



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Gov. Hickenlooper stresses interagency cooperation to fight wildfires

**DENVER — Thursday, April 14, 2011** — Gov. John Hickenlooper today received the annual Colorado pre-season fire briefing from the Colorado State Forest Service and other state and federal agencies that provide wildfire preparedness and response.

“Colorado’s wildfire season has already begun and with extreme dry and warm conditions conducive to wildfire, we need to be prepared for an extended firefighting season,” said Hickenlooper. “We need all wildland fire responders to continue to work together to efficiently, effectively and safely manage wildfires and protect against loss of life and property.”

Gov. Hickenlooper credited the successful management of this season’s fires to planning and effective decision-making at each level of government, which has been supported by the state’s Wildfire Preparedness Fund that provides assistance to all of Colorado’s counties.

“Wildfires don’t respect boundaries, so it’s imperative that local, state and federal firefighters work together to manage wildfires in the most effective way possible,” said Hickenlooper. “The fact that no lives were lost during the Indian Gulch and Crystal fires is a testament to the preparation of the firefighters and to the relationships between the local, state and federal agencies responsible for managing wildfires.”

Hickenlooper, Jeff Jahnke, state forester and director of the Colorado State Forest Service, and Tony Dixon, deputy regional forester for Region 2 of the U.S. Forest Service, urged Coloradans to take action to prevent and mitigate the damaging effects of wildfires by being vigilant when recreating on public lands and by implementing FireWise practices on private lands. FireWise focuses on reducing wildfire threat to life and property, and creating safe access to subdivisions for firefighters.

Jahnke said windy conditions and an abundance of dry fuels, a dangerous combination that already has contributed to large fires this spring, are expected to continue throughout much of Colorado going into the summer.

“We encourage landowners to take the opportunity to do what they can to keep firefighters safe,” Jahnke said. “The Colorado State Forest Service can provide technical assistance to help Coloradans living in fire-prone areas make their properties more defensible in case of a wildfire. These simple steps will help protect homes and communities and increase safety of firefighters.”

On April 1, Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center Predictive Services indicated that above-normal temperatures and drier than average conditions are expected across Colorado through the month of June. Such conditions could result in higher than normal potential for large fires across southern Colorado early this summer; however, precipitation and spring green-up are expected to bring fire potential in northeast Colorado back into the average range by early May.

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