



MEDICINE BOW-ROUTT
**National
Forests**



THUNDER BASIN
**National
Grassland**

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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ABOUT THE MEDICINE BOW-ROUTT NATIONAL FORESTS AND THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLAND (MBRTB)

The Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests were established as “Forest Reserves” in the early 20th Century by President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1995 these national forests were administratively combined with the Thunder Basin National Grassland.

Today the MBRTB includes almost 2.9 million acres of National Forest System lands managed for multiple uses and public enjoyment. These units provide a diverse mix of wildlife habitat, timber, livestock forage, vast mineral resources, and a vital source of water for irrigation and domestic use. Additionally, they offer diverse, year-round outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests extend from north central Colorado to central Wyoming. The National Forests encompass portions of many mountain ranges, including Gore Range, Flat Tops, Parks Range, Elkhead Mountains, Medicine Bow Mountains, Sierra Madre Range, and Laramie Range. The topography varies greatly with elevations ranging from 5,500 to 12,940 feet. The climate ranges from semiarid at low elevations to colder and less arid in the high country.



The Thunder Basin National Grassland is located in northeastern Wyoming in the Powder River Basin between the Big Horn Mountains and the Black Hills. Elevation on the National Grassland ranges from 3,600 to 5,200 feet, and the climate is semi-arid.

The MBRTB has six offices, one for each district. The Supervisor’s Office is in Laramie and is co-located with the Laramie Ranger District. The unit also has offices in Douglas and Saratoga, Wyo., as well as Steamboat Springs, Walden and Yampa, Colo. Many on-the-ground activities occur on the ranger districts, including trail construction and maintenance, operation of campgrounds, and management of vegetation and wildlife habitat.



ACREAGE	AT A GLANCE
Medicine Bow National Forest 1,096,885	6,085 Miles of Open Road
Thunder Basin National Grassland 547,499	2,351 Miles of Trail
Routt National Forest 1,125,558	56 Campgrounds
Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest (managed by Parks Ranger District) 129,325	31 Fee Day Use Sites
Total: 2,899,147	183 Non-fee Day Use Sites
ELEVATION	WILDERNESS ACRES
Highest Elevation (CO) Mount Richtohofen - 12,940 feet	Encampment River - 10,1124
Highest Elevation (WY) Medicine Bow Peak - 12,013 feet	Flat Tops - 38,290
Lowest Elevation (CO) Elk River - 6,750 feet	Huston Park - 30,588
Lowest Elevation (WY) Thunder Basin NG - 3,600 feet	Mount Zirkel - 159,935
	Neota - 267
	Never Summer - 6,659
	Platte River - 23,492
	Rawah - 1,462
	Sarvis Creek - 44,549
	Savage Run - 14,927

PROGRAM OF WORK, FY2022

USDA STRATEGIC GOALS (FY 2022 - 2026)

1. Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities
2. Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous
3. Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers
4. Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food
5. Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities
6. Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA

FOREST SERVICE STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Sustain our Nation's Forests and Grasslands working Environment
2. Deliver Benefits to the Public
3. Apply Knowledge Globally
4. Excel as a High-Performing Agency

FOREST SERVICE NATIONAL PRIORITIES

1. Controlling the COVID-19 Pandemic
2. Providing Economic Relief
3. Tackling Climate Change
4. Advancing Racial Equity
5. Improving Our Workforce and Work Environment

MBRTB PRIORITIES

- Manage and respond to wildfires on our Forest and across the nation.
- Implement the Joint Chiefs' Valleys and Headwaters Landscape Restoration Partnership
- Continue implementing the Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA)
- Execute our Disaster Recovery projects.
- Meet our FY22 goals for both fuels treatments (10,155 acres) and 53,000 ccf of timber sold.
- Refine and finalize the Sustainable Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- Complete GAOA funded projects and develop effective proposals for the final year of GAOA submissions.
- Implement up to date COVID mitigation measures to reduce transmission of the virus in our workplace and communities.
- Support delivery of This Is Who We are second round of engagement sessions by supporting ambassadors and creating time for delivery and participation in engagement sessions.

Rocky Mountain Regional Priorities

Resilient Landscapes
Improving Recreation Opportunities
Workforce Enhancement
Continuing to PIVOT



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Timber Management

The MBRTB worked with the Wyoming Department of Forestry to modify the Forest Wide Vegetation Management and Restoration agreement adding approximately 2.6 million dollars to fund a second Wyoming GNA forester, whose focus will be disaster recovery and Joint Chiefs work. One Joint Chief's Project, the Sandstone North GNA contract, is all service work that has the potential to create future volume through the sale of logs decks. The Rob Roy GNA will further fuels reduction work in the Rob Roy Reservoir area.

Similar efforts occurred in Colorado in tandem with the Colorado State Forest Service on the Mining Claim, Argentine, Owl Mountain, and Copper GNAs. Colorado State Forestry also aided in establishing a GNA sale for the removal of timber from the Steamboat ski area expansion.

- Timber Sales Offered: 45,055 ccf
- Timber Sales Sold: 42,329 ccf
- Fuelwood Permits: 4,207 ccf

The unit exhibited the breaking down of "silos" when Parks, Yampa, and SO personnel aided efforts on the Douglas RD to complete and award the Gateway West Powerline settlement sale for the corridor clearing of the new powerline. The Routt NF completed the Argentine and the Lawson Creek CEs for small salvage sales; additional NEPA is planned for FY 23 to expand treatment opportunities. In addition, there is a review of resource issues to determine if further mitigations will allow us to expand vegetation management treatments in the form of timber sales, fuels reduction projects, and implementation of wildlife enhancement. We will expand this holistic use of resources in order to potentially increase future timber yields.



Rangelands

MBRTB staff partnered with nine County Weed and Pests to accomplish treatments of noxious weeds across the Forests and Grassland. The MBRTB entered into additional partnerships with five County Conservation Districts to accomplish rangeland monitoring, water system development, prairie dog mapping and control, and wildlife friendly fencing.

Grassland Plan Amendment implementation accomplished approximately 2,000 acres of plague mitigation, started prairie dog control treatments, and completed priority colony mapping. Staff continue to work with Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association (TBGPEA), grazing associations, and the prairie dog working group to accomplish this.

Partnering with TBGPEA allowed for continued research into soil characteristics that may be correlated with prairie dog occupancy. This research was presented at the Range Futuring meeting in Salt Lake City as technology that will be available in just a few years and applicable to all kinds of rangeland monitoring across the Agency.

Virtual fence research project on Thunder Basin National Grassland was started in May and will continue for several years. The project continued on the Park District with a focus on grazing in wildfire-impacted areas.

Laramie District hosted a range employee from Wyoming Department of Agriculture for summer work.

An assessment of range fences and other infrastructure was completed in the Mullen Fire area. Staff is working with Wyoming Department of Agriculture and Wyoming Conservation districts to begin fence replacement in 2023 in both Colorado and Wyoming.

With numerous partners, 6,289 acres of cheatgrass treatment was completed in the Mullen and Badger Creek burn areas.

Law Enforcement & Investigations

In the past year, LE&I has increased Day Use Fee compliance from 30% to ~90% compliance. LE&I officers' credit this surge to the increase in interactions that have enabled the officers to answer any questions or concerns the public has had. Some of the key efforts noted by officers were their ability to further educate the public on topics such as Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) and Over Snow Vehicle (OSV) compliance checks, unauthorized off-road vehicle uses investigations, unattended campfires, and enforcement of road closures.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Recreation & Special Uses Statistics

- Recreation Sites
 - Campgrounds: 53 (MB – 29; Routt – 24)
 - Rental Cabins: 13 (MB-11; Routt-2)
 - Day Use Sites: 45 (MB-30; Routt – 14; TB-1)
 - Trailheads: 153 (MB-74; Routt-79)
 - Trails - 2351 (MB – 1013; Routt – 1338; TB – 0)
 - Includes winter trails, as well as motorized/non-motorized
 - Ski Areas: 2 (MB – 1; Routt – 1)
- Visitation Information
 - Annual Visits - 2,604,000
 - Medicine Bow/TB - 658,000
 - Routt - 1,946,000
 - Average Total Spending by Party
 - Medicine Bow - \$213
 - Routt - \$777
- Recreation Special Use Permits: MB 192; Routt 99; TB 10
- Christmas Tree Permits Sold: 5582, Total Revenue \$54,246
 - 64 Every Kid Outdoors Permits given
- Recreation Partnerships: Colorado State Parks, Wyoming State Parks, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, Colorado Mountain Club, Wyoming Conservation Corps, National Forest Foundation, Yampatika, Common Outdoor Ground, Wyoming Pathways, Medicine Bow Nordic

Volunteer Events

- National Public Lands Day**
- Pole Mountain Work
 - Laramie Ranger District Staff partnered with the University of Wyoming to make improvements at Tie City and Yellow Pine Campgrounds.
 - East Iron Creek Reservoir
 - Douglas Ranger District Staff and members of the public installed a new dock, walkway, trail, kiosks and picnic area near Upton, Wyo.

- Common Outdoor Grounds Events**
- Vedauwoo Clean-Up Days
 - Lake Owen Work Day and Reopening

- Wet Meadows Project**
- With partners and volunteers, Hahns Peak/Bears Ears staff built rock structures known as Zuni bowls to improve riparian zones in California Park.

- Burgess Creek Cutthroat Reintroduction**
- With partners and volunteers, the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District began a three-year project to reintroduce thousands of native Colorado River Cutthroat Trout at the base of Steamboat Ski Area.

Events and Outreach

LaVA Monitoring Trip | Class and Library Presentations
Conference Attendance | Job Fair Presentations
Farmers Markets Information Booths | Parades

Historical and Cultural Resources

	MBRTB	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Recorded Cultural Resources	10,151	2,421	2,852	4,878
Historic Sites Recorded	3,620	47%	43%	10%
Prehistoric Sites Recorded	2,688	13%	35%	52%
Multi-Component Sites Recorded	352	28%	13%	59%
Unknown sites needing further info in GIS	3,462	8%	9%	83%
Sites Eligible for National Register	2,723	880	566	1,277
Sites Listed on National Register	19	12	5	2
Sites Found in 2022	107	26	81	0
Total Sites on Forest	10,151			
Total Acres Surveyed 2022	39,926	29,69	9,575	655
Total Acres Surveyed on Forest	1,575,809	6		



Transportation System

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Miles of Road (ML 2-5)	1,782	923	1,744
Closed to Motorized Use (ML 1))	517	650	326

Lands and Minerals

<i>Coal Mines</i>	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Active	0	0	3
Yearly Production (million tons)	0	0	144
<i>Lands/Surveying</i>	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Exchange Cases Pending	5	0	0
Purchases Pending	0	0	0
Acquisitions Complete	0	0	0
<i>Non-Recreation Special Uses</i>	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Issued	11	11	16
Active	439	343	263
Pending	30+	4	3
<i>Oil and Gas</i>	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Applications for Permit	0	0	0
Active Wells	0	3	414

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Air, Aquatics, Botany, Fisheries, Soils, Watershed and Wildlife

Watershed scale restoration continued in the California Park/Headwaters Elkhead Creek priority watershed. This multi-faceted project includes activities to improve stream, riparian, and upland conditions which benefits overall watershed and forest health, resiliency to climate change, and multiple USDA Forest Service R2 sensitive species. Partners include over a dozen Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations.

Central Zone programs collaborated with Wyoming Game and Fish to implement beaver dam analogs (BDAs) along Fall Creek to support Boreal Toad breeding habitat. The team installed 10 BDAs and collected and hand-planted 200 willow stakes.

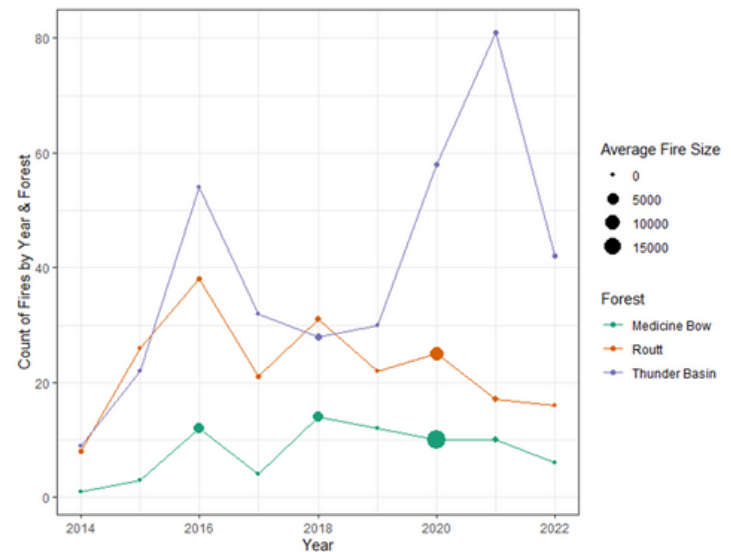
With volunteers and partners, 403 acres of shrub planting took place in the Mullen Fire scar. Restoration took place in elk, mule deer and bighorn sheep winter ranges and mule deer migration corridor.

On the Brush Creek-Hayden District, 20 user-created motorized trails were decommissioned in big game winter ranges, birthing areas, riparian areas, and wetlands. Restoration re-established native habitats over 7 miles and 30 acres.

The Douglas Ranger District conducted inventory or project clearance surveys for 12 Forest Service sensitive species including raptors, bats, Mountain Plovers, sage grouse, burrowing owls, swift fox, and northern goshawks.



Fire and Fuels



2014- 2022 Averages (Depicted in Chart Above)

- Medicine Bow: 3972 acres / 7.2 fires per year
- Routt: 1162 acres / 20.4 fires per year
- Thunder Basin: 175 acres / 35.6 fires per year

2022 Fires Statistics

- Fire Season 6/1-10/31
- 32 fires
- 1169 acres on USFS Ownership
- 1492 acres for mixed ownership

2022 Expenditures (Salaries not include):

- WFPR > \$459,744
- NFHF > \$1,040,806

Treatment

- Mechanical (8,510 acres)
 - MB – 7,537 ; RNF – 297 ; TBNG – 676
- RX fire (4,045 acres)
 - MB – 2,384 ; RNF – 523 ; TBNG – 1,138
- Grazing (2,003 acres)
 - MB – 0 ; RNF – 0 ; TBNG – 2,003
- Total treatments: 14,559 acres

Additional Efforts

- Contributed to Disaster Recovery work from the large fires on the unit in 2020
- Assisted with Hazardous Fuels reduction on the Valley and Headwaters Restoration Joint Chiefs Projects

Safety

- 1,484,786 miles driven
- 5063 hours of equipment operation
- As of 11/30/2022 we have recorded 9 recorded motor vehicle incidents that are (Chargeable) Vehicle Repair Cost equal or greater than \$1500 * Reporting Threshold for Department of Labor Vehicle Accident Statistics

Vicinity Map for Medicine Bow - Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland

