



Background Information

The BLM administers forested lands in Colorado. The majority of forested acres in the Royal Gorge Field Office are considered woodlands dominated by pinyon, juniper, and oak. The remaining forested acres consist of traditional commercial tree species such as ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, spruce, and Douglas fir. Forest lands in Colorado have low productivity rates due to harsh conditions such as short growing season or young soils in geological times. Some of the wood products harvested include sawtimber, firewood, Christmas trees, post and poles, transplants, pinyon nuts, craftwood, house logs, and biomass. The primary emphasis of the BLM's forests and woodlands program is offering a scientifically sound and environmentally responsible level of timber sales, as well as conducting forest and woodland health restoration treatments to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and bark beetle epidemics while improving forest health.



The Mountain Pine Beetle, spruce beetle, and other variations of bark beetles are at epidemic levels throughout the western United States and have impacted more than 4 million acres in Colorado and southeastern Wyoming since the first signs of outbreak in 1996. The epidemic results in large stands of dead trees. Mitigation of outbreaks in these areas is critical because dead trees can add to wildfire intensity, severity and control efforts. Additionally, dead and dying trees can impact watershed resources, wildlife habitat, range infrastructure, recreation opportunities, human health and safety, and basic services such as travel, electricity, and water.

Potential Decisions:

Forestry management planning as part of the Eastern Colorado RMP/EIS may:

- Identify characteristics to describe healthy forest conditions for forest and woodland types in the planning area
- Identify a suite of possible management actions and associated best management practices that can be applied to forested areas to meet desired outcomes
- Identify areas that are available and have the capacity for planned, sustained-yield timber harvest or special forest product harvest
- Identify the number of forested acres at moderate to high risk of bark beetle attack and management actions specific for these areas
- Identify areas as moderate to high risk from catastrophic wildfire
- Identify areas of relative ecological importance to guide lands uses and management, including:
 - Areas of deforestation from recent large fires and changes in forest composition
 - Areas with loss of quaking aspen due to lack of disturbance, conifer encroachment, drought, and the number of ungulates on the landscape
 - Areas where the average number of trees is unsustainable at current levels
 - Areas lacking forest age class diversity

Planning Issues:

- How should the BLM manage forest health and diversity across the landscape?
- How should the BLM address demands for commercial/economic and personal use of forest products?

Tell Us What You Think!

If you have input on these topics, please share it with us in a scoping comment.

1. Are there additional forestry topics that should be covered in the EIS?
2. Are there BLM-administered lands in the planning area that require increased management actions to maintain or enhance forest diversity or improve forest health?
3. Can you recommend sources of information that should be used in the RMP/EIS?

Please submit your comments and other information via email to ECRMP.comments@blm.gov