

## **...Wildfire in Colorado...where do you get your information...**

2015 was a quiet year for fires in Colorado. One factor has been the El Nino pattern that is more favorable for precipitation. Many times the fuels that grow when the rainfall is plentiful may create a fire threat when dryer conditions develop. As we go from an El Nino pattern to a possible La Nina pattern later this year we should be prepared for a more active fire year in 2016.

To assist in your preparation for fire...the National Weather Service provides a variety of fire weather forecast products. Twice a day in Colorado... fire weather planning forecasts are made from each weather service office serving the state. A Fire Weather Watch may be issued if in the next 12 to 48 hours the forecast includes gusty winds of 25 mph or greater...relative humidities of less than 15 percent for at least three hours, dry lightning, or a combination of weather and fuel conditions that may make large wildfires possible. A Red Flag Warning will be issued if these same critical fire conditions are forecast within the next 24 hours.

Both Fire Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings are issued in coordination with land management agencies. The fire weather spot program supports land management agencies for both prescribed burns and for wildfires. A fire weather spot forecast is a detailed forecast for an individual fire. For national type 2 or type 1 fires the National Weather Service will detail an IMET...incident meteorologist to a fire team to provide onsite weather support and detailed fire forecasts.

If you live in the urban interface there are a number of actions you can take to reduce your personal fire threat including reducing vegetation near the home and putting a fire resistant roof on your home. More information is available from your local fire department at <http://www.ready.gov/wildfires>. When a fire occurs, there may be years of increased flood threat on the burn scar, as a healthy forest can handle an inch to inch and a half of rain with no flood risk. Once the litter and vegetation is removed by fire...as little as a half inch of rain in a short period can cause serious and possibly life threatening flooding.

Colorado Flood Safety and Wildfire Awareness Week continues through this Saturday.