



MEDIA CONTACT: Shawna Legarza, 970-884-1427

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 7, 2010
Animas City Mountain Fuels Reduction to Begin this Month

DURANGO – San Juan Public Lands Columbine BLM Field Office Manager Matt Janowiak has signed a Record of Decision for the Animas City Mountain Mechanical Fuels Reduction Project. The project will take place this summer and fall on 733 acres of BLM lands on top of Animas City Mountain and 100 acres of BLM lands behind Sailing Hawks Subdivision and adjacent to Dalla Mountain Park.

A Veterans Green Corps crew is expected to begin hand thinning the parcel behind Sailing Hawks Subdivision this month. Next month and through the fall, a mini mower and hand crews will be working on the top of the mountain. The goal is to remove smaller trees and shrubs, while leaving older trees intact. Thinning operations will leave a natural mosaic of vegetation, while creating fuel breaks. Treatment methods and prescriptions will be tailored to reflect the different vegetation patterns occurring naturally on the mountain.

“We thank the public and City of Durango for being actively involved in the planning process since 2007,” said Matt Janowiak, Columbine BLM Field Office Manager. “Our goal is to reduce the risk of wildfire to these public lands and adjacent private property for the long term, while mitigating short-term adverse effects to recreation and natural resources.”

Several mitigation measures will be implemented to lessen the impacts of the project on recreationists and neighbors, including:

- Trail and area closures will be staggered during project implementation, so that all areas/trails are not closed at the same time, allowing users alternate areas in which to recreate.
- Informational signs will be posted at trailheads describing the nature of the project and warning trail users of the danger of project activities.
- To reduce noise impacts to adjacent neighbors, ATVs, chainsaws and other equipment will not be operated before 7 a.m. or after 6 p.m. weekdays, and no work will take place on weekends or holidays.
- The main trail accessing the top of the mountain will not be reconstructed, and a helicopter may be used to transport equipment and supplies.
- No changes to the existing trail network on Animas City Mountain. Any impacted trail will be restored to a condition similar to what it was prior to project activities.
- Areas adjacent to trails will be thinned by hand to leave a visual buffer.
- Recreational bouldering areas adjacent to Dalla Mountain Park will retain natural vegetative screens.

Mitigation measures to reduce impacts on natural and cultural resources include:

- All project equipment will be cleaned and inspected for weed seeds prior to operation. The area will be monitored for resulting weed infestations for at least three years and treated, if necessary.
- To offer wildlife habitat, clumps of Gambel oak will be retained, and standing dead trees will not be cut unless they pose safety hazards.
- Project activities, including the later burning of piles resulting from hand thinning, will not take place during the winter wildlife habitat closure period.
- Raptor nests and turkey roosts will be avoided, and Abert’s squirrel nests will be protected in clumps of untreated oak.

- Cultural resources will be protected when encountered.
- Equipment will not be allowed to operate when soils are saturated. In the event that machinery causes rutting, any resulting damage will be rehabilitated.
- Pile burning will take place during moist shoulder seasons.
- Protective devices will be erected around areas used for fuel storage during the project to reduce the threat of spills.

The Environmental Assessment is available for viewing at:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/cfo/nepa_documents.html

For more information, contact Shawna Legarza, Project Lead, at 970 884-1427 or via e-mail at

slegarza@fs.fed.us.