

# USDA-Forest Service

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

Douglas Ranger District

How it Works: Staff, Budgets, Projects, etc.

Thunder Basin Cooperative Working Group

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Newcastle, Wyoming

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

- Contains nearly 2.9-million acres of National Forests System lands
  - Located in 16 counties, in 2 states
- 1 Supervisor's Office in Laramie
- 6 Ranger Districts
  - 3 in Wyoming and 3 in Colorado
  - Manage day-to-day operations
- Approximately \$21 million annual budget

# Douglas Ranger District Overview

- Manages the day-to-day operations on approximately 723,000-acres
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland (553,000-acres)
  - Laramie Peak Unit of the Medicine Bow National Forest (170,000-acres)
- Located in 8 counties and 8 conservation districts
- Both units are made of intermingled lands
  - Public domain lands
  - Acquired lands
- Pilot Energy Office with the BLM Buffalo Field Office

# Douglas Ranger District Overview

- Approximately \$2 million annual budget
- Staff
  - 37 permanent fulltime positions
  - 25 seasonal fulltime positions
  - 1 permanent fulltime position from the Supervisor's Office
  - Approximately 6+ other positions located in Supervisor's Office (Laramie) or other Ranger Districts (Laramie and Saratoga)

# Douglas Ranger District Workload

- Energy Development
- Grazing
- Sensitive, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- Wildland Fire

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Air, Soil, Water, Fish
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland Processing Stock Water Rights
  - Laramie Peak Soil Survey
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland Road Decommissioning
  - Weston Area Off-Highway Vehicle Management and Rehabilitation
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Air, Soil, Water, and Fish
- Fire and Fuel
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland Prescribed Fires
  - Pine Creek/Upton Fuels Reduction
  - Spring Creek Vegetation Management
  - Northeast Laramie Peak Fuels Reduction

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Fire and Fuels (continued)
  - Wildcat (Laramie Peak Unit) Grazing
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland Grazing
  - Laramie Peak Unit Maintenance Burn (planning)
  - East York Fuels Reduction (planning)
  - Helios Vegetation Burning (planning)
  - Responding to Lightning and Human Caused Wildland Fires
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Fire and Fuel Resources
- Rangeland and Invasives
  - Spring Creek Conifer Encroachment
  - Noxious/Invasive Weeds Treatments

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Rangeland and Invasives (continued)
  - Rangeland Vegetation Evaluation
  - Small Waters Projects
  - Rangeland Vegetation Improved
  - Thunder Basin Governmental Cooperative Working Group and Learning Series
  - Arapaho Burn Cheatgrass Treatment
  - Wildlife: Lethal and non-lethal Prairie Dog Colony Management
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland Restoration
  - Grazing Permit and Agreement Administration
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Rangeland Resources



# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Timber and Forest Vegetation
  - Fuelwood Permits
  - Post and Beam Permits
  - Transplants (Bonzai Trees)
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Timber and Forest Vegetation
- Wildlife and Botany
  - Prescribed Burns (Mountain plover and monarch butterfly habitat)
  - Turner Reservoir Repairs
  - Dickinson Farm Restoration
  - Non-lethal and lethal Prairie Dog Colony Management
  - Riparian Habitat Improvement (willow planting and tamarisk removal)

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Wildlife and Botany (continued)
  - Wetland/Riparian Habitat Improvements
  - Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Improvements
  - Greater Sage Grouse Plan Amendment Implementation
  - Enclosure Reservoir Cattleguards
  - Mapping Prairie Dog Colonies
  - Sage Grouse Lek Surveys
  - Focal Species Monitoring (Forest and Grassland Plan)
  - Mountain Plover Surveys
  - Burrowing Owl Surveys

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Wildlife and Botany (continued)
  - Migratory Bird Surveys
  - Bat Surveys
  - Raptor Surveys
  - Goshawk Surveys
  - Winter Roost Surveys
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Wildlife and Botany Resources
- Recreation
  - Signing (roads, trails, sites, campgrounds, etc)
  - Outfitter and Guide study
  - Outfitter and Guide Permit Administration
  - Dispersed Camping Limitation

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Recreation (continued)
  - Douglas Trails Fire Rehabilitation
  - Trail UTV Purchase
- Archeology
  - Evaluating or protecting archeological or historical sites
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Archeological, Historical, and Cultural Resources
- Engineering
  - Douglas Ranger District Office Security Door
  - Esterbrook Workstation Old Shop Front Door

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Engineering (continued)
  - Esterbrook Workstation Bunkhouse Roof
  - Douglas Ranger District Office Move
  - Administering Engineering Projects
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Engineering Resources
- Minerals
  - Converse County Oil and Gas Plan of Development Environmental Impact Statement
  - Greater Crossbow Oil and Gas Plan of Development Environmental Impact Statement
  - Coal Lease Readjustments
  - Wright Coal Lease By Application (West Highlight)

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Minerals (continued)
  - Coal Mine and Special Use Permit Administration
  - Antelope Road Relocation Phase 2
  - Oil and Gas Special Use Permits
  - Oil and Gas Leasing
  - Oil and Gas Inspection and Enforcement Actions
  - Road Use Permit Processing
  - Road Use Permit Administration
  - Oil and gas spill response and remediation

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Minerals (continued)
  - Processing Oil and Gas Sundry Notices
  - Processing Abraxas Application for Permit to Drill
  - Processing Wave Petroleum Application for Permit to Drill
  - Processing HD Adams Application for Permit to Drill
  - Processing True Jibilian Application for Permit to Drill
  - Processing Four Corners Application for Permit to Drill
  - Processing Devon Energy Applications for Permit to Drill (23)
  - Processing Off-lease Application for Permit to Drill Developments
  - Processing Mineral Material Authorizations

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Minerals (continued)
  - Administering Mineral Material Authorizations
  - Administering School Creek and North Antelope Rochelle Mine Scoria Contract
  - Administering Black Thunder Coal Mine Scoria Contract
  - Administering Antelope Mine Gravel Pit
  - Administering Special Use Permits for Survey and Testing
  - Administering Wyoming Department of Transportation Special Use Permits
  - Administering Thunder Basin Coal Special Use Permit
  - Paleontological Education and Evaluation
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Mineral Resources



# Douglas Ranger District

- Lands and Realty
  - Administering PRECorp Authorization
  - Administering Triton Coal Special Use Permit
  - Administering Phillips and Bell/Scranton Ditches Special Use Permits
  - Sage Grouse Plan Amendment Implementation
  - Administering Off-site Mitigation and Restoration
  - Processing Britannia Land Exchange
  - Processing Inyan Kara Land Exchange
  - Processing Laramie Range / Parsons Creek Land Exchange
  - Evaluating Projects for Potential Affects to Lands and Realty Resources

# Douglas Ranger District Projects

- Administrative
  - Information Education
  - Smokey Bear Appearances
  - Job Fairs

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

- Restoration and Resiliency

- Project planning will utilize the suite of tools available to improve and increase efficiency, including the following authorities: Farm Bill, HFRA, and Good Neighbor.
- Objectives and management priorities for an integrated vegetation management program include:
  - **Sage Grouse Implementation Plan – Completion of Fiscal Year 2017 Items**
  - Timber Harvest – produce a timber sale program of 100,000 CCF;
    - NEPA decisions completed on North Savery and Teller/Wheatley
    - NEPA decisions on Fallen Piles;
- **Integrated invasive weed treatments – implementation under the Invasive EIS Decision**

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

- Restoration and Resiliency (continued)
  - Adaptive Rangeland Management NEPA Decisions – Pagoda and Coulton Creek
  - Water – Progress on NEPA and authorizations of water facilities on National Forest System lands (Ditch Bill and Water Conveyance Right of Ways)
  - Programmatic Agreement – Complete a Programmatic Agreement with the Colorado State Historical Preservation Office that includes vegetation activities
  - Fire/Fuels – Continued implementation of Pole Mountain Vegetation Project, Divide Peak Prescribed Burn and Steamboat Front

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

- Sustainable Recreation Program
  - **Recreation Site Analysis – Implementation priority activities in the implementation plan**
  - Travel Management
    - As (if) directed by the Regional Office, begin implementation of Travel Management Subpart C
    - Complete the Pole Mountain Travel Management Decision
  - **Capacity Analysis – Support Outfitter and Guide capacity studies and related NEPA decisions in support of permit reauthorization**

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

- **Energy Development**

- **Converse County Oil and Gas Plan of Development Environmental Impact Statement**
- **Greater Crossbow Oil and Gas Plan of Development Environmental Impact Statement**
- **Devon Energy M Creek Oil and Gas Plan of Development Environmental Impact Statement**
- **Processing Oil and Gas Leases**
- **Process Application for Permit to Drill in a timely manner**

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

- **Improve Business Operations**
  - Empower Employees
  - Responsible administrative management
  - Implement the Facilities Master Plan

# Douglas Ranger District Workload Priorities

Organized into three categories:

- “Have To Do” Work
- “Need To Do” Work
- “Want To Do” Work



# Douglas Ranger District Priorities

- “Have To Do” Work
  - Employee development and work environment (training required of a Federal employee and to successfully fulfill one’s job duties);
  - Fulfilling supervisory roles and responsibilities for a smooth operating organization;
  - Directly related to significant human health and safety, and/or environmental quality (i.e. oil and gas spills) risks that are emergencies;
  - Inspection and enforcement (compliance) actions related to any authorization the district administers to enforce Federal law;

# Douglas Ranger District Priorities

- “Have To Do” Work (continued)
  - Required by Federal statute (for example, processing leasable mineral actions, consulting on threatened and/or endangered species, archeological clearances); and
  - Taking action and/or processing non-discretionary authorizations per Federal statute, which are typically actions connected to exercising property rights.

# Douglas Ranger District Priorities

- “Need To Do” Work
  - Directly connected in supporting the accomplishment of “**Have To Do**” work;
  - Processing discretionary authorizations;
  - General maintenance and repair – unless a safety issue – of government property; and
  - Other actions that are not required by Federal statute, but may be required by regulation, policy, and/or a land management plan.

# Douglas Ranger District Priorities

- “Want To Do” Work
  - All other work that is not defined as “Have To Do” or “Need To Do” work.

# Summary

- The Douglas Ranger District is part of and subject to the Supervisor's Office of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland
- Defined Capacity (budget, staff, and time)
- A lot of project
- Defined workload prioritization

# The End

Thank-you