

JARED POLIS
GOVERNOR



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D 2020 208

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Cameron Peak Fire in Larimer County

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution and the relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due the Cameron Peak Fire in Larimer County, enabling State agencies to coordinate, and making resources available for fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts.

I. Background and Purpose

The Governor is responsible for meeting the dangers to the State and people presented by disasters. C.R.S. § 24-33.5-704(1). The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act defines a disaster as “the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural cause or cause of human origin, including but not limited to fire.” C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3).

The Cameron Peak Fire started on August 13, 2020, in Larimer County on United States Forest Service Land fifteen miles south of Redfeather Lakes. On August 20, the fire had grown to 16,461 acres and was zero percent contained. On August 21, 2020, the Lewstone Fire started on private land in Larimer County, and the combination of these two fires greatly reduced local response capacity. As of August 21, 175 homes had been evacuated due to the Cameron Peak Fire. On September 6, the Cameron Peak Fire grew to 40,813 acres and approximately 5,500 residents were under mandatory evacuation.

At approximately 4:15 PM on September 6, 2020, I verbally declared a disaster emergency for the Cameron Peak Fire in Larimer County and activated the State of Colorado Emergency Operations Plan.

Because of the severity of the fire and additional private and State properties at risk, on September 6, 2020, at approximately 5:35 PM the Division of Fire Prevention and Control requested a federal Fire Management Assistance Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the Cameron Peak Fire. On September 6 at approximately 6:43 PM, the request for a Fire Management Assistance Grant was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Regional Administrator.

As of September 30, 2020, the Cameron Peak Fire burned 125,006 acres and was thirty percent contained and over 6,200 homes had been evacuated.

II. **Declarations and Directives**

- A. The Cameron Peak Fire and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of September 6, 2020, declaring a disaster emergency is hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if it were contained within this Executive Order.
- B. The State Emergency Operations Plan is hereby activated. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director or Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Management pursuant to the Emergency Support Function 5 Annex of the State Emergency Operations Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.
- C. Funds in the Emergency Fire Fund are hereby found to be insufficient to pay for the State fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts related to the Cameron Peak Fire. I encumber six million, seven hundred thirty-nine thousand, five hundred dollars (\$6,739,500) from the Disaster Emergency Fund, established in C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(2)(a), for costs associated with suppression resources related to the Cameron Peak Fire since September 1, 2020 and the State's fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts related to the Cameron Peak Fire since September 6, 2020.
- D. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-705.4(5), the Director of the Office of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate government agencies and non-profit organizations and execute awards, purchase orders, or other mechanisms to effect the allocation of the funds. The funds described in section II(C) above shall remain available for this purpose until thirty-six (36) months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the Disaster Emergency Fund.
- E. The Division of Fire Prevention and Control, via its fire billing practices, is authorized to coordinate applications for any funds available related to this disaster emergency. Specifically, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control is directed to seek reimbursement and make payments as needed to agencies providing assistance related to the Cameron Peak Fire.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from September 6, 2020, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II.C above shall remain available for the described purposes for thirty-six (36) months from the date of this Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and
the Executive Seal of the
State of Colorado, this fifth
day of October, 2020.

Jared Polis
Governor



Cameron Peak Fire

Unit Information

Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland
U.S. Forest Service
2150 Centre Avenue Building E
Fort Collins, CO 80526



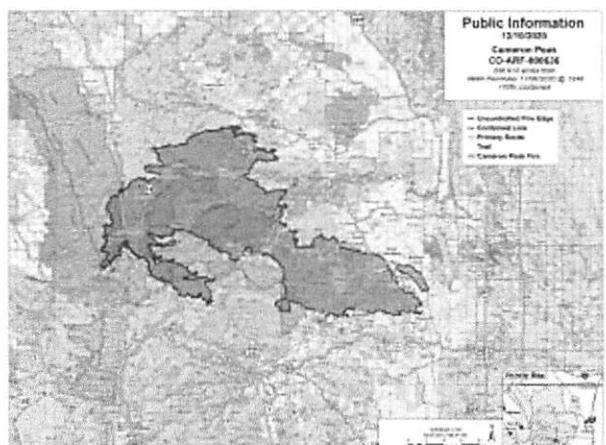
Incident Contact

Public Information Line
Email: 2020.cameronpeak@firenet.gov
Phone: 970-541-1008
Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Incident Overview

The Cameron Peak Fire was 100% contained as of December 2, 2020, and called controlled on January 12, 2021. On Sunday, December 13, 2020, command of the fire returned to the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland. Suppression repair work continues as conditions allow.

Cameron Peak Fire Narrative



(For a printable version of this summary that includes graphics, please click:

http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/photos/COARF/2020-08-14-0842-Cameron-Peak/related_files/pict20201111-154527-0.pdf (http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/photos/COARF/2020-08-14-0842-Cameron-Peak/related_files/pict20201111-154527-0.pdf)

(For a printable version of the Incident Management Team progression graphic, please click:

http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/photos/COARF/2020-08-14-0842-Cameron-Peak/related_files/pict20201111-154548-0.pdf (http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/photos/COARF/2020-08-14-0842-Cameron-Peak/related_files/pict20201111-154548-0.pdf)

Overview:

The Cameron Peak Fire was reported on Thursday, August 13 at approximately 1:48 PM. The fire was burning in steep, rugged terrain, approximately 25 miles east of Walden and 15 miles southwest of Red Feather Lakes near Cameron Pass.

The fire burned through an area of 208,913 acres on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests in Larimer and Jackson Counties and Rocky Mountain National Park.

The cause of the wildfire remains under investigation. Large scale and long duration evacuations took place throughout the fire.

During the time the Cameron Peak Fire was burning, there was another fire (East Troublesome) burning simultaneously to the west of the Cameron Peak Fire, on the west side of the Continental Divide. On October 22, the East Troublesome Fire spotted over the Continental Divide, and created what became known as the “Thompson Zone” of the East Troublesome Fire. This zone was managed by the Cameron Peak Fire Incident Management Team until November 9, upon which time command returned to the East Troublesome Incident Management Team.

On the Cameron Peak Fire, extreme temperatures, low humidity, rough terrain and gusty winds reaching over 70 miles per hour were just some of the elements that contributed to extreme fire behavior and rapid rates of spread. A major contributing factor to the large fire growth was the tremendous amount of beetle kill trees and the drought-stricken Ponderosa Pine, Engelmann Spruce and mixed conifer stands available as fuel.

The heavy concentration of standing bark beetle-killed snags, along with steep, loose terrain made it difficult to get firefighters safely into the fire for direct attack; however, this fire was always managed as a full suppression fire. Firefighters worked to protect homes and outbuildings using a combination of heavy equipment and fire personnel to build fire lines. Road systems were used as control lines where crews initiated firing operations to slow the fire spread. Air support was utilized in fire suppression efforts throughout the incident, but at times was limited due to conditions.

After 62 days of burning, on October 14, the Cameron Peak Fire became the largest recorded wildfire in Colorado's history, surpassing the Pine Gulch Fire that burned near Grand Junction in 2020.

On October 18, the Cameron Peak Fire became the first in Colorado history to burn more than 200,000 acres. Prior to 2002, there was never a fire larger than 100,000 acres in Colorado.

The Larimer County Damage Assessment Teams (DAT) completed assessments of all known structure damage caused by the Cameron Peak Fire on November 6. The Larimer County Sheriff's Office released the following:

A total of 469 structures were impacted by the fire as follows

- 461 structures destroyed (residential and outbuildings)
- 224 residential structures were destroyed and 4 sustained damage
- 220 outbuilding were destroyed and 4 sustained damage
- 17 business structures were impacted (Shambhala Mountain Center)
- 42 of the residential structures impacted were primary residences

Dates and locations of damage

- September 7 – Poudre Canyon south of Highway 14 near Archer's Poudre River Resort and the Monument Gulch area
- September 25 and 26 – Poudre Canyon between the Fish Hatchery and Rustic, the Manhattan Road area, and the Boy Scout Ranch Road area
- October 14 – Upper and Lower Buckhorn areas, Crystal Mountain, Bobcat Ridge, Buckskin Heights, Redstone Canyon, Storm Mountain, The Retreat, and Pingree Park

Approximately 30,000 acres or 9 percent of Rocky Mountain National Park was impacted by the Cameron Peak Fire, and both the Grand Zone and Thompson Zone of the East Troublesome Fire.

Over the duration of the Cameron Peak Fire, there have been 10 Incident Management Teams before transferring the fire back to the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland. Teams include six Type 2, three Type 1, and one Type 3.

Once the Cameron Peak Fire reached 100% containment on December 2, a significant amount of suppression repair work remained. Due to weather conditions, some of the work was delayed until the following spring.

Resources have traveled from over 46 states and Puerto Rico to work on the Cameron Peak Fire

Timeline of Major Events:

The Cameron Peak Fire was reported on Thursday, August 13, at approximately 1:48 PM.

Between September 4 and September 7, the fire grew over 78,000 acres in a 3-day period.

On the evening of September 8, 8-14 inches of snow fell and temporarily halted the growth of the Cameron Peak Fire at 102,596 acres. Authorities were hopeful the snow would help firefighters focus on problem areas. The moisture lasted for two days before temperatures began to warm up and dry out, bringing an increase in fire activity.

The next period of record-breaking critical growth was from October 13 through October 18. 70+ mile per hour winds drove the fire over 68,000 acres eastward during these 6 days.

- On October 14, after 62 days of burning, the Cameron Peak Fire became the largest recorded wildfire in Colorado's history, surpassing the Pine Gulch Fire that burned 139,007 acres near Grand Junction in 2020. The Cameron Peak Fire would measure at 164,140 acres by the end of the day.

- On October 18, the Cameron Peak Fire became the first in Colorado history to burn more than 200,000 acres.

On October 22, the East Troublesome Fire spotted into Rocky Mountain National Park, between the Continental Divide and Estes Park. Due to this threat, evacuations were put into place for Estes Park. This spot, which was called the Thompson Zone, was subsequently placed under the command of the Cameron Peak Fire Incident Management Team.

On October 24 and 25, a winter storm brought 8-18 inches of snow across the entire fire area. This season-slowng event helped firefighters increase containment.

On November 2, the Cameron Peak Fire grew to 208,913 acres.

On November 2, the Larimer County Sheriff's Office lifted all mandatory and all voluntary evacuations for the Cameron Peak Fire and the East Troublesome Fire.

On November 4, the containment was raised to 92% and would remain there for 24 days.

On November 6, the Larimer County Damage Assessment Teams (DAT) completed assessments of all known structure damage caused by the Cameron Peak Fire.

On November 9, the Thompson Zone of the East Troublesome Fire was transitioned back to the East Troublesome Fire team.

On November 28 the containment increased slightly to 94%. Containment continued to increase slowly over the next few days to 97% on the morning of December 2.

On the evening of December 2, the Cameron Peak Fire was declared 100% contained. This occurred 112 days after ignition on August 13.

On December 13, the Cameron Peak Fire was transferred back to the host unit, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland to be managed by a local Type 4 team.

Team History:

- The Type 2 Rocky Mountain Incident Management Blue Team assumed command of the fire on August 15.
- The NIMO Portland Type 1 Team and the Type 2 Rocky Mountain Incident Management Black Team assumed command on August 26.
- The Southwest Area Type 2 Incident Management Team 3 assumed command on September 12.
- The Northwest Area Type 2 Incident Management Team 6 assumed command on September 29.
- The Rocky Mountain Type 1 Incident Management Team assumed command on October 14.
- Pacific Northwest Type 1 Incident Management Team 2 assumed command on October 27.
- The Northwest Type 2 Incident Management Team 10 assumed command on November 9.
- The Southern Area Type 2 Incident Management Gold Team assumed command on November 22.
- A Type 3 Incident Management Team assumed command on December 5.

- A local Type 4 Team for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland assumed command on December 13.

Additional Facts

- Communities near the fire included Estes Park, Red Feather Lakes, Crystal Mountain, Storm Mountain/Lake, Rustic, Pingree Park, Buckhorn, Poudre Canyon, The Retreat, Glen Haven, Cedar Park, Colorado State University Mountain Campus, and other private housing, ranches, and camps
- 232 miles of suppression repair work is in progress to return impacted areas to pre-fire conditions
 - 108.6 miles of dozer line and hand line
 - 123.4 miles of road
- 317 additional areas used for staging, helicopter landing spots, safety zones, drop points, etc
- 549 water pumps were utilized across the fire area

Incident Information

Basic Information

Current as of	2/23/2021, 9:35:18 AM
Incident Type	Wildfire
Cause	Unknown, Under Investigation
Date of Origin	Thursday August 13th, 2020 approx. 01:48 PM
Location	Canyon Lakes Ranger District of the Roosevelt National Forests and surrounding Larimer County communities
Incident Commander	Type 4 local USFS Fire Incident Commanders
Incident Description	Wildfire
Coordinates	40.609 latitude, -105.879 longitude

Current Situation

Total 18

Personnel

Size 208,913 Acres

Percent of 100%

Perimeter

Contained

Estimated Saturday December 05th, 2020 approx. 12:00 AM

Containment

Date

Fuels Timber (Litter and Understory)

Involved Closed Timber Litter

Timber (Grass and Understory)

High elevation mixed conifer with moderate dead and down fuel loading, along with a high percentage of beetle-killed lodge pole.

Lower elevation grass fuels are dry in areas that lack snow cover. ERC values have declined but are expected to begin to trend back up slightly. They have settled into the 50 percentile range. A small area of smoldering organic soil has emerged east of Hourglass Reservoir. It might increase smoke production but is not a control threat at this time.

Significant Minimal

Events Smoldering

Outlook

Projected The primary focus of operations on the Cameron Peak Fire is now fuels reduction. There
Incident are still several weeks of work to be done northwest of the fire perimeter in Division D.

Activity Crews will work as long as weather allows, and some work may remain for the spring. The Suppression Group is still monitoring the smoldering fen north of the CSU campus; they have found no other areas of heat.

The administrative side of the Cameron Peak Fire is still very active; several overhead staff remain in place to work on finances, equipment management, public information, and planning.

- Remarks Cameron Peak acreage is 208,913 acres (estimated from MMA flight at 1248 on 11/06/2020). There has been no growth since and a new map will not be produced starting 12/04/2020.

The Canyon Lakes District of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests have many closures. USFS closure information can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/arp/alerts-notices/?aid=57718>

Portions of County Road (CR) 86 are currently closed for fuel reduction activities. Please observe all signage and respect closed areas. This is for the safety of the firefighters and the public. Additional information can be found here:
<https://www.larimer.org/roads/closures>