



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

July 2008



Owl Mountain North Analysis Finding of No Significant Impact

Parks Ranger District

**MEDICINE BOW-ROUTT NATIONAL FORESTS &
THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLAND**

Jackson County, Colorado

**Township 5 North, Range 76 West
Township 6 North, Ranges 76, 77, & 78 West**

**Responsible Official: Michael A. Wright
District Ranger**

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment prepared for the Owl Mountain North Analysis Area. My determination on whether the proposed action may have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment is based on consideration of the following:

(a) Context. The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. The project area is limited in size and the activities limited in duration. Effects are local in nature and are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources. Both short-term and long-term effects of the proposal have been considered.

(b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. The following are considered in evaluation intensity (40 CFR 1508.27):

- (1) **Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:** Both beneficial and adverse effects have been taken into consideration when making a determination of significance. While there will be beneficial effects, this action does not rely on those effects to balance potential significant adverse environmental effects.
- (2) **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety:** The proposed project will have positive impacts to recreation, including fewer hazard trees in campsites, picnic areas, and trails. Wind throw and fuel loading associated with beetle-killed trees will be reduced.
- (3) **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:** The project area does not contain any unique characteristics that will be significantly impacted by the project. Cultural resources will be protected (EA, p.16). The project does not occupy or damage wetlands (EA, p.22). There are no treatments proposed in roadless areas (EA, p.20). The Never Summer Wilderness will not be adversely affected by the proposal (EA, p.20).
- (4) **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:** The effects of the proposed alternative on the various resources is not considered to be highly controversial by professionals, specialists, and scientists from associated fields of forestry, wildlife biology, fisheries, and hydrology, etc. I do not believe that there is significant controversy over the effects of this project.
- (5) **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment is highly uncertain or involves unique or unknown risks:** Scoping did not identify highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. The technical analyses conducted for determinations of the impacts to the resources are supportable with the use of accepted techniques, reliable data, and professional judgment. Therefore, I conclude that there are no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks.

- (6) **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:** The Owl Mountain North Project represents a site-specific project that does not set a precedence for future actions or present a decision in principle about future considerations. Any proposed future project must be evaluated on its own merits and effects. The activities are in accordance with the best available science we have to manage beetle epidemics.
- (7) **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.** There are no significant cumulative effects on the environment, either when combined with the effects created by past and concurrent projects, or when combined with the effects from natural changes taking place in the environment or from reasonably foreseeable future projects of this type. Refer to Environmental Impacts section of the EA (pp. 12-24).
- (8) **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:** A cultural resource inventory has been completed in the area, and all known cultural resources will be protected (EA, p.16).
- (9) **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973:** This project would not adversely affect endangered or threatened species or their habitat. Refer to Threatened and Endangered Species portion of Environmental Impacts section of the EA (pp. 23).
- (10) **Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment:** This action complies with other Federal, State and local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

After considering the environmental effects described in the Owl Mountain North Analysis Environmental Assessment and the entirety of the Project Planning Record, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

/s/ Michael A. Wright

July 21, 2008

MICHAEL A. WRIGHT
District Ranger

Date

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