

# **Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory**

## **West Slope CO, Front Range CO, Southeast CO, and Southern Wyoming**

*Valid July 1<sup>st</sup> – July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026*



**Subject:** Critically dry fuel conditions are present across the West Slope of Colorado, High Country and Foothills of the Front Range of Colorado, Southeast Colorado and Southern Wyoming due to the ongoing drought and recent hot and dry weather, which has resulted in extreme fire behavior. Continued hot & dry weather will keep the potential for extreme fire behavior elevated until significant precipitation arrives.

**Discussion:** After an extremely dry winter with minimal snowpack, fuel moistures are well below normal, and much of the Geographic Area is under severe to exceptional drought. Several major wildfires are currently burning in the area: the Snyder Fire on the West Slope of Colorado has burned over 29,000 acres. The Aspen Acres Fire on the Southern Front Range of Colorado is over 28,000 acres and the Gold Mountain Fire in Southwest Colorado, has burned over 8,400 acres. High Elevations in Colorado are also seeing large fire growth with the Willow Fire burning over 1,200 acres at 11,000 foot elevation in Central Colorado. Extreme fire behavior has been observed marked by rapid rates of spread, 10,000 to 20,000 acre growth in a single burn period, active crown fire, and resistance to control. This is being driven by critically dry 1000-hour fuels, and drought-stressed brush and trees. The dry fuels and extreme fire behavior trend is predicted to continue until significant precipitation occurs over the area.

**Difference from Normal Conditions:** Fuel conditions across the Geographic Area are significantly drier and more volatile than normal for late-June. Prolonged heat, low humidity, and steady winds have rapidly dried out live and dead fuels, especially native grasses, trees/brush, and 1000-hour fuels. In most of Colorado and a good part of Southern Wyoming moisture levels are nearing or exceeding historic lows, triggering fire behavior seen only during the driest and most severe fire seasons.

**Concerns to Firefighters and the Public:** Dry fuels, predicted high wind events and rising temperatures are creating conditions for fast-moving, unpredictable wildfires. Firefighters face limited suppression options, while communities near wildland-urban areas are at heightened risk. Even routine activities can spark new ignitions. Extreme caution is critical as fire danger escalates.

### **Mitigation Measures:**

#### **Low Fuel Moistures (Live & Dead):**

- Monitor conditions closely; anticipate high resistance to control and intense fire behavior.
- Plan for longer operations and use indirect tactics as needed.

#### **Heavy Fuels & Sagebrush Consumption:**

- Be prepared for torching and spotting; increase lookouts and contingency lines.
- Avoid direct attack in volatile brush, especially on slopes.

#### **Drought-Stressed Areas:**

- Treat all vegetation as highly flammable; spotting distances may increase.
- Adjust escape routes and safety zones accordingly.

#### **Public Risk:**

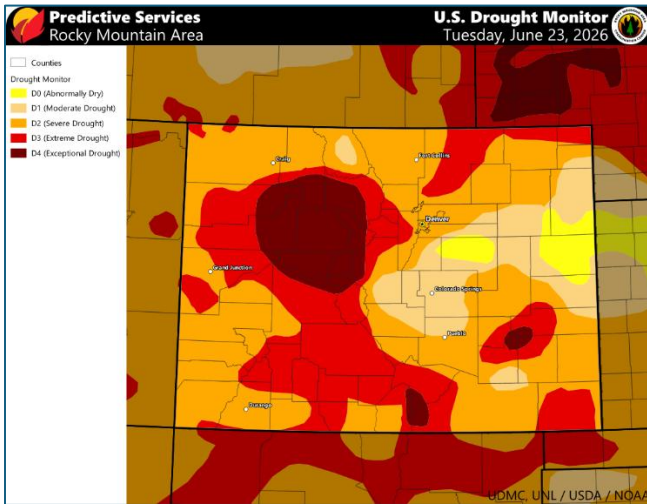
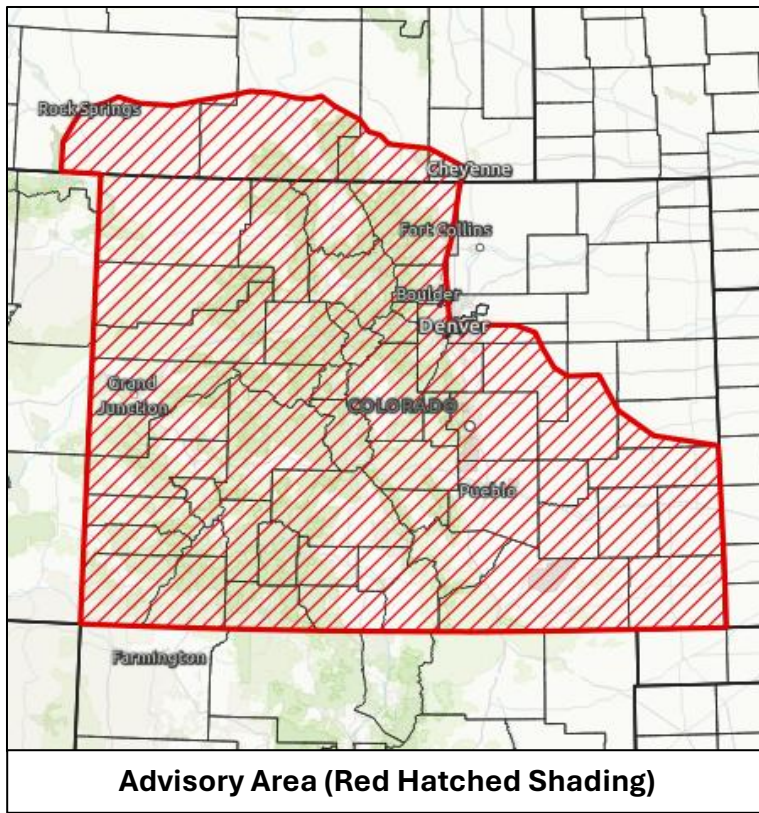
- Boost prevention messaging and patrol high-risk areas.
- Enforce fire restrictions, especially in WUI zones.

#### **Weather & Heat:**

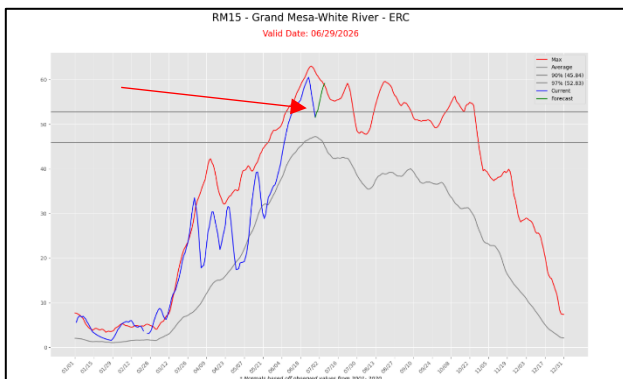
- Plan for extended shifts and heat exposure—rotate crews and hydrate often.
- Use updated forecasts to anticipate critical fire behavior periods.
- Plan for long burn periods that have lasted throughout the night with very poor RH recovery

**Area of Concern:** West Slope, High Country, Front Range and Southeast Colorado, and Southern Wyoming (see map on page 2)

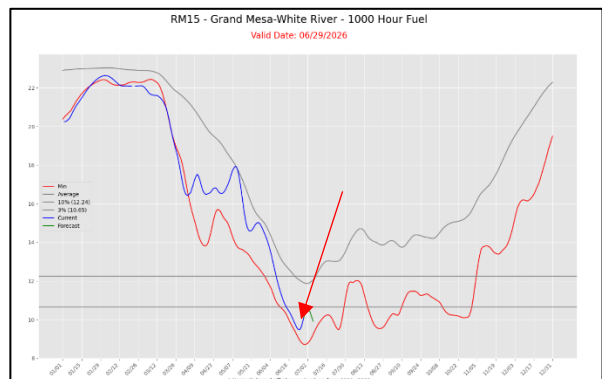
**Issued By:** Rocky Mountain GACC in coordination with State, Local and Federal Partners



Snyder Fire – 6/27/26



ERC's Grand Mesa, CO (Red Arrow shows current levels at 97% percentile)



1000 hr Fuels Grand Mesa, CO (Red Arrow shows fuels close to historic lows)