



Forest Service

Caring For the Land and Serving People



Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis

Project Update—Spring / Summer 2024

Fall Public Monitoring Field Trip Announcement

The Medicine Bow National Forest will host its third annual monitoring field trip for the Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA) project. This year's monitoring field trip will look at the Spool GNA Timber Sale Project, which is located on the northern end of the Sierra Madre Mountains, about 20 miles southwest of Saratoga, in Carbon County, Wyoming.

The Spool project was developed and implemented collaboratively between the U. S. Forest Service and Wyoming State Forestry Division using the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). Part of the project (103 acres) was identified during development of the North Savery Project. Another part of the project (124 acres) was identified for early implementation under the LaVA project. An additional 104 acres of the project are located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State of Wyoming lands. Treatments were clearcuts in primarily lodgepole pine stands. The project included an estimated 1.6 miles of road reconstruction and 1.7 miles of temporary roads.

The monitoring field trip is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 25, 2024**. Meeting time and location are to be determined. We ask that everyone interested in participating in the field trip RSVP so that we can let you know when and where we will meet, in case of inclement weather, or other complications. To RSVP or if you have any questions, please contact Matt Schweich, LaVA Implementation Coordinator at matthew.schweich@usda.gov (preferred) or (307) 745-2422 (limited voicemail monitoring).

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and reporting is the fifth and final phase of the LaVA implementation process. The LaVA Record of Decisions requires monitoring of all projects following a generic plan (Appendix A, Attachment 6) and applying a set of post-treatment standard operating procedures (SOPs) (Appendix A, Attachment 5). A biennial monitoring report following the outline in Output 4, Appendix A is also required.

The primary intent of this phase is to answer the questions:

- Did we do what we said we were going to do?
- Did we get the expected outcomes?
- Do we need to adjust future treatments?

2024 Spring Public Meeting Summary

The 2024 spring public meeting for the LaVA project was held on May 22, 2024. Total attendance was 26 individuals, including the public, partners, and Forest Service staff. We received feedback on several focus areas and individual projects, as well as several requests for additional information or project-specific meetings. Our next public event will be the fall monitoring field trip (see above).

What Have We Been Doing?

Since the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in August of 2020, we have been working closely with our partners and interested members of the public to plan and implement projects across the LaVA landscape following the five-phase process described in Appendix A of the ROD, the Adaptive Implementation and Monitoring Framework. The table below summarizes the status of LaVA projects in relation to the Appendix A process. Some highlights from the implementation process in the last few months include:

- Held our 2024 Spring LaVA Public Meeting (see summary on page 1) to discuss current status of the project and solicit public input and feedback at several points in the implementation process.
- Held one formal meeting with our Cooperator group to discuss project planning and implementation.
- Completed two implementation checklists, clearing these projects for implementation beginning during the summer of 2024.
- Prioritized 13 projects in 10 focus areas for field validation during the summer of 2024. Additional projects may be validated if personnel are available.

LaVA Project Status – Winter 2024		
Appendix A Phase	# Projects	Acres
1: Focus Areas	5	n/a
2: Preliminary Design	4	n/a
3: Refine and Validate – Low Priority	25	22,580
3: Refine and Validate – High Priority	13	8,730
4: Review and Implement	18	5,899
5: Monitor and Report	4	1,024

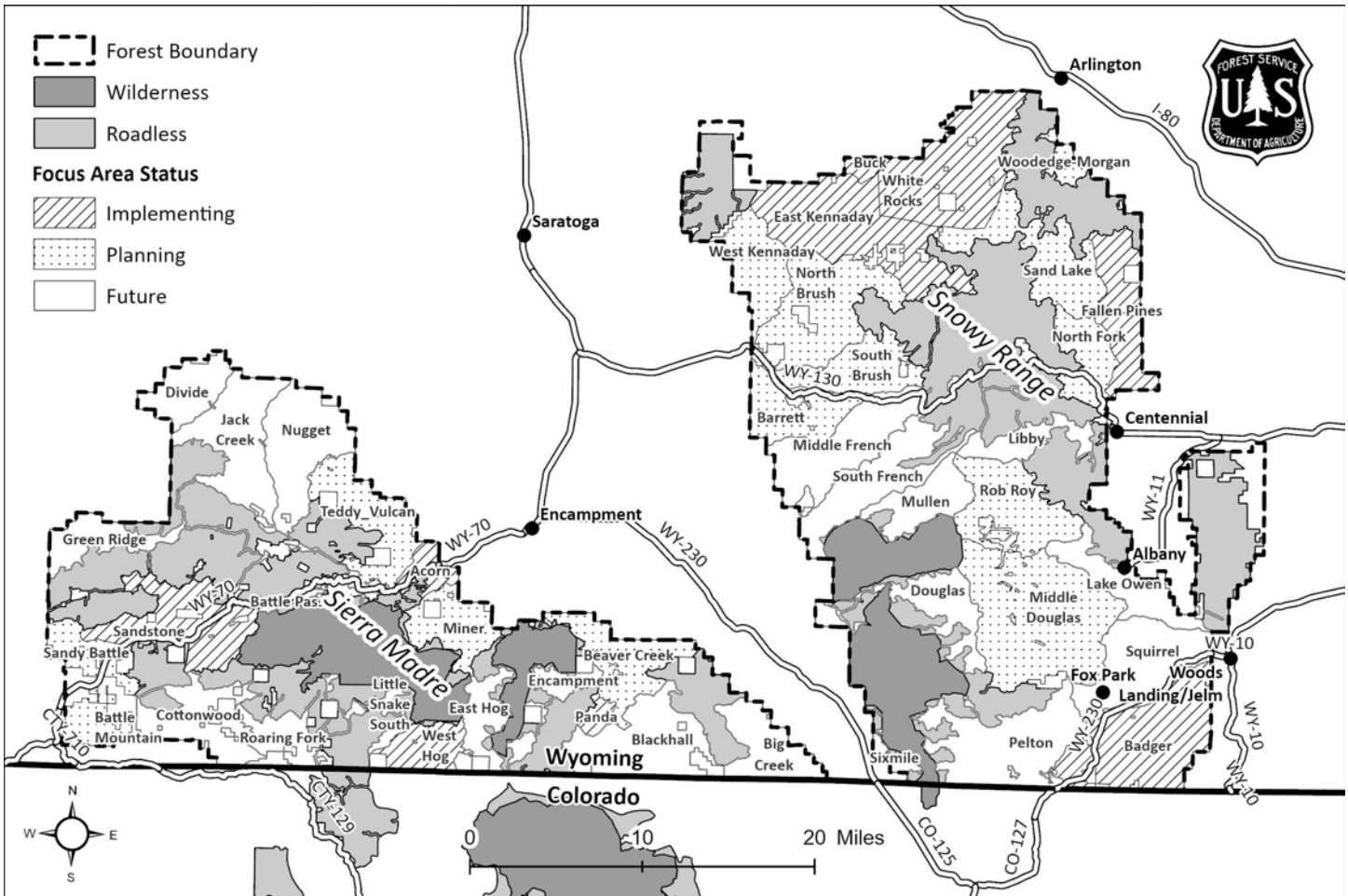
What is the LaVA Project?

The Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis Project, or “LaVA” project, was developed to respond to unprecedented landscape-level tree mortality from bark beetles and other forest health issues that affected hundreds of thousands of acres across the Medicine Bow National Forest since the late 1990s. The LaVA decision authorized up to 288,000 acres of vegetation management on the Forest over 15 years. Objectives of the project include:

- Mitigating hazardous fuels
- Providing for recovery of forest products
- Enhancing forest and rangeland resilience to future insect and disease infestations
- Protecting infrastructure and municipal water supplies
- Restoring wildlife habitat
- Enhancing access for forest visitors and permittees
- Providing for human safety.

Implementation Plan

The implementation process outlined in Appendix A contains five phases, eighteen activities, and takes three or more years to complete. The Forest Service, working with our partners, developed a draft plan to provide our partners and the public with the schedule for providing meaningful input on focus areas and preliminary treatments, as well as allowing us to work together to prioritize workloads, secure funding, and meet objectives of the LaVA project across the landscape. As our collaborative work on each focus area proceeds, we will update the plan to reflect current conditions and priorities in the area. The map below displays the current status of focus areas across the LaVA landscape.



Additional Information and How to Get/Stay Involved

- The [LaVA Implementation web page](#) links to extensive information on the NEPA decision and supporting analysis, implementation process, LaVA StoryMap and feedback tool, pre-treatment and implementation checklists, treatment tracking, and monitoring. It is updated regularly as new information becomes available.
- The [LaVA StoryMap](#) is an interactive tool for spatially representing LaVA focus areas and treatments on the landscape. The StoryMap allows users to view future, ongoing, and completed treatments and to provide online feedback specific to focus areas and treatments.
- We encourage you to join the LaVA mailing list through GovDelivery, which is our primary means of directly contacting the public. To use the [GovDelivery online application](#), enter your email address, then scroll down the list of available subscriptions to the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, which has a dropdown menu of current projects including the LaVA project.
- The Forest Service hosts a LaVA public workshop each spring and a monitoring field trip every fall. Workshops and field trips will be advertised through a press release, the LaVA mailing list (via GovDelivery), and on the implementation web page.
- For additional information on the LaVA project, please contact Matt Schweich, LaVA Implementation Coordinator at matthew.schweich@usda.gov or (307) 745-2422 (limited voicemail monitoring).