



Rocky Mountain National Park Fire Management: Volunteers in Fuels Management



The Shining Mountains Group of the Colorado Mountain Club displays the spirit of volunteerism at its brightest level. This group of dedicated volunteers, forty-nine strong, has contributed over 1,347 hours of labor working on fuels reduction projects in the park this year. Their dazzling efforts represent significant cost savings of \$22,271 for the park fire management budget and ultimately for federal taxpayers.

Reducing wildfire risk by reducing fuels along boundaries and near developed areas is a high priority for park fire management staff. "These volunteers have done an extraordinary job and they are a great bunch to work with," says Scott Beacham, fuels technician and volunteer crew supervisor.

Fire crews using chainsaws and hand tools will come through an area first, cutting and thinning the excess vegetation. The volunteers follow up with stacking the cut material into piles to dry out for burning at a later time. "They are the best darn stick stackers that money can't buy," joked Beacham.

Madeline Framson, who at the young age of 81 hikes up the steepest slopes just about as fast as any fire crewmember, spearheads the group. Framson recruits the fuels management volunteers and organizes the weekly workday activities. "I think it is important that we take every opportunity to give something back to this wonderful national park. At the same time, this fire prevention work is also helping to protect Estes Valley residents," stated Framson.

The Shining Mountains Group also assists with numerous other volunteer projects, such as trail maintenance and resource management duties, within Rocky Mountain National Park. The volunteers have been working on fuels reduction projects in the park since 2001. Contact Madeline Framson at 970-586-6623 for more information about the Colorado Mountain Club and fire prevention projects.