

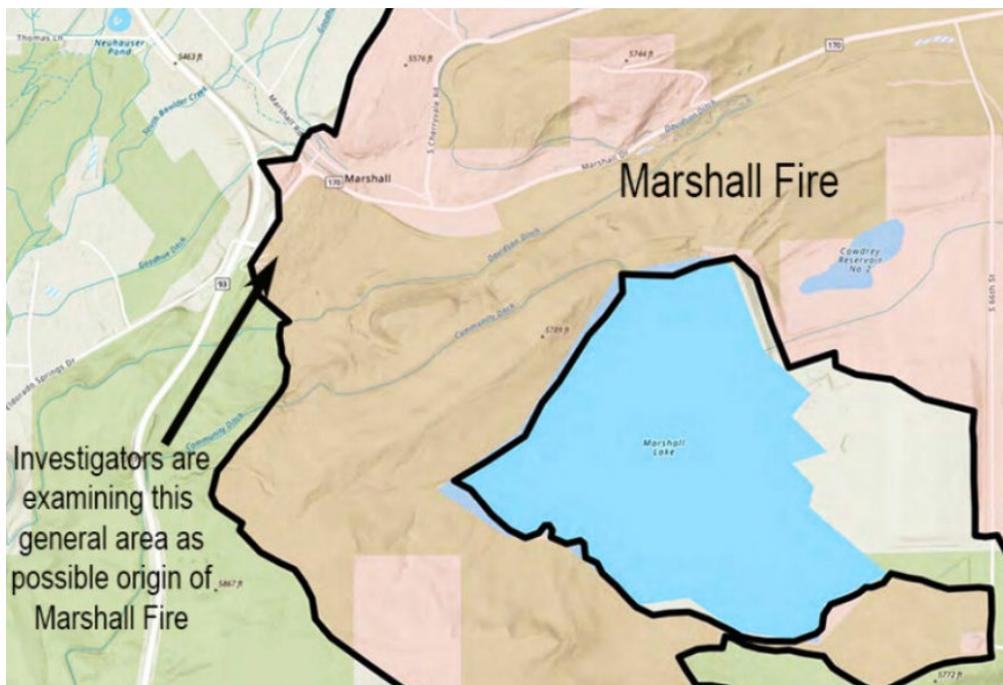
<https://wildfiretoday.com/2022/01/25/officials-are-investigating-smoldering-coal-mine-as-cause-of-marshall-fire/>



Officials are investigating smoldering coal mine as cause of Marshall Fire

Author Bill Gabbert Posted on January 25, 2022

The rapidly spreading blaze destroyed more than 1,000 homes northwest of Denver December 30, 2021.



Investigators are looking at an old coal mine as the possible cause of the Marshall Fire northwest of Denver, Colorado. Decades ago miners were extracting coal from an area near the location where the Marshall Fire started December 30, 2021. The remaining coal has been burning for years even though dozens of tons of fill were hauled in with the intention of stopping the burning, or at least insulating the fire from the surface. But these underground fires have a habit of creeping their way back to the surface and too often ignite a vegetation fire.

The old mine near the intersection of Highway 93 and Marshall Drive near the town of Marshall is one of 38 active underground coal fires in Colorado. In 2002 a burning underground coal seam ignited vegetation near Glenwood Springs, Colorado which burned 29 homes and more than 12,000 acres.

Wildfire Today had an [article in 2008](#) about an 8-year-old boy who suffered burns on his foot when he walked into an area of Golden Hills park in Colorado Springs, Colorado that was covered in coal dust. Left over from coal mining operations about 80 years earlier, the dust was on fire, smoldering, and it melted the boy's plastic shoe and gave him second degree burns. If the boy had not "discovered" the fire, it would have spread into nearby vegetation. The cause of the fire was unknown.

Pushed by winds gusting at 60 to 100 mph, the Marshall Fire spread rapidly last month as it destroyed more than 1,000 homes. Most were in the city of Louisville and the town of Superior.

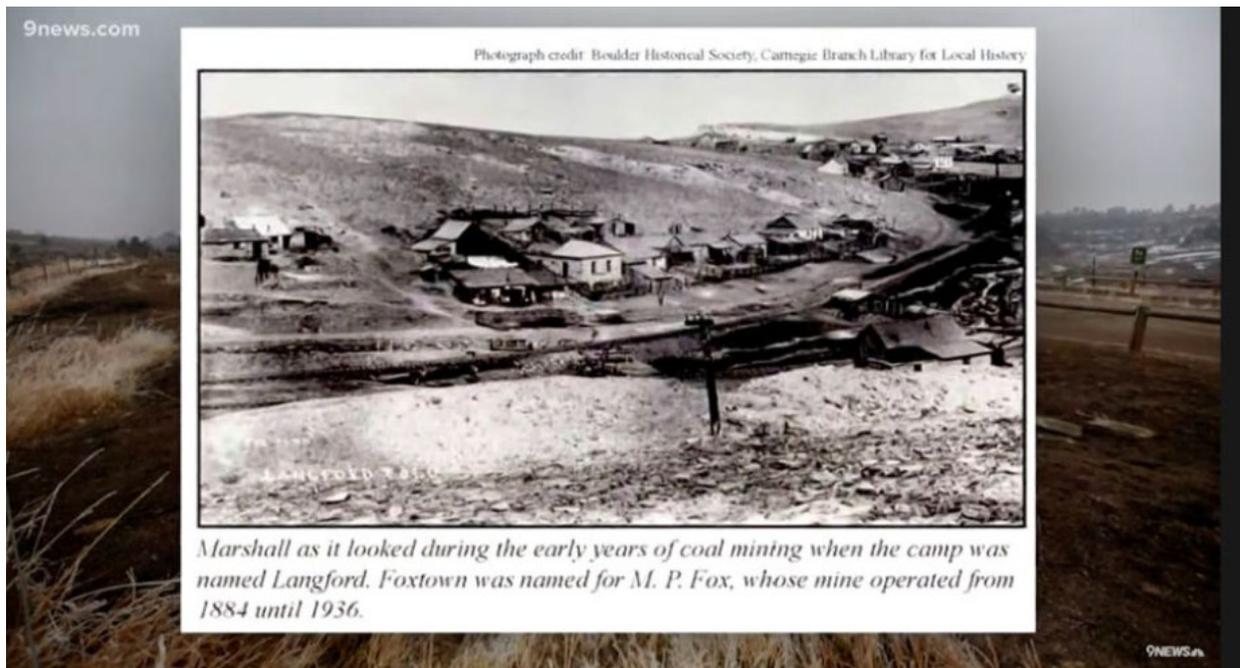
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Coal underground may have been burning for 150 years near where the Marshall Fire started northwest of Denver

Author [Bill Gabbert](#) Posted on [January 26, 2022](#)



A television station in Denver, 9News, has found that in the general area where investigators are narrowing down the origin and cause of the Marshall Fire northwest of Denver an underground coal seam has been burning since the 1870s.

In December, 2005 after a portion of the burning seam emerged on the surface and started a vegetation fire the Office of Surface Mining advised the City of Boulder, which owns the land, “It would be prudent for the City of Boulder to remove any vegetation from surface cracks, as well as begin a long term maintenance and monitoring program for the area.” In 2005 the spread of the fire was stopped quickly.

The City hauled in 275 tons of gravel with the intention of least insulating the fire from the surface. But these underground fires have a habit of creeping their way back up and too often ignite fires. They are next to impossible to extinguish.

9News reported that the M. P. Fox mine in the area operated from 1884 until 1936.

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The 9News video below has more details.

<https://youtu.be/AtVgWeLhkBo>