

## So, why can't we have a campfire?

Fires are not permitted in the Indian Peaks or James Peak Wilderness east of the Continental Divide ... WHY?



### **Danger**

Extremely dry forest fuel materials coupled with periodic high winds can lead to rapid spread of devastating fires. Sparks, incomplete dousing, and igniting tree roots or duff can all start wild fires.



### *Impact*

#### **Wood Removal**

Fallen wood provides essential habitat for insects and animals as well as nutrients to the forest as it decomposes. Trees at timberline (krummholz) rely on "deadwood" at their base to trap snow for moisture and insulation.



#### **Increased Foot Travel**

Foraging for wood and establishing a campfire generates added impact on the ground and vegetation, leaving a larger camping footprint.



#### **Soil Chemistry**

Ash changes the chemical composition of the soil and prevents forest floor bacteria and vegetation from repairing and replenishing nutrients.



## Help us protect the Wilderness Areas

We all love a campfire, but please, respect the fire regulations and protect the wilderness!

Please report illegal fires to the appropriate authority below.

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### **Indian Peaks Wilderness**

Boulder County Sheriff's Dispatch  
(303) 441-4444

### **James Peaks Wilderness**

Gilpin County Sheriff's Dispatch  
(303) 582-5511

### **Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest Interagency Wildfire Dispatch Center**

(970) 295-6800

*For a detailed map of fire restrictions,  
visit [indianpeakswilderness.org](http://indianpeakswilderness.org)*

Why Can't We Have a Campfire?



# What to do if you find an illegal campfire

If a smoldering fire has been abandoned, here's how to safely extinguish it.

- ✓ **ALWAYS check the scene** to verify your personal safety first!
- ⊘ **Do NOT cover the fire with dirt.** This can insulate the embers and ignite the duff!
- ✓ **Slowly drizzle water onto the embers** while stirring them. Continue until all parts have been thoroughly wetted, making a slurry of embers.
- ✓ **Carefully pour more water over the heated rocks** and wet the ground underneath them. Be careful, and wear eye protection! Hot rocks can burst when exposed to cold water.
- ✓ Once the fire has been extinguished successfully, make sure to **report to USFS** (see back panel for contact information).

# What the Duff?!

*How campfires take root and spread underground*



## 2 types of wild fire fuels

**Litter:** Highly flammable top layer of debris which can cause intense surface fire.

**Duff:** The underlayer, full of fungus and decomposing matter.

With the right moisture level and heat exacerbation, duff has the potential for smoldering combustion that can last for hours, and sometimes weeks or months.



The greatest duff accumulation occurs around the base of trees. At high altitudes, as in the Indian and James Peaks Wilderness, trees rely heavily on the duff layer at their base for vital nutrients.

If a fire ring is on a duff layer, the heat and embers can cause a fire to ignite below the surface, even after it appears to be extinguished. The duff layer can exceed 12" deep, creating a unique fire containment situation.

**Duff fires often lead to wild fires as the litter is ignited.**

**They are just as dangerous as surface fires!**