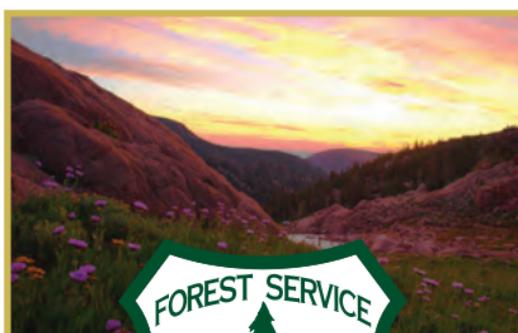
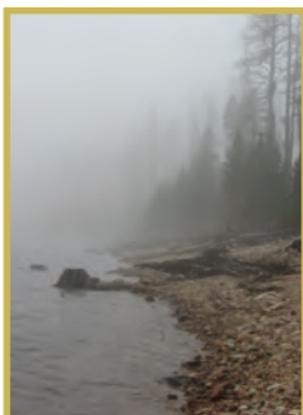
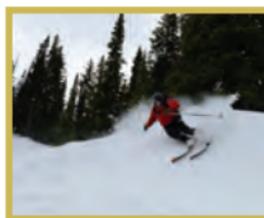
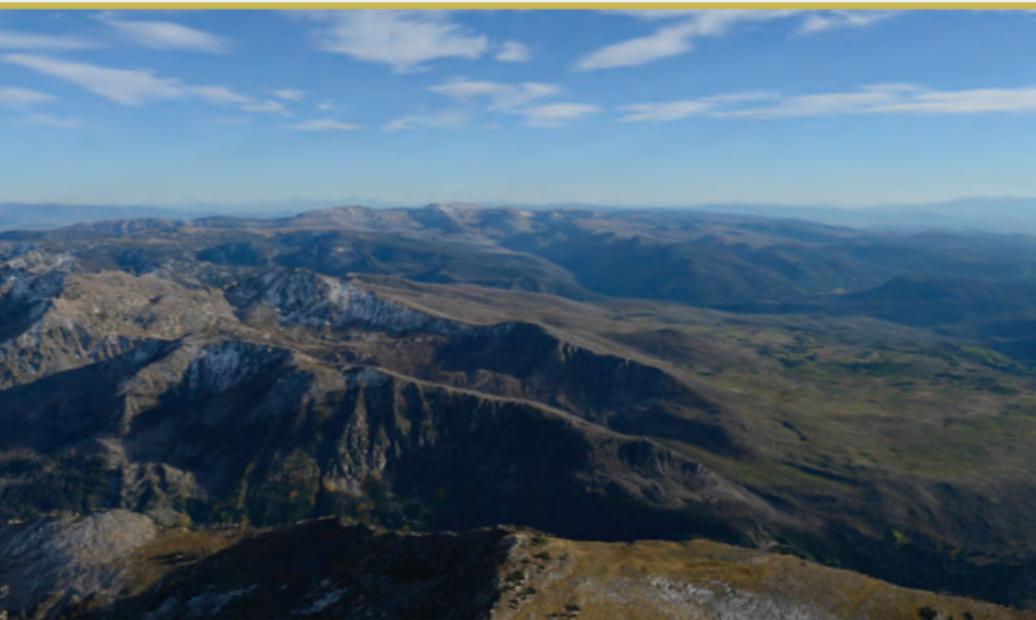




MBRTB

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests & Thunder Basin National Grassland

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



U.S. Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region



Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland

[MBRTB]

2013 Fact Sheet/Annual Report

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, Medicine Bow Mountains, Sierra Madre, and Laramie Range. The topography varies greatly with elevations ranging from 5,500 to 12,940 feet. The climate ranges from semi-arid 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.



Total Acres Managed	2,899,147
Wilderness Acres	330,843
Miles of Open Roads	6,085
Miles of Trails	2,351
Campgrounds & Picnic Areas (#)	94

PERSONNEL

Permanent Employees	183
Temporary Employees	118
Volunteers	340



FOREST FINANCIAL REPORT

2013 Expenditures

Recreation Management	2,199,407
General Administration	4,101,231
Road/Trail Maintenance & Construction	2,810,809
Mineral & Mining Management	970,091
Fire Preparedness	2,029,492
Fire Suppression	2,089,527
Timber & Vegetation Management	4,831,701
Fleet/Vehicles/Fuel/Maintenance	1,915,378
Facilities Maintenance & Construction	429,731
Lands & Realty	402,403
Wildlife & Botany Management	1,115,232
Range Administration	1,201,093
Planning, Inventory & Monitoring	928,942
Wildland Fuels Reductions	1,326,028
Cost Recovery (permit processing fees)	72,651

TOTAL **\$26,423,716**

2013 Revenues & Collections

Recreation Fees & Special Use Permits	1,989,924
Coal, Oil & Gas Revenue (2012)	433,567,118
Mineral Materials	991,005
Timber Sales	460,973
Cooperative Work Agreements	443,234
Cost Recovery (permit processing fees)	57,454
Lands/Lands Special Use Permits	119,411
Employee Housing	30,576
Grazing Permits	287,970
Road Maintenance Agreements	148,460
Map Sales	11,261
Fines, Penalties & Forfeitures	2,709
Miscellaneous	7,901

TOTAL **\$438,167,996**

MBRTB Program of Work at a Glance

The MBRTB offers many products, services and opportunities for the American public. Its core/niche programs generally include:

- Forest Management
 - ⇒ Support for production of forest products
 - ⇒ Reduction of fuels/hazard trees
 - ⇒ Maintenance/restoration of forest health and wildlife habitat
- Energy Resources (Coal, Oil and Gas)
- Diverse Recreation Opportunities
- Water Resources Management

While the mountain pine beetle epidemic in north central Colorado and southeastern Wyoming has largely run its course, many hazards remain to be treated, including clearing dead/dying trees along road and trail corridors, as well as removing dangerous fuels around communities. This work will be ongoing for several more years; however, our focus is shifting to accelerating restoration of forested and non-forested ecosystems across the MBRTB. This focus will result in the MBRTB continuing to provide:

- Diverse, resilient forest and grassland landscapes that provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species, forage for domestic livestock, clean air and water, and scenic escapes for recreationists.
- A mix of viable forest products, such as saw-timber, as well as biomass for pellet mills and electrical cogeneration plants, that will help generate and maintain jobs.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLES

- Numerous partners assist in accelerating ecological restoration and fostering resiliency on the MBRTB, resulting in job creation and preserving industry infrastructure. Examples include:
 - ⇒ The first year of implementing the Forest’s Long Term Stewardship Contract (10-year) with Confluence Energy of Kremmling, Colo., resulted in 27,608 tons of biomass/timber sold.
 - ⇒ A variety of mills and facilities throughout northern and western Colorado, as well as southern Wyoming obtain timber volume from the MBRTB.
- The MBRTB joined forces with the Univ. of Wyoming, Ruckelshaus Institute on a multi-pronged project to share information about the future of our forest lands as we move beyond the pine beetle epidemic. Project components included:
 - ⇒ Three public workshops conducted in Laramie and Saratoga, Wyo., and Steamboat Springs, Colo. to increase awareness of the epidemic status, the tools being used to treat impacted resources, and what the future holds.
 - ⇒ An annotated bibliography of peer-reviewed scientific literature was completed to identify, organize and summarize useful beetle epidemic information resources.
 - ⇒ A series of 10 short videos were produced to document work being conducted on the Forest, recreation opportunities and other relevant topics that overlap with the beetle epidemic.
 - ⇒ Over 4,000 high-quality still images of MBRTB landscapes, beetle impacts, special places and recreation sites were taken and cataloged into a photo library.



- To ensure a skilled and diverse future workforce, the MBRTB is in its’ third year of proactively outreaching seasonal positions. Regional colleges, universities, veterans groups and now tribes have been engaged to recruit and foster the next generation of USFS resource specialists. Colorado State Univ., New Mexico Highlands Univ. and

the Univ. of Wyoming are among the institutions which have been involved.

- The MBRTB has increased its’ presence at the world-renowned venues and events of Cheyenne Frontier Days. Efforts have included:
 - ⇒ Hosting the Forest Service Region 2 Mule Pack String, which won the 2013 award for “Best Mounted Group” in the Grand Parade.
 - ⇒ Riding on an historic fire engine with Wyoming Division of Forestry staff and Smokey in one of the many parades.
 - ⇒ Sharing information about the Medicine Bow and other National Forests in Wyoming, while co-staffing the “Land Office” in Frontier Park with the BLM.
- To help foster a healthy, future forest, over 700 limber pine and bristlecone pine seedlings were planted at the Pole Mountain Work Center for the Southern Rockies Rust Resistance Trial. The trial is a multi-year project to increase White Pine Blister Rust resistance within five-needle pine populations. This is a collaborative project with the Rocky Mountain Research Station, Colorado State University, and the Forest Health Protection program.



REVENUES RETURNED TO COUNTIES

25% Fund Distribution/1908 Payments

Medicine Bow NF (Wyoming)*

⇒ Albany	\$310,029
⇒ Carbon	\$391,888
⇒ Converse	\$13,008
⇒ Natrona	\$2,306
⇒ Platte	\$708
TOTAL	\$717,939

Routt NF (Colorado)*

⇒ Garfield	\$30,704
⇒ Grand	\$68,779
⇒ Jackson	\$193,210
⇒ Moffat	\$28,976
⇒ Rio Blanco	\$75,788
⇒ Routt	\$231,764
TOTAL	\$629,221

Bankhead Jones Farm Tenant Act

Thunder Basin NG (Wyoming)*

⇒ Campbell	\$322,075
⇒ Converse	\$419,724
⇒ Crook	\$696
⇒ Niobrara	\$1,936
⇒ Weston	\$517,138
TOTAL	\$1,261,568

* 2012 Data

Secure Rural Schools – Title II Funds

⇒ Albany (Wyo.)	\$7,322
⇒ Carbon (Wyo.)	\$15,904
⇒ Jackson (Colo.)	\$4,501
⇒ Routt (Colo.)	\$11,074
TOTAL	\$38,801

GEOGRAPHY

	Acres
Medicine Bow NF	1,096,885
⇒ Other	307,007
Thunder Basin NG	547,499
⇒ Other	35,572
Routt NF	1,125,558
⇒ Other	121,808
Arapaho/Roosevelt NF (Managed by Parks & Yampa RD)	129,325
TOTAL	2,899,147

* 'Other' acres include lands within NFS boundaries that are not federally owned or administered by the FS

<u>Medicine Bow NF Wilderness</u>	Acres
⇒ Encampment River	10,124
⇒ Huston Park	30,588
⇒ Platte River	22,749
⇒ Savage Run	14,927
TOTAL	78,358

<u>Routt NF Wilderness</u>	
⇒ Flat Tops	38,290
⇒ Mount Zirkel	159,935
⇒ Rawah	1,462
⇒ Neota	267
⇒ Never Summer	6,659
⇒ Platte River	743
⇒ Sarvis Creek	44,549
TOTAL	252,485



LAW ENFORCEMENT & INVESTIGATIONS

Law Enforcement & Investigations is an integral part of the MBRTB, recognized as leaders in public and employee safety, natural resources protection, and as a professional cooperators. Partners include:

- ⇒ County Sheriff's Offices, Search & Rescue
- ⇒ Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Wyoming Game & Fish
- ⇒ Bureau of Land Management
- ⇒ U.S. Fish & Wildlife

Acres by County

■ National Forest in Wyoming

⇒ Albany	379,952
⇒ Carbon	633,184
⇒ Converse	77,010
⇒ Natrona	5,598
⇒ Platte	1,141

■ National Grassland in Wyoming

⇒ Campbell	139,775
⇒ Converse	182,153
⇒ Crook	302
⇒ Niobrara	840
⇒ Weston	224,429

■ National Forest in Colorado

⇒ Garfield	35,267
⇒ Grand	169,747
⇒ Jackson	333,294
⇒ Moffat	38,084
⇒ Rio Blanco	111,241
⇒ Routt	577,202



Local law enforcement personnel are responsible to patrol the nearly 3 million acres of the MBRTB. Illegal OHV/ATV use accompanied by extreme resource damage is the most common concern, violation and current priority. Other common violations include:

- ⇒ Human caused wildfire
- ⇒ Illegal outfitters/guides
- ⇒ Resource damage
- ⇒ Game & Fish violations
- ⇒ Property damage

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Many MBRTB staff actively participate in outreach events at various levels. Examples include:

- ⇒ Cheyenne Frontier Days events
- ⇒ County and State Fairs
- ⇒ Curt Gowdy Summer Outdoor Slam
- ⇒ Parks Ranger District Winter Open House
- ⇒ WyoTech Community Welcome
- ⇒ Family Activity Fair in Steamboat Springs
- ⇒ USA Pro Cycling Challenge
- ⇒ Haub School of ENR at UW Career Series
- ⇒ Douglas Ranger District Boys & Girls Club Field Trip
- ⇒ And many more...



Highest Elevation (Colorado Portion)

Mount Richtohofen (Parks RD) 12,940 feet

Highest Elevation (Wyoming Portion)

Medicine Bow Peak (Brush Creek-Hayden RD) 12,013 feet

Lowest Elevation (Colorado Portion)

Elk River (Hahns Peak/Bears Ears RD) 6,750 feet

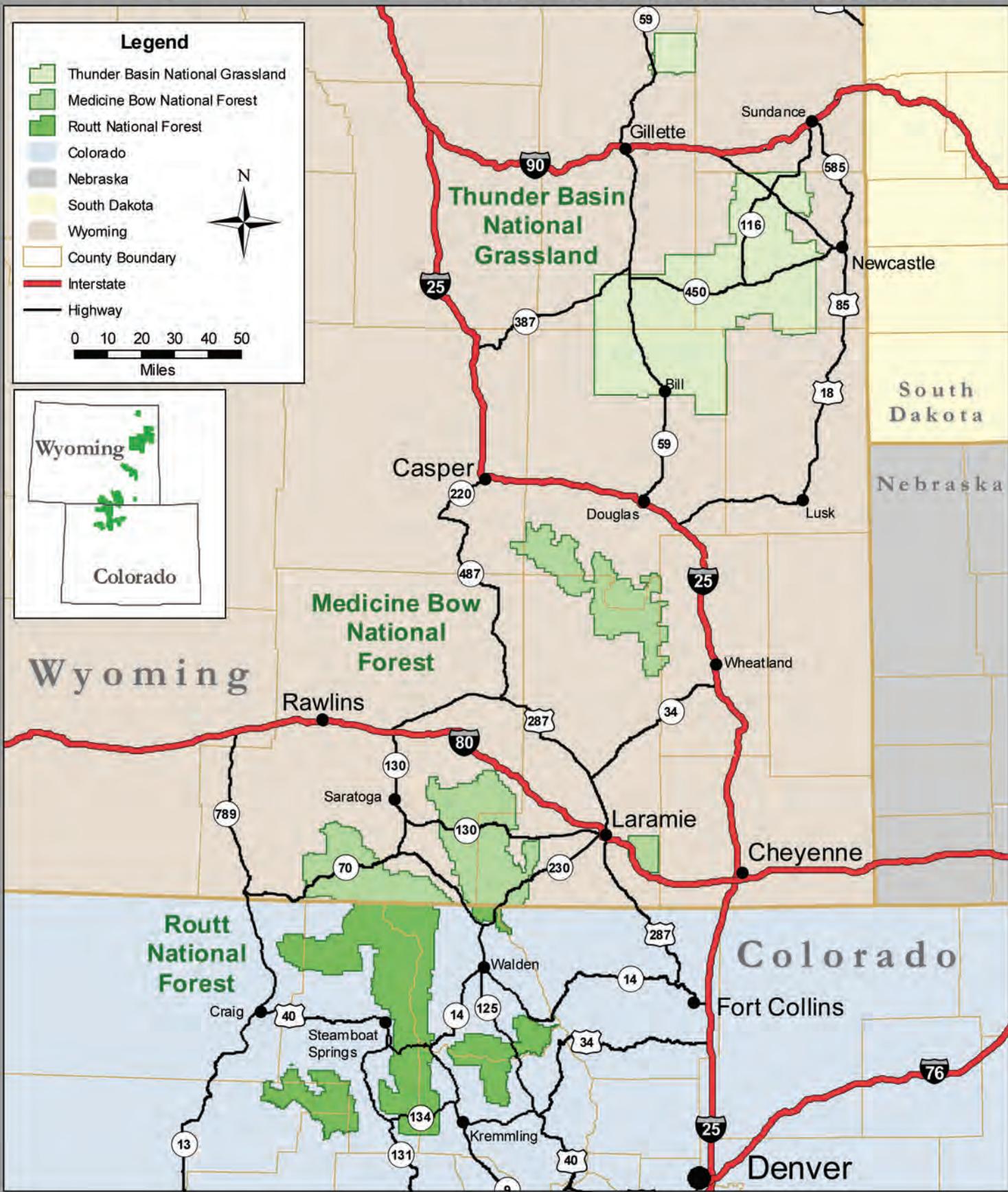
Lowest Elevation (Wyoming Portion)

Thunder Basin NG (Douglas RD) 3,600 feet

National Scenic or Historic Trails

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

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



Overview of Accomplishments

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

	MBNF	RNF	Total
Sawlogs & POL Sold (CCF*)	38,167	32,307	70,474
Commercial/Personal Fuelwood (Cords)	3,909	1,363	5,272
Christmas Tree Permits	1,958	1,713	3,671
Acres of Natural Regeneration Certification	1,182	3,702	4,884
Acres of Site Preparation for Natural Regeneration	43	48	91
Acres Planted	10	34	44
Acres of Timber Stand Improvement (Thinning)	245	251	496
Release & Weed	-	26	26

* CCF = 100 cubic feet
 1 CF = 5 board feet
 1 board foot = 1 square foot by 1 inch thick

- In 2013, the MBRTB awarded 1,051 acres under a Long Term Stewardship Contract.
- From 2007-13 the MBRTB offered 610,149 (ccf) of timber volume and sold 466,776 (ccf) of timber volume. 2013 totals were 75,841 and 70,474, offered and sold respectively.
- The ten-year average for volume sold on the MBRTB is 66,763 ccf.
- Timber from MBRTB lands provide wood fiber for seven mills, two large pellet factories, two large post/pole facilities, and numerous secondary wood product producers
- About 8,400 log-truck loads of timber are offered annually by the MBRTB for a multitude of uses, at 11.88 ccf per load.
- The MBRTB Supervisor's Office in Laramie houses the North Timber Zone Accounting Center, which serves five National Forests: Arapaho-Roosevelt; Bighorn; MBRTB; Shoshone; and White River.



MINERALS

[2012]

Oil and Gas

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Number of Applications for Permit	-	-	2
Number of Wells in Production	-	3	549

Coal Mines

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Active	-	-	4
Yearly Production (million tons)	-	-	240

- ⇒ The Thunder Basin NG contains four mines that provide 20% of the nation's coal, which generates 10% of the nation's electricity and produces between 4-5,000 jobs.
- ⇒ Coal resource royalties (production & lease sales) totaling \$100 million in 2013, \$200 million in 2012 and \$400 million in 2011 were split 50/50 between the State of Wyoming and the U.S. Federal Government.
- ⇒ Nearly all mineral activity on the MBRTB is administered by the Douglas Ranger District.
- ⇒ Mineral Material Contracts administered and/or sold on the MBRTB conveyed 1.5 million tons of material, mostly scoria, resulting in revenue of \$991,005.
- ⇒ Bonus bids based on sales in 2011-12 totaled \$1,461 million in revenue (this is in addition to the coal resource royalties shown above).



FIRE & FUELS MANAGEMENT

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG	Total
Number of Wildfires	30	10	8	48
Burned FS Acres	342.95	1	1.2	345.15
RX Burn Acres	454	110	200	764
Mechanical Treatments	1,982	2,390	585	4,957
Targeted Grazing	571	-	600	1,171

- The MBRTB's primary fire season runs from June 1 through October 31.
- As bark beetle mitigation efforts continue, the six MBRTB Districts treat thousands of slash piles annually, primarily in WUI areas.
- MBRTB crews accomplished 3,196 acres of hazardous fuels treatments in WUI during 2013.
- After being well above average in 2012, fire averages were below normal in 2013, with 48 wildfires compared to a unit average of 63, and 345 acres burned compared to an average of 7,463.



SAFETY

Estimated Work Hours 460,666

OSHA Recordable Rate 1.3

* Calculation based on number of recordable injuries (3) and hours worked.

Miles Driven 1,361,283

Motor Vehicle Accident Rate 5.1

* Calculation based on number of chargeable MVAs (7) and miles driven.

RECREATION & SPECIAL USES

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Facilities			
Camping/Picnic Areas	51	42	1
Summer Homes	105	20	–
Downhill Ski Areas	1	1	–
Recreation Special Use Permits	217	139	25
Trail Miles	1,013	1,338	–

Includes winter trails, as well as motorized/non-motorized

Permitted Outfitter/Guides **129 Total**
(many operate on multiple districts/forests)

Recreation Fees Collected **\$736,574**
Annual Recreation Visits **2.7 million**
(1.6/RNF, 1.1/MBNF)

- **Formal Partnerships/Agreements:** Colorado Corrections Industries, HistoriCorps, Montana Conservation Corps, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, University of Wyoming Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources, Wyoming Conservation Corps, Yampatika

- **Recreation Area Hazard Tree Mitigation:** In 2013, the MBRTB sprayed six campgrounds, two administrative sites, a ski area, a visitor center and one white pine blister rust site.

Annual Spending associated with recreation visits

MBNF/TBNG: \$45,330,000 RNF: \$219,399,000
Spending on lodging, gas, souvenirs, etc., in 2007 dollars

Total Volunteer Hours

18,401 worth an estimated **\$407,398**



RANGELANDS

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG	Total
Grazing Fee Receipts	\$64,173	\$70,200	\$153,597	\$287,970
Active Grazing Allotments	102	123	184	409
Vacant Allotments	4	7	3	14
Grazing Permittees	86	66	158	307
Cattle Grazed	20,081	12,703	21,206	53,990
Sheep Grazed	13,585	65,019	4,930	83,534
Head-Months of Cattle Grazed	44,144	28,863	108,866	181,873
Head-Months of Sheep Grazed	16,953	115,684	24,546	157,183
Acres of Noxious Weed Control	841	508	173	1,522

* Head Months defined (example of sheep) - A single sheep, or a ewe and her lamb, grazing on the Forest for one month.

- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Invasive Plant Species will be available for public comment in early 2014. It will provide for increased treatment methods for control of cheatgrass on crucial big game winter ranges and in critical sage-grouse habitats.
- The Douglas Ranger District has the largest rangeland management program in USFS Region 2. They have agreements with three Grazing Associations on the Thunder Basin NG; those associations have 155 members utilizing 179 allotments.



TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Roads			
Miles of Roads	2,358	1,590	2,137
Closed (to motorized use)	511	650	937

LANDS/SURVEYING

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Exchange Cases Pending	3	–	2
Purchases Pending	1	1	–
Acquisitions Completed	–	1*	–
* 120 acres in California Park donated from a private entity			
Non-recreation special use permits			
Issued status	226	338	236 (Douglas)
Pending status	–	30	3 (Douglas)

HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

	MBNF	RNF	TBNG
Recorded Cultural Resources	3,043	2,747	2,060
Historic Sites Recorded	80%	55%	25%
Prehistoric Sites Recorded	20%	45%	75%
Eligible for National Register	438	164	208
Currently on National Register	7	4	1
Sites Found in 2013	290		
Total on Forest	7,850		
Acres Surveyed in 2013:	19,515		
Total on Forest:	215,985		

- In 2013, a Passport In Time (PIT) project on the Thunder Basin NG resulted in a Triceratops find.





AIR, AQUATICS, BOTANY, FISHERIES, SOILS, WATERSHED & WILDLIFE

Accomplishments

Wildlife (acres)	MBNF	RNF	TBNG	Total
Habitat Improvement	6,350	6,676	3,427	16,453
Habitat Inventoried	12,066	12,941	224,209	249,216

Watershed/Soil	MBNF	RNF	TBNG	Total
Acres Improved	350	549	638	1,537
Stream Restored (miles)	16.5	12.8	–	29.3
Stream Inventoried (miles)	12	13	–	25

Threatened & Endangered (acres)	MBNF	RNF	TBNG	Total
Habitat Improvement	–	–	3,000	3,000
Habitat Inventoried	3,000	–	22,879	25,879

Spotlights:

- The MBRTB features 290 miles of streams containing native, genetically-pure Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, 190 miles on the Routt NF and 100 miles on the Medicine Bow NF.
- Both Elise (Apple) Snider and Robert Skorkowsky, Wildlife Biologists with the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District, received national awards in 2013. Snider won the *Wings Across the Americas Conservation Award* for her work with the BatsLIVE project, while Skorkowsky, who is also the R2 Bird Coordinator, earned the *Joint Conservation Project of the Year Award* for his efforts with the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions Program.



- Infrastructure improvements within high-priority watersheds are important on the MBRTB. Efforts include replacing and repairing old culverts, with bottomless arch models when possible, improving stream function and aquatic habitat by rerouting roads, and minimizing the potential for road flooding with a variety of methods. The Middle Fork of the Little Snake River, Nugget, Pelton, Poose, Trout and Willow Creeks are all areas where this type of work has taken place.



- The Routt NF (RNF) maintains habitat for some of the largest elk herds in the nation and supports approximately 74,000 individuals during the summer.
- The Thunder Basin National Grassland offers large blocks of public land which feature excellent pronghorn hunting. Four different herds use a portion of the TBNG, numbering 86,435 individuals.

- A population of locally-rare wood lilies exists on the Medicine Bow National Forest within the Snowy Range. Last documented within the Snowy Range in 1964, wood lilies were thought to have been extirpated from this mountain range, prior to being discovered at this location in 2011.



- To balance the interests of multiple TE&S species with concerns of private landowners and ranchers, Thunder Basin NG staff is working on an amendment to the Prairie Dog Management Strategy. A Final EIS and Record of Decision are expected to be completed by fall of 2014.

- In coordination with the BLM, the MBRTB is in the midst of completing environmental analyses that will likely lead to Forest and Grassland Plan amendments to help conserve Greater Sage-grouse habitat. The Routt NF and Northwest Colorado BLM District completed a Draft EIS (DEIS), and held public meetings in the fall of 2013. The Medicine Bow NF and TBNG worked with the Wyoming BLM and other Wyoming National Forests to complete a DEIS in late 2013, with public meetings held in February 2014. Final analyses and any accompanying plan amendments are expected to be completed by the fall of 2014.



CONTACTS

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Melanie Fullman, District Ranger, 307-326-2501

Douglas District

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Tom Whitford, District Ranger, 307-358-7101

Hahns Peak/Bears Ears District

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Chad Stewart, District Ranger, 970-870-2149

Laramie District

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Frank Romero, District Ranger, 307-745-2337

Parks District

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Yampa District

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Jack Lewis, District Ranger, 970-638-4176



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