and Wildlands Restoration Volunteers – for their contributions, as well as the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps, Larimer County Youth Conservation Corps, and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps.

Long-term Recovery is the final phase and includes integrated work with partners. The Forest Service has issued numerous permits to facilitate recovery work, such as aerial mulching, water monitoring, and utility infrastructure efforts, and are analyzing what reforestation might look like within the burn scar, as well as other longer-term recreation needs.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is implementing the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program to provide federal assistance on five of the 2020 wildfires in Colorado, including Cameron Peak. The EWP program relieves imminent hazards to life and property, and through EWP, NRCS is providing \$7.3 million towards Cameron Peak recovery efforts, including the installation of measures that reduce sedimentation, erosion, and threats from future flooding.

Larimer County has been in collaboration with local, state, and federal partners leading the way throughout the Cameron Peak Fire recovery and restoration efforts. The recovery and restoration work of debris management, erosion control, suppression repairs, sandbagging, and vegetative debris removal have been key activities that have guided the participation of recovery partners.

The Long Term Recovery Group has mobilized dozen of volunteer and non-profit groups to help with recovery needs and post-fire impacts. These groups have addressed hazardous trees on private lands, erosion control, stream mitigation, structure protection, private land repairs, and more.

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Community meetings have been very important in addressing the needs for the impacted communities and helping those impacted in this recovery process. As a result of the recovery efforts, a greater focus on preparedness in flood-after fire and mitigation for our communities in vulnerable areas will continue to guide the collaboration of our partners. Resources for those impacted by the fire are available at <https://www.larimer.org/emergency/recovery/wildfire-resources>.

The City of Greeley has been a key partner in aerial mulching activities within the burn area for recovery efforts with partners. Water officials monitor source water quality as it flows downstream. Greeley strategically draws water from several sources, and water officials have the ability to change water sources when river water quality degrades. The diversity in supply and treatment infrastructure allows Greeley staff to navigate around poor water quality without affecting taste or quality or disrupting service.

The City of Fort Collins continues to address the short-term and long-term effects of Cameron Peak on its water supplies in the Poudre River watershed. In addition to partnering with the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed and the City of Greeley on aerial mulching to support long-term watershed recovery, Fort Collins Utilities also continually monitors water quality along the river and adjusts water treatment measures and protocols as needed to ensure high-quality drinking water for its customers. While thunderstorms continue to wash ash, sediment and debris down the river, Fort Collins Utilities is able to rely on Colorado-Big Thompson water supplies in Horsetooth Reservoir and customers should experience no change in water quality or service. See fcgov.com/water-status for details.

The Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed (CPRW) is partnering with the cities of Greeley and Fort Collins to implement aerial mulching operations on more than 10,000 acres of high priority land within the Cameron Peak burn area. To date, more than 2,000 acres have been mulched as part of this effort. Mulching is part of a larger program of recovery work intended to provide holistic post-fire mitigation on a total of 20,000 acres, helping to mitigate the negative consequences of the wildfire to watershed values including water quality and river ecosystem function and health. High priority project areas were identified using science-based information and modeling, as well as collaborative data input from partners of the Larimer Recovery Collaborative. Mulching will be conducted through the summer and fall of 2021 and potentially into the summer of 2022.

The Big Thompson Watershed Coalition (BTWC) has been an active member of the Larimer Recovery Collaborative since the Cameron Peak Fire edged into the Big Thompson watershed in October 2020. While only a third of the fire burned in this watershed, there is a large proportion of private lands impacted across five communities. BTWC's work emphasizes private land recovery while seeking funding for future aerial mulching endeavors uphill of our communities. Restoration activities have focused on landowner restoration trainings and volunteer programs. Trainings have provided 7,000 linear feet of wattles and 40 pounds of native seed to landowners. Volunteer programs have engaged over 80 volunteers in approximately 400 hours of erosion control work and will continue two Saturdays a month through the end of the year. BTWC is committed to helping our communities recover from this event while reducing water resource impacts from runoff from the burn and associated flooding.

Again, recovery will take time but working together is key to restoring our lands. We will not soon forget the date August 13, 2020, but we will move forward together. To find information about upcoming events, research, safety and more, please visit the Cameron Peak Fire Recovery StoryMap that was just recently published.

News Release, Reghan Cloudman, USFS, August 12, 2021

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NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

None of the efforts of our partner organizations would be possible without community support. Most efforts involved volunteers from both in and out of the affected communities, lending a hand to try to protect lives and property. Community members have attended classes and participated in multiple volunteer opportunities.

On top of all that, we have seen examples in every community of neighbors helping neighbors. One person going out of their way to help another, to share resources, loan out equipment or by getting dirty with the manual labor that has been required to restore areas.

Each effort builds on the others to make a wonderful community!



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