

Newsletter



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Chief's Message

from Chief Bill McLaughlin



You may have heard that the Board of Directors of Elk Creek Fire has asked the county for a moratorium

on construction for the Conifer area. This request to halt new development – at least for a time – is because the fire department's call volume has been steadily climbing, while the available funding has been slowly falling. The fire district is concerned about the added impacts of new development when we are finding it a challenge to maintain services for the community as it is.

The fire district would like to see all new development meet the newest codes to prevent ignition from wildfires. These Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) codes would help prevent a major development from going up in flames – or spreading to other buildings. There is also the building height issue; the county code allows buildings up to 45' high, but without a ladder truck, we can protect buildings only up to 28' at the roof edge. The fire district would also like to ensure that, as new development comes in, the developers contribute fees appropriate to the amount of impact they would have on the fire department. These impact fees are already paid to schools, the sheriff's office, and libraries, but not currently to the fire department. Collecting those fees would keep the burden of growth off the existing residents and businesses.

Chipping Program Helps Protect Homes from Wildfire

You may have seen firefighters working on the side of the road, chipping slash. They are part of the Elk Creek Community Chipping Program. This program provides chipping at no cost to the landowner. The program is funded by a combination of grants and donations. Removal and chipping of woody vegetation including branches,

logs and small trees helps residents and property owners create defensible space around their homes in the event of a wildfire. For the 2019 season, we are operating a Wildland Fire Module: a 10-person firefighting crew that will focus on hazard-fuel reduction projects (such as the free community chipping), as well as targeted wildfire mitigation throughout the district. They are also available to respond to local fires. This is a highly motivated local resource that is designed to serve the community in education, preparation, and response to wildfires. Team members hail from Colorado and across the country, including Oregon, Illinois, California, and North Carolina.

To sign up for chipping, go to elkcreekfire.org/chipping-program and submit a chipping request. The chipping crew will chip your slash when they are next in your neighborhood. Be aware that this may be several weeks after your request. To be efficient, the chipping crew will work in one or two neighborhoods at a time rather than driving back and forth across the fire district. (*cont. p2...*)



Elk Creek Wildland Fire Module 459 works on the community chipping program in the Belle Meade sub-division in Conifer, CO, on June 22, 2019.

Chipping Program cont.

Please read through the guidelines on the website about how and where to pile material. The piles should be arranged with the larger ends of the limbs all facing the road to help the chipping go faster. Piles must be at the roadside.

Starting this spring, the crew will offer the option to remove the chips or broadcast the material on the property.

The program has been generously funded through the Upper South Platte Partnership. This group includes the Colorado State Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, Denver Water, and others. The partnership works to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires throughout the watershed.

Donations to keep the program going are also accepted and appreciated. To donate, you may mail a check to Elk Creek Fire, P.O. Box 607, Conifer, CO 80433. You can write "chipping program" on the memo to designate your donation.

Summer Roadway Safety



New Monthly Community CPR Classes

Immediate CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) can double or triple the chances of survival after cardiac arrest. In an effort to ensure members of the community are trained in CPR, Elk Creek Fire will now begin offering community **Heartsaver CPR AED** classes once per month beginning June 2019. This course teaches adult and child CPR and AED use, infant CPR, and how to relieve choking in adults, children, and infants.

Dates will be announced on the Elk Creek Fire Protection District website: www.elkcreekfire.org. Classes will be free, unless a participant requires an official course completion card, then there is a \$20 fee.

Additionally, Elk Creek Fire is looking for community members who are interested in teaching CPR to others in the community.

For questions regarding CPR classes and for more information about becoming an instructor, please contact: info@elkcreekfire.org.

"So far in 2019, there have been over 200 crash-related fatalities in the state of Colorado."

Summer has arrived in Colorado, which means more outdoor fun, more travel, and more vehicles on the road. Along with cars, summer brings an increase in motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians on roadways. It also brings an increase in construction projects, and therefore roadside workers and vehicles operating in hazardous, busy areas.

So far in 2019, there have been over 200 crash-related fatalities in the state of Colorado (per the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)). Here, we offer some reminders to motorists that we hope will help you and others stay safe this summer while traveling around our beautiful state. (*cont. p3...*)

Summer Roadway Safety cont.

Motorcycles!!

Motorcycle fatalities peak during the warmer summer months as the number of motorcycles on the road increases. Always provide extra space when following motorcyclists and allow them the full width of a lane. Use extra caution when turning left at an intersection, as oncoming motorcycles can be hard to see from a distance, and many motorcycle crashes happen this way. Always, always check mirrors and blind spots before merging or changing lanes. The average vehicle blind spot is 650 square feet – this is large enough to fit a small studio apartment or even a jet! Small vehicles such as motorcycles can easily get lost in this large blind spot.

Motorcyclists themselves can help reduce the risk of crashes by obeying all traffic laws, remaining within the speed limit, never driving impaired, and by taking advantage of Colorado's Motorcycle Operator Safety Training (MOST) programs. Also, always wear a helmet and other protective gear. Head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes.

Road Work!!

Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes. If that's not reason enough to slow down, remember that in Colorado, the fines are doubled for most infractions in a work zone. Rear-end collisions are common in work zones, so be sure to leave extra space, and do not tailgate. Stay alert and expect the unexpected in work zones; traffic lanes and patterns and speed limits can change quickly, and people and equipment may be on or near the road. Give them plenty of space. Heed and obey warning signs and flaggers; they are there to keep you safe, and you can be cited for disobeying either one. Avoid distractions such as using cell phones and changing radio stations while in a work zone; dedicate your full attention to the conditions and people around you.

Distracted Driving!!

Every day in Colorado, distracted drivers are involved in an average of 43 crashes. Many of these lead to serious injury or death. In 2018, 53 fatalities and 6,269 injuries were attributed to 15,673 crashes involving distracted drivers in Colorado, according to preliminary data from CDOT. Even with these alarming statistics, a CDOT survey of Colorado drivers shows that 91 percent of people reported driving while distracted in the previous seven days. Remember, distracted driving is not just about your phone, though this may be the most common culprit. It is also about eating, tending to children or pets, reading, watching videos, or talking to another passenger – anything that takes your full focus away from the road. CDOT is encouraging motorists to utilize the "Do Not Disturb While Driving" feature that can be enabled on many phones. CDOT has a list of distracted-driving-prevention apps available at distracted.codot.gov.

Move Over!!

Traffic-related incidents are the leading cause of death for on-duty law enforcement officers, fire, EMS, maintenance workers, and tow / recovery professionals. Moving over for these responders is not an optional courtesy; it's the law.

In Colorado, state law requires drivers approaching stationary emergency and maintenance vehicles that are displaying flashing lights, including tow trucks, traveling in the same direction, to vacate the closest lane. If it is not safe to do so, motorists must slow down to a reasonable speed safe for existing weather, road, and traffic conditions.

Alcohol and Marijuana!!

It's summer and you may want to have a little fun, but do it responsibly, for the sake of yourself and others. Nearly 60 people in Colorado are arrested for impaired driving each day, equaling over 20,000 every year. Nearly one-third of Colorado's road fatalities involve an impaired driver. If you are planning to drink, designate a sober driver or get a Lyft, Uber, or taxi. And remember, everyone handles alcohol differently, so "one or two" may equal a DUI for you. (*cont. p4...*)

Summer Roadway Safety cont.

If you are not sure (most think they are, but really are not), find out! CDOT and BACtrack have teamed up in a partnership to promote the use of smartphone breathalyzers. You can find more info here: www.bactrack.com/pages/cdot-partner-program.

Marijuana-impaired driving continues to be a problem on Colorado roads. From 2017 to 2018, the Colorado State Patrol (CPS) noted a 25 percent increase in marijuana DUI citations, and in 2018, more than 20 percent of all DUI citations by CPS involved marijuana. Remember to use the same plan as you would for alcohol – designate a driver or get a ride service!

Buckle Up!!

Despite Colorado's seat belt law, the use rate is 86 percent – below that national average of 90 percent. In 2018, there were 215 unbuckled deaths of drivers and passengers – this accounted for more than half of the 410 total passenger vehicle deaths in the state. CDOT states that an estimated 70 lives could have been saved in 2017 if everyone in Colorado had buckled up. Those 70 lives could be your mother or father, your brother or sister, your husband or wife, your best friend, your child. Seat belts reduce the risk of injury or death in a crash by 50 percent. Are you willing to take a 50/50 chance on your life? BUCKLE UP.

Speed!!

It may sound obvious, but in all the above situations, speed is generally one of the main factors contributing to fatalities. Check radio, television, or websites ahead of time for traffic or closure information, leave with time to spare, don't tailgate slower motorists, remember that construction zones generally have slower speed limits, slow down and move over for accidents and traffic stops, and finally, take a breath. (Podcasts and recorded or streamed books are a great way to make some extra time in the car more pleasant!) Remember: nothing is so important that it takes your or another's life. Get there in one piece.

Have fun and enjoy our beautiful state this summer – and do so safely. Let's all work together to minimize Colorado road-related injuries and fatalities.

Statistics and recommendations from www.cdot.gov

Elk Creek Fire Academy Prepares New Firefighters to Help Protect the Community



Billy Gage, from Fire Module 459, instructs students on moving a patient during the S130/ S190 field days on the Pike National Forest on May 19, 2019.

"It becomes like you are running a marathon every week – but you get conditioned to it. No matter how conditioned you are when you come in, you leave more conditioned when you come out."

Last year, Rob Adranovic, a local resident of Conifer, decided it was finally time to pursue a goal he'd had since he was just a kid. "I went the way my parents thought was better. I got a business management degree and hated it. Now, I'm pursuing what I've always wanted to... I didn't start until I was 50. I was worried if I could physically keep up." But now, Rob is a volunteer firefighter, and he recently received his EMT certification. "Now, I'm living my dream."

On May 4th, 2019, six new Elk Creek firefighter candidates embarked on their own year-long training program to pursue the goal of becoming a firefighter. Along with them, several other candidates from neighboring departments, including Inter Canyon Fire, Indian Hills Fire, Genesee Fire, and Foothills Fire, are also working through their training in this combined academy. (cont. p5...)

Elk Creek Fire Academy cont.

This year's training began with the topic of wildland fire. Students spent time in lecture sessions learning about wildland-fire behavior, weather impacts, firefighter operations and safety, working in the wildland / urban interface, and the impact of human behavior on wildfire operations and team dynamics. Along with classroom time, the candidates spent several days outside learning front-line operations including digging fire line, performing firing operations, working with hose lays, observing fire behavior and safety issues, identifying escape routes, and learning to deploy fire shelters in the event of an emergency. To pass the wildland-fire courses, students had to pass an "arduous pack test". This entails quickly walking (they are not allowed to run) 3 miles within 45 minutes with 45 pounds of weight on their backs in their packs. With all classes and pack tests successfully completed, these candidates will be approved to fight wildfire in the Elk Creek Fire district, and they will also be qualified to travel out of district to work on fires in other parts of the country.

From here, the candidates move on to obtaining their structural fire fighting certifications. They will be tested on both classroom knowledge as well as a plethora of physical fire-fighting skills. These include proper use of their protective clothing and breathing equipment, tying various knots, erecting and climbing ladders, scene-safety techniques, using large saws, forcing entry into locked buildings in the event of an emergency, searching burning structures for victims, rescuing victims, direct fire attack with hoses and water, ventilating buildings, maintaining equipment, operating firefighting vehicles, and various other skills. Throughout this training, there are many challenging and adrenaline-filled tasks to be completed, including crawling through a maze that simulates escape from a collapse and practicing with real fire inside a burn-training building. Speaking of his own time in the burn building, Rob says, "It was getting so hot... I ran out of gas, stumbled up the stairs... I was dizzy, light headed, and then they said, 'let's do it one more time'." One of the instructors gave Rob a beverage with electrolytes, and he began to feel normal again. "It becomes like you are running a marathon every week – but you get conditioned to it. No matter how conditioned you are when you come in, you leave more conditioned when you come out."

Fire academy students also learn basic medical skills by obtaining their Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) certificate. This allows them to perform basic life-saving techniques (provide oxygen, perform CPR, stop bleeding, etc.) Like Rob, many students choose to further their medical training after fire academy by going on to achieve their Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certificate, and some already have this certification upon beginning fire academy. (*cont. p6...*)



During the Wildland classes for the rookie academy, a medical scenario was introduced to the recruits. Rookie firefighter Andrew Beckwith (center in red shirt) is assessed by rookie firefighter/ EMT Christine Lievers (right) and Dung Tee Than. Wildland Fire module member Zach Treakle (left) and Captain Tim Sander (upper right) look on. Picture taken in the Pike National Forest on May 19, 2019.

Elk Creek Fire Academy cont.

"It's like my second family. We have dinner every month together at membership meetings. Any time I have problems with anything, I can hang out with people there. I have made a lot of friends... The person walking in front of me or behind me might be saving my life or I might be saving theirs, and there is a whole different type of bonding and tighter connection that happens here when you have that kind of trust with people."

Finally, candidates will train in the recognition and mitigation of hazardous materials and gain their HazMat Operations certificate. The HazMat class includes significant classroom time learning about the chemical properties and health hazards of various hazardous materials. Students learn the science of how various forms of matter act and react, learn to identify storage and transport containers and what they may be carrying, learn how to mitigate hazardous material spills and exposures, and how to decontaminate items and people in the event of exposure. The state hazardous-materials test is known to be the hardest of the tests in fire academy, and "rookies" can often be found on nights and weekends sitting in the training room helping each other prepare for this test.

Does this sound challenging, fun, or inspiring to you? Do you wonder if you may be an ideal candidate to help support your community by assisting in an emergency? Elk Creek Fire runs a fire academy nearly every year and also recruits volunteers as medical-only providers. Feel free to contact us to learn more and start preparing now. You can also take a "ride-along" for part of a day to see what it's like to be a firefighter and / or emergency medical professional. We would be happy to get to know you and introduce you to our fire family. "I love it," says Rob, "It's like my second family. We have dinner every month together at membership meetings. Any time I have problems with anything, I can hang out with people there. I have made a lot of friends... The person walking in front of me or behind me might be saving my life or I might be saving theirs, and there is a whole different type of bonding and tighter connection that happens here when you have that kind of trust with people."

Wildfire Mitigation in the Elk Creek Fire Protection District

As we move into another wildfire season, it is time for firefighters and residents alike to prepare for the inevitability of wildfire. Elk Creek firefighters have been training over the last month to suppress wildfires within district and nationally. As part of this "refresher" training every year, we look back at previous incidents in an effort to learn and improve. A major topic discussed in our training this year was the increase of extreme wildfire events in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). (The WUI is any developed area where conditions affecting the combustibility of both wildland and built fuels allow for the ignition and spread of fire through the combined fuel complex. This includes areas within or adjacent to private and public property where mitigation actions can prevent damage or loss from wildfire.)



An Elk Creek Fire chipping truck chips slash that was piled at the roadside by residents participating in the chipping program.

2018 saw severe fire conditions, leading to some of the most destructive fire activity this country has ever seen. While fewer acres burned than in years past nationwide, we witnessed more destructive fires impacting communities. Fires such as the Camp Fire in Paradise, California (destroyed over 14,000 structures and killed 88 people) are horrifying examples of the potential situation our community faces. (cont. p7...)

Wildfire Mitigation cont.

And before you say it is a California problem, in 2018, Elk Creek Fire Protection District (ECFPD) responded to 30 wildfires within district, and there were multiple large fires that affected communities across Colorado. Additionally, a short look back at the region's wildfire history (the Hayman, Waldo Canyon, Black Forest, and Buffalo Creek fires) reminds us of the area's extreme fire potential. When faced with critical fire behavior within the WUI, firefighters must focus on evacuations and effectively apply available resources to defensible homes. In these scenarios, it is crucial that homeowners have already implemented Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) best practices prior

to the start of a fire in order to protect their property. (The HIZ is an area where the factors that principally determine home ignition potential during extreme wildfire behavior - high fire intensities and burning embers - are present. The characteristics of a home and its immediate surroundings within 100 feet comprise the HIZ.)

For these reasons, ECFPD has been hard at work to provide the resources needed to reduce the risk of wildfire to individual properties and communities.

The Elk Creek Wildfire Specialist is available to perform a home assessment to assist your mitigation efforts. This includes an in-depth look at the exterior of the home and the surrounding defensible space. The science and standards applied to these site assessments have been proven to work time and time again, and all proposed actions are voluntary. Site visits generally take about two hours, and a report will be generated to guide your mitigation work. To set up an appointment, email Ben Yellin byellin@elkcreekfire.org or call 303-816-9385 ext. 25.

A 10-person fire module has also been established to reduce extreme fire behavior potential in critical areas of the district. This year, the fire module will focus its efforts on the Foxton and Pleasant Ridge project areas. These fuel thinning projects have been organized and funded with the partners of the Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP). For specific details related to these projects, please call the ECFPD.

The Elk Creek fire module is also running the chipping program again this year. A new chip truck has been added to the fleet, so all of the material that is chipped can be hauled away and turned into soil. Homeowners and organized neighborhoods are encouraged to sign up on the Elk Creek Fire Protection District website or email Jayson Papenfus at jpapenfus@elkcreekfire.org. In the past, there has been high demand for these services, so schedule your appointment soon.

Both individual HIZ mitigation and larger landscape fuels treatments are essential for safe and effective fire response and for preserving the communities within ECFPD. Elk Creek Fire is investing in mitigation programs and providing the tools needed to create a more fire-adapted community (a community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely co-exist with wildland fire.) However, we still need homeowners to take responsibility for the fire behavior associated with the condition of their property and take essential mitigation action. Together, we can be better prepared for this wildfire season and for years to come.

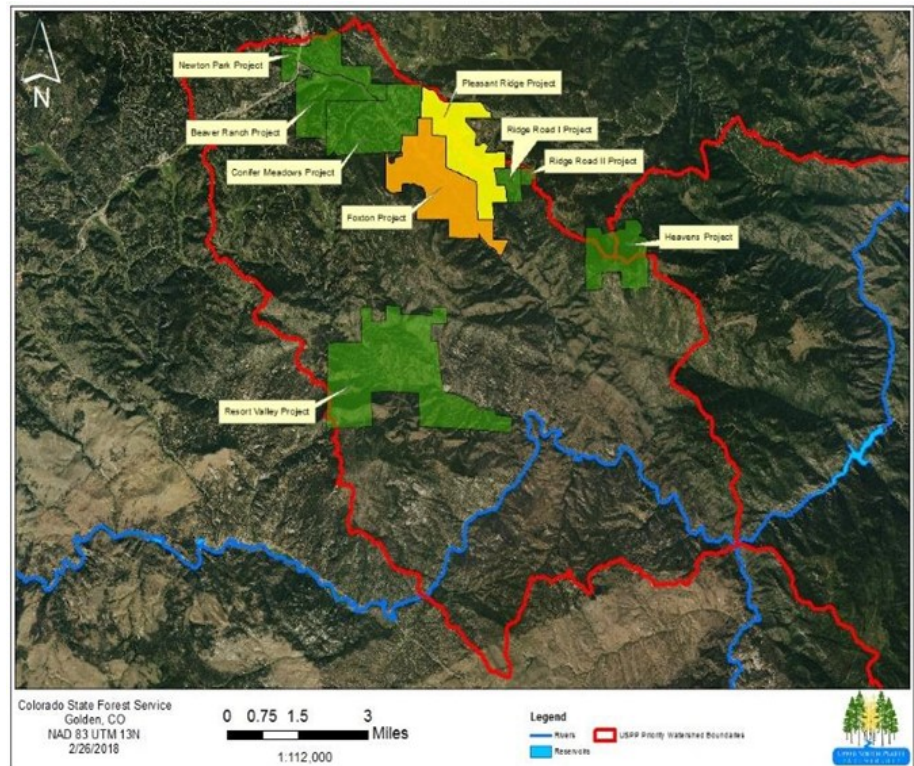


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: Map of fuels USPP fuels projects. Credit: USPP.

The Fire Explorer Program fosters new friendships and provides participants with training and career development, positive mentoring, improved self-confidence, and leadership experience.

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WANTED!

Young People Interested in Firefighting and Emergency Services

Elk Creek Fire has an exciting and intriguing program for young people between the ages of 14 and 20 years old. The **Fire Explorer Program** fosters new friendships and provides participants with training and career development, positive mentoring, improved self-confidence, and leadership experience. The program runs year-round and requires 80 percent participation / attendance.

Members of the Explorers program learn basic training in fire suppression and emergency medical services. Once members have met certain requirements and are cleared by the Explorer Post Advisor, they are granted the opportunity to observe and participate in actual 911 responses with Elk Creek Fire firefighters and EMS personnel.

Many young people who join the Explorers program go on to become volunteers for Elk Creek Fire once they reach the age requirement for application (18).

Elk Creek Fire Explorer Post 1948 currently has nine Explorers. If you are interested in becoming an Explorer or would like more information, please contact: explorers@elkcreekfire.org.

TO: