Rocky Mountain

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Rocky Mountain National Park
Fire Management Office
Estes Park, Colorado 80517
970-586-1264

Beaver Meadows #1 Prescribed Fire

Date

Late spring to early summer 2003, weather permitting

Location

Eastern end of Beaver Meadows, north of Bear Lake Road/Trail Ridge Road intersection

Size and Fuel Type

46 acres consisting of ponderosa pine, shrub and grass communities. Located between previously completed prescribed fire projects.

Project Goals

- Provide for public and personnel safety
- Reduce hazardous fuels accumulations
- Restore the ecological role of fire
- Protect values at risk by reducing the potential for high intensity wildland fire, providing for increased protection for the resources of Rocky Mountain National Park and its neighbors to the east

Burn Objectives

- Reduce total fuel load by 40-80%
- Limit mortality in over-story (>6" diameter) ponderosa pines to 5% within 5 years post-fire
- Generate 5% to 35% mortality in pole sized trees (>2.5" to< 6" diameter) within 5 years post-fire

Low intensity fire in ponderosa pine forest.

Fire History

Lightning–ignited fires have been an essential and natural part of Rocky Mountain ecosystems for thousands of years. Fire naturally thins the forest, recycles nutrients and releases seeds for new plant growth. The fire return cycle in ponderosa pine forests has been estimated to be between 20 to 35 years. Fire has not occurred in this area for more than 85 years.

Ignition specialist using a drip torch to ignite prescribed fire.

Prescription

Fire suppression and other land management practices have altered the natural fire cycles and created unhealthy forest conditions and an increased risk of a dangerous wildfire. Prescribed fire, ignited under predetermined environmental conditions, is the recommended treatment method for this area. The prescription ensures that the burn can be managed safely and that fuel reduction and ecosystem restoration objectives are met.

Smoke Management

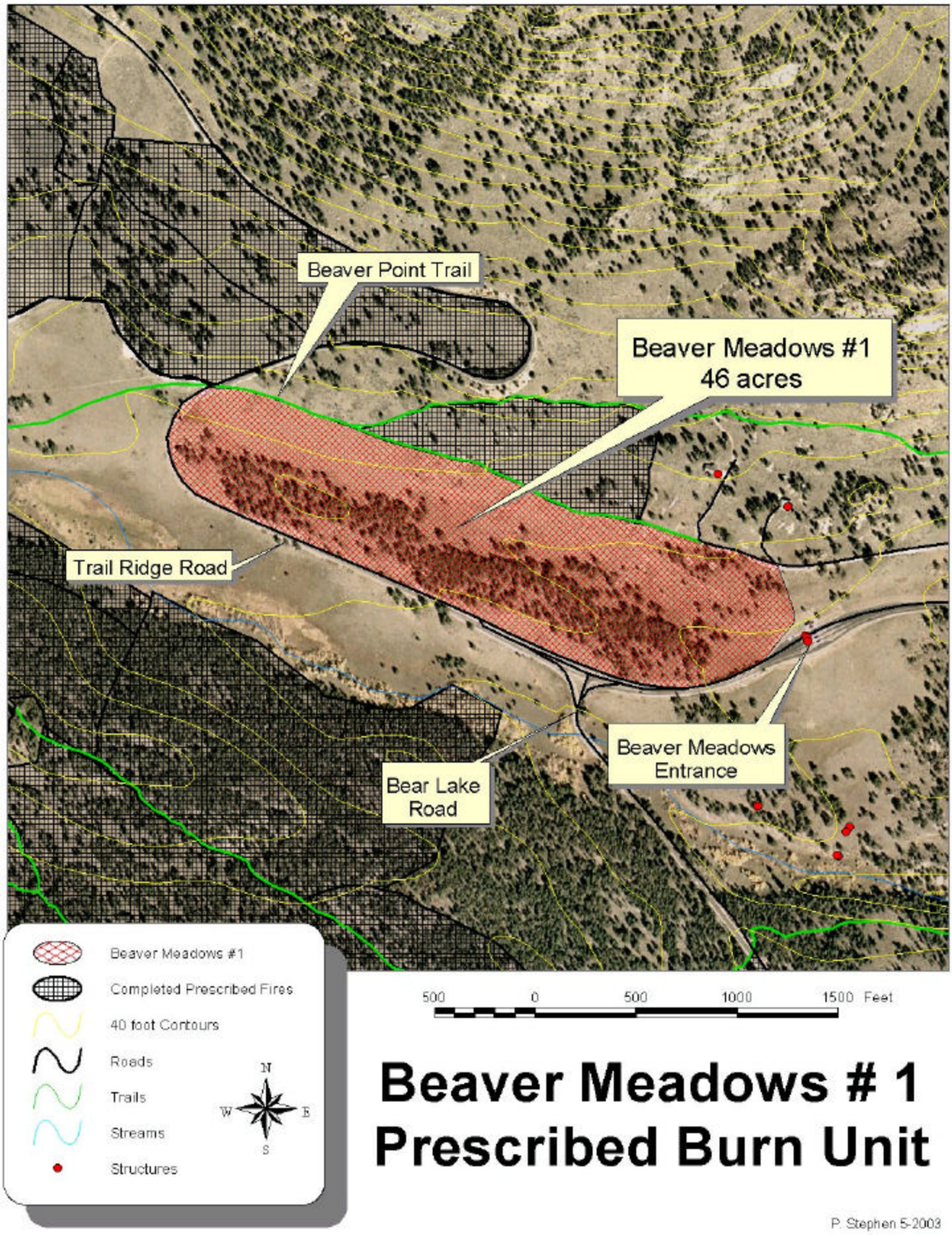
Smoke emissions will be managed in accordance with state air quality regulations. Smoke may be present for several days, especially during late evening and early morning hours. Smoke impacts on Trail Ridge Road and Bear Lake Road will be monitored, with park staff available to direct traffic if visibility is significantly reduced. No road closures are anticipated.

Safety

Public and firefighter safety is the highest priority in all fire management activities. An interagency team of 24 fire staff will be on hand to manage and monitor the fire. Safety factors, weather conditions, air quality and environmental regulations will be continually monitored.

Park visitors are requested not to stop along the roadway or enter the area while burning operations are being conducted. A viewing area will be designated with staff available to answer questions. The Beaver Point Trail will be closed during ignition and periods of active fire spread.

For more information please contact 970-586-1264 or 586-1206



Beaver Meadows # 1 Prescribed Burn Unit

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Rocky Mountain National Park
Wildland Fire Use
Prescribed Fire
Suppression
FIRE