



# NEWS RELEASE

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

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### **Forest Service seeks input on North WUI Fuels Reduction and Watershed Protection Project**

(Laramie, Wyo. November 23, 2010) – The Forest Service announces plans to protect private property, structures, and municipal watersheds in the Snowy Range Mountains with the release of the North Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels Reduction and Watershed Protection Project. The North WUI project, which is located approximately 30 miles southwest and northwest of Laramie, Wyoming, is the latest in a series of projects the Forest Service has proposed to reduce fuel loads and the risk of catastrophic fires adjacent to private lands, special use permit areas, and municipal watersheds on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests. These projects are in response to a mountain pine beetle epidemic that has plagued forests in southern Wyoming and northern Colorado over the last several years.

The North WUI project currently proposes treatment of approximately 7,490 acres of forested and mixed sagebrush/grassland areas to reduce fuel loading adjacent to 11 WUI areas (private inholdings), 11 summer home groups and special-use permit areas, and two municipal watersheds including Lake Owen and Rob Roy Reservoir. A combination of prescribed fire and silvicultural prescriptions would be applied to manage fuel loads and to protect municipal water supplies and water quality. Adaptive management prescriptions would also be applied in areas where flexibility is needed to manage for changing conditions. Roughly 1,550 of the 7,490 acres proposed for treatment are located within six separate Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs).

Current estimates indicate that 8.4 miles of temporary road construction and 5.8 miles of road reconstruction could be required for project implementation. The final

assessment of road needs has not yet been determined and could be more or less. No road construction is proposed in the IRAs.

“We’ve worked closely with private landowners, permit holders, and the Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities over the last year to develop this proposal,” said Laramie District Ranger, Larry Sandoval. “We’re optimistic that what we’ve come up with is responsive to public needs while managing for hazardous fuel conditions and environmental protection.”

The Forest Service will be accepting comments on the Proposed Action until December 27, 2010. ***This comment period represents the only opportunity for the public to comment on the proposal during the environmental analysis process.*** The Forest Service will also be hosting an Open House meeting for the project on December 8, 2010. Forest Service personnel will be available at the meeting to discuss the proposal and to answer any questions the public may have about it. The meeting will be held at the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests Headquarters Office, 2468 Jackson Street, Laramie, Wyoming and will run from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

More detailed information about the North WUI Project can be found on the Forest Service’s website at <http://fs.usda.gov/goto/mbr/projects>.

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