Cutting Torch Ignites Small Wildfire at Howelsen Hill
Construction Crews & City Staff Quickly Extinguish Flames With Snowmaking

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-May 13, 2021-A contracted construction crew was utilizing a cutting torch to remove the third lift tower of the Barrows chairlift when a spark ignited nearby dry grass at approximately 11:23am this morning, Thursday, May 13.

Contractors, Parks & Recreation staff, and Police Department personnel were able to swiftly decrease the fire with extinguishers and further control additional growth by charging the snowmaking lines and running hoses to the site. Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue arrived shortly after to fully contain the 250-square-foot scene.

"We are fortunate that only a small area of dry grass burned," said Parks & Recreation Director Angela Cosby. "I want to commend the fast action by crews onsite which made all the difference in knocking this down quickly."

The ability to charge and utilize the ski area's snowmaking system was critical to extinguishing and stopping the spread of the fire. Parks & Recreation and Howelsen Hill staff, David Good, Robbie Shine, Brad Setter and Matt Barnard were in the vicinity for other business and were able to react and bring the snowmaking system online within minutes.

Moving forward, the construction crew will be pre-wetting the area and keeping a charged hose on site prior to utilizing any cutting devise due to existing dry conditions. Additional precautionary measures will continue to be evaluated as the project moves ahead over the coming weeks.

"It's dry out there and doesn't take much to get a fire going as we've seen firsthand the past two days," commented Steamboat Springs Fire Chief Chuck Cerasoli. "I can't stress it enough, please be careful, remain vigilant and use extreme caution."

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