

# Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland



*Lost Lakes Peak*



## Current Issues

### Yampa River Basin Water Rights

The Yampa River Basin is one of the only major river basins in Colorado where water rights are not over-appropriated. The Yampa River headwaters are mostly on the Routt National Forest, which is receiving various applications for water rights and diversions. Laws and regulations require that the Forest Service minimize damage to the environment and maintain the ecological functions of streams and rivers for wildlife habitat, flood control, and recreation. The forest is working with local governments and other stakeholders to ensure that streams and rivers are protected. Other water issues include the challenges in protecting and restoring watersheds if large wildland fires resulting from fuels build-up following beetle epidemics affect their function. The forest will continue working to protect rivers and streams amidst new proposals and changes in forest conditions.

### Colorado Roadless Rule and the Wildland Urban Interface

More than 100,000 acres of wildland-urban interface are in roadless areas on the forest. Most of these acres are in need of fuel reduction treatments to help create fuel breaks between public and private lands, especially in light of the bark beetle epidemic and increased catastrophic wildland fire hazard. The proposed Colorado Roadless Rule allows entry into those areas for hazardous fuel removal. Public comments indicate that some groups and individuals feel the rule's wording is too vague, and they would like changes. Until this proposal or some other proposal becomes the new rule, the forest will not be removing hazardous fuels from these wildland-urban interface areas.

### Threatened and Endangered and Petitioned Species

The Thunder Basin National Grassland provides habitat for a number of threatened and endangered species and species that have been petitioned for listing. These include the currently listed black-footed ferret, Ute's ladies tresses, and blowout penstemon, and the greater sage grouse and black-tailed prairie dog that have been petitioned for listing. The two petitioned species are currently undergoing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service status reviews. If these species are determined to be warranted

## Headquarters

Forest Supervisor: Mary Peterson  
Deputy Forest Supervisor: Phil Cruz  
2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, Wyoming 82070  
307-745-2300

## Ranger Districts

### Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District

District Ranger: Steve Best  
South Highway 130, PO Box 249  
Saratoga, Wyoming 82331  
307-326-5258

### Douglas Ranger District

District Ranger: Bob Sprentall  
Deputy District Ranger: Misty Hays  
2250 East Richards Street  
Douglas, Wyoming 82633  
307-358-4690

### Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District

District Ranger: Jamie Kingsbury  
925 Weiss Drive  
Steamboat Springs, Colorado 80487  
970-870-2299

### Laramie Ranger District

District Ranger: Larry Sandoval  
2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, Wyoming 82070  
307-745-2300

### Parks Ranger District

District Ranger: Mike Wright  
100 Main Street, PO Box 158  
Walden, Colorado 80480  
970-723-2700

### Yampa Ranger District

District Ranger: Oscar Martinez  
300 Roselawn Avenue, PO Box 7  
Yampa, Colorado 80483  
970-638-4516

for listing, major impacts to national grassland management will occur, including impacts to existing and future mineral development and livestock grazing.

**Wind Energy**

The forest received an application for wind energy site testing and feasibility determination for data collection. The forest has some of the highest potential for private-sector development of solar and wind energy resources, as new transmission line construction has increased access to the grid across the state. Currently, the Forest Service does not have direction and guidance specific to wind energy development on National Forest System lands. Proposed directives (Federal Register September 24, 2007) would ensure consistent and adequate analyses for evaluating wind

energy proposals and applications. Concerns for wind farms in mountainous terrain include visual quality objectives; soil/geology factors; presence of significant cultural resources; federally listed fish, wildlife, or rare plant habitat; and bird and bat migration routes. The forest is currently a cooperating agency on the Choke Cherry and Sierra Madre project on Bureau of Land Management lands. The proposed action for this project would place 1,000 turbines on 98,000 acres. The forest has received an application for a 60-meter anemometer to be placed in the Pole Mountain area. The anemometer would be used to measure windspeed over a one- to two-year period. The data would be used in designing potential wind farms.

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Forest Size	Total land area is 3,234,331 acres within the following units: Medicine Bow National Forest – 1,403,894 acres (Wyoming) Routt National Forest – 1,247,366 acres (Colorado) Thunder Basin National Grassland – 583,071 acres (Wyoming)		
Number of Employees - Permanent	194		
Number of Employees - Seasonal	144		
Average Annual Budget	\$18,038,000		
Elevations	Lowest – 3,600 feet above sea level Highest – 12,940 feet above sea level		
Wilderness Areas	Encampment Flat Tops Huston Park Mt. Zirkel	Neota Never Summer Platte River Rawah	Sarvis Creek Savage Run
Wild and Scenic Rivers	None		
National Scenic or Historic Trails	Continental Divide National Scenic Trail		
National Recreation Areas	None		
Scenic Byways	Flat Tops Trail Scenic Byway Snowy Range Scenic Byway		
Outfitter Guides	132 outfitter guides		
Grazing	410 active allotments on 3,659,496 acres 371 term grazing permits		

Forest Management and Timber	Timber Volume Sold in fiscal year 2008 – 100,204 ccf Forest Vegetation Improved in fiscal year 2008 – 1,171 acres
Hazardous Fuels Reduction Treatments	9,225 acres in fiscal year 2008
Unique Features or Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently five large world-class coal mines operate on the Thunder Basin National Grassland, producing over 250 million tons of coal annually and occupying some 44,000 acres of Forest Service-administered lands through active mining, permitted areas, and reclamation.</li><li>• Weather Modification Incorporated, along with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, the Desert Research Institute, and the University of Wyoming, are conducting a scientific research project in the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Snowy Range to determine if snowpack water yield can be increased economically without adverse environmental effects. Wyoming Water Development Commission administers this site-specific winter cloud seeding pilot research project for the State of Wyoming, and the venture has international attention.</li><li>• The Forest Service is taking the lead in utilizing renewable energy. The Brush Creek-Hayden and Yampa ranger districts are part of a handful of places in Region 2 where the Forest Service is installing vertical axis wind turbines to help provide energy to offices and to feed it back to the grid if more is produced than needed.</li><li>• High up Buffalo Pass, north of Steamboat Springs, sit components that supply air quality data to the National Atmospheric Deposition Program at the University of Illinois. Since 1984, forest employees have visited the site weekly – even in the dead of winter – to collect samples and data measuring air quality. The studies measure trends and pollutant concentrations. Data collected from the site was used to certify impairment of the air shed over the Mt. Zirkel Wilderness (Class I) in the early 1990s.</li><li>• The forest is using a predictive model to determine high probability areas for pre-historic sites. By plugging in various factors within a project area, such as proximity to water, slope, and source site, the model predicts where prehistoric sites are likely to be found. Archaeologists then survey the areas to determine if sites exist. The model eliminates the need for acre-by-acre, on-the-ground surveys to locate pre-historic sites before projects, such as timber sales, can be implemented, reducing costs and project implementation delays.</li></ul>
Web Address	<a href="http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/mbr/">http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/mbr/</a>