



United States
Department of
Agriculture –
Forest Service

Medicine Bow – Routt
National Forests

United States
Department of
Interior – Bureau
of Land Management

Glenwood Springs
Field Office



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Dear Interested Parties:

The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland (MBR), Yampa Ranger District, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Glenwood Springs Field Office, request your input about beetle issues on the Routt National Forest and Bureau of Land Management lands in the Gore Pass area.

The MBR and the BLM are initiating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for the Rock Creek Integrated Management Project. The analysis area will be the Gore Pass Geographic Area and BLM lands directly to the south (see enclosed map). The Gore Pass Geographic Area encompasses about 63,857 acres of National Forest Service lands. The BLM lands encompass about 5,300 acres of public lands. The MBR and BLM lands are intermingled with approximately 6,344 acres of state and private lands.

Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) infestations increased 20-fold between 2002 and 2003 and are expected to continue increasing. A large-scale MPB epidemic will hinder the ability of the Forest Service and BLM to meet Resource Management Plan goals and objectives for the area.

The Rock Creek Focused Assessment completed in January 2004 identified resource values at risk due to large-scale, high intensity beetle epidemics and fires within the Gore Pass area. Resource values threatened by these disturbances include hydrologic flows, timber production, wildlife habitats, developed recreation sites, administrative sites, transportation systems, heritage sites, and urban interface areas. The assessment also identified potential management actions using preventive, suppression, and salvage strategies to reduce beetle infestations aimed at minimizing adverse effects to these resources.

Preventive methods identified involve spraying, forest thinning, and creating changes to existing stand tree species and age distributions. Suppression techniques involve removing, burning, or peeling beetle-infested trees; along with the use of pheromones to redirect beetles into or out of specific areas. Salvage actions are intended to capture the value of dead and dying trees, to remove mistletoe-infested trees to protect stand regeneration, and to reduce concentrations of dead and dying trees that increase the potential for large-scale high intensity fires. Road construction is needed to provide access to treatment areas outside of roadless areas. Road repair and decommissioning will correct existing or anticipated erosion and water flow problems likely exacerbated by increased water flows resulting from beetle-induced tree mortality.

This project is an “authorized project” under Title I of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. We will be using expedited procedures authorized by this act to complete project planning and decision-making. Use of this new authority requires an emphasis on collaboration with



