



Aug. 23, 2011, 9 a.m.

Contact: Lynn Barclay, Public Information Officer, (970) 826-5096  
Recorded Information Line (970) 826-5108

## News Release

### Storms over Northwest Colorado keep fire crews busy

CRAIG, Colo. – About two dozen wildland fires occurred over the weekend beginning Friday afternoon. Lightning was the cause of all the fires except for one which was a vehicle fire. The majority of responses were on Bureau of Land Management land in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. There were four responses on private land in Moffat County, one response on the Routt National Forest and one call in Jackson County on private land.

The Box Elder and Forget Me Not fires, 20 miles southeast of Rangely in Rio Blanco County, are being managed for multiple objectives. Sitting one and a half miles apart, the two incidents are near a Shell oil and gas facility on BLM land. By allowing the fires to remove vegetation in that area it will benefit wildlife habitat and help protect the Shell facility. Natural barriers to the northwest and fuel breaks established by BLM to the east, west and north will aid in keeping the fires within a predetermined area. “We started working on the hazardous fuel breaks around the Shell facility in 2009,” said Zone Fire Management Officer Garner Harris. “This is a fire prone area and our fuel reduction work has aided in being prepared to manage fires in this area while protecting industry facilities and associated infrastructure.” Engine crews and a hand squad are on scene to take holding actions if it becomes necessary. Fire activity has been creeping through sagebrush with occasional torching of pinyon/juniper trees. The size is 21 acres.

The Sawmill Fire, 24 miles west of Maybell in Moffat County, is 86 acres and being managed for multiple objectives on BLM land.

All the incidents are contained except for the Sawmill, Box Elder and Forget Me Not fires.

The Chew Fire, in Moffat County, was the largest of the incidents at 50 acres on private land and is contained.

In addition to BLM, National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service engines, Moffat County Sheriff’s engines, Colorado State Forest Service, Maybell Fire Department, North Park Fire Rescue and a helicopter have responded to incidents over the weekend.

-End-