Montrose-area flyer about the year's burn projects

Each Zone has a similar flyer.

Distribution sites include CDoW and sporting goods stores.

OURAY FIRE ZONE

The Ouray Zone contains roughly 2.5 million acres, of which 1,344,020 acres are managed by the BLM and USFS. Combined, the BLM and USFS accomplish an average of 6-8 prescribed burns per year for a total of 2,000-4,000 acres. The majority of these burns are conducted in the spring or the fall when the cooler weather provides optimal low-intensity burning conditions.

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Montrose Interagency Fire Management Program

This program is responsible for all wildland fire activities on BLM and USFS lands in Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel, and portions of Mesa and Saguache counties. The administrative offices are located in the Montrose Interagency Dispatch Center, which provides dispatching for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), and the National Park Service (NPS).

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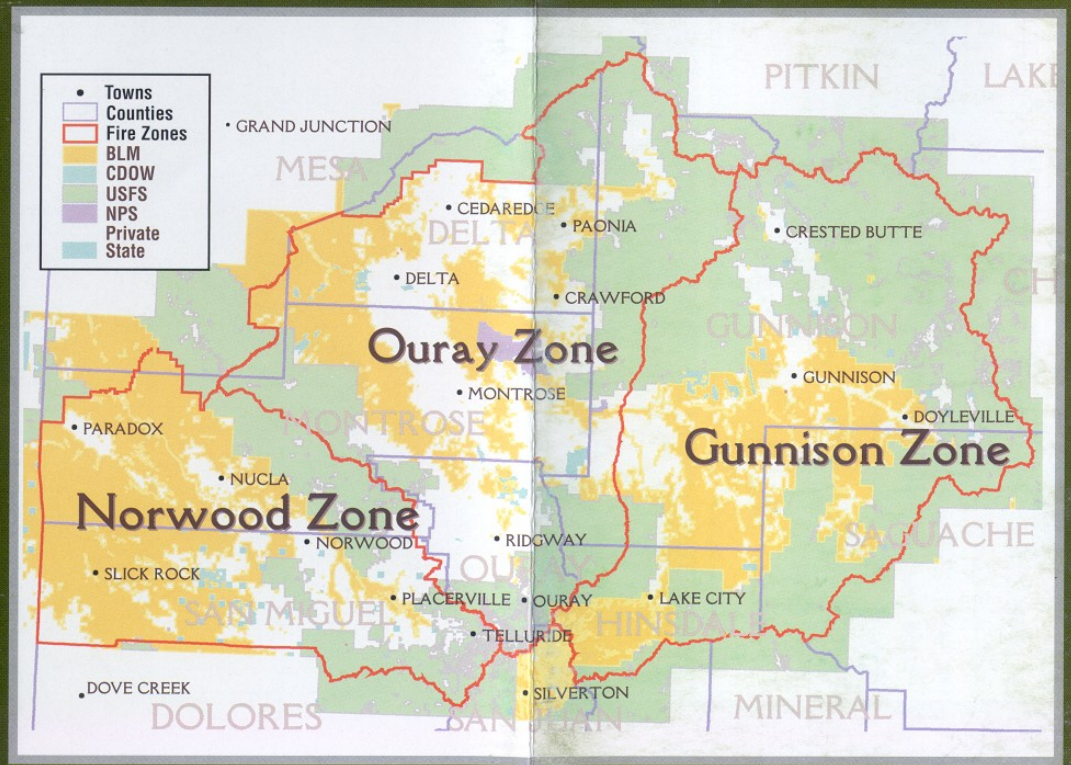


BLM/CO/GI-05/005

Why the smoke?

Prescribed Fires 2005

OURAY ZONE

FIRE MANAGEMENT

WHY USE PRESCRIBED FIRE?

Fire managers use prescribed fires – that is, fires that are intentionally ignited under predetermined conditions by trained fire personnel - to help restore and maintain ecosystem health. Fire managers have greater control over the impact of fire to the ecosystem on prescribed fires than on wildfires because they can time and plan the conditions for burning. As a result, prescribed fires are often used to achieve specific resource objectives, such as habitat improvement, fuels reduction, and overall range and forest restoration.

Fire's Role on the Landscape

Fire has been a vital force shaping vegetation across the landscape in southwestern Colorado, particularly in the ponderosa pine, pinyon juniper woodland, and mountain shrubland communities. Much of this ecosystem evolved with fire, so it has become fire dependent – that is, fire is essential to sustaining the function and health of the biotic systems.

Fire creates a dynamic vegetative "mosaic" or mix of successional stages, communities, and stand ages in the various plant communities. This shifting mosaic is essential to the stability of the system as a whole.

Fire is also a critical element in the creation of wildlife habitats. Because fire affects habitat quality and diversity, it regulates the types and numbers of species in the ecosystem.

Fire Has Been Excluded

Over the last century, fire has been excluded in many areas where it once played a critical role in maintaining ecosystem health. Traditional land management practices, such as grazing, logging, and fire suppression, have changed the structure and composition of many plant communities and greatly affected many species occurring in Western Colorado. The resulting changes include an overall increase in the density of trees, particularly in the ponderosa pine, with relatively more saplings and pole-sized trees and fewer large trees. There has been an increase of ground fuels in the form of litter and fine woody debris. Trees such as pinyon pine and juniper have also invaded formerly shrub or grass dominated areas. Many of the remaining shrub-grassland areas are dominated by older age plants, and these areas have fewer native bunchgrasses and forbs. Non-native species, such as cheatgrass and knapweed have out-competed native grasses in many areas.

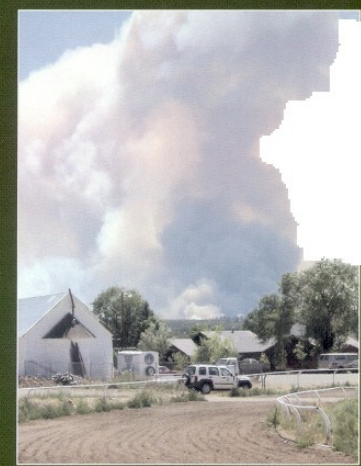
Prescribed fire - in combination with chemical and mechanical treatments, such as roller-chopping or chaining – give fire managers the greatest control in helping restore fire to the landscape.

WHAT ABOUT THE SMOKE?

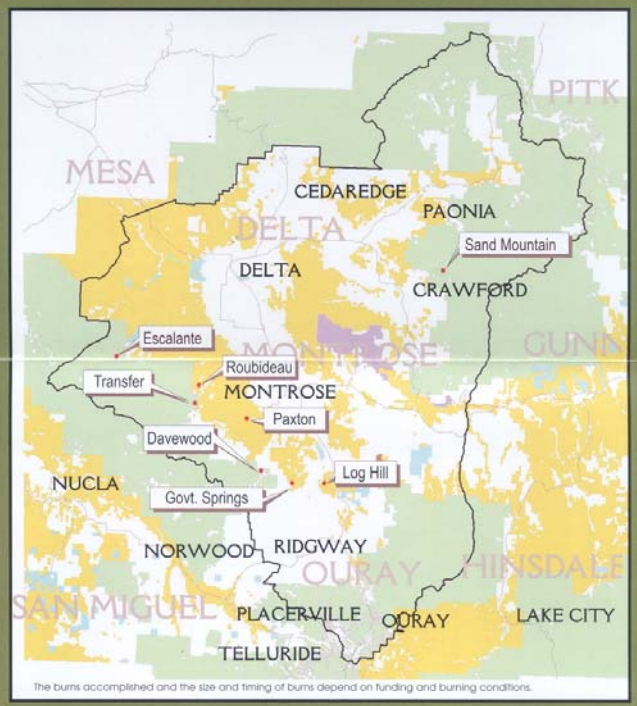
The smoke from any wildland fire can be a significant source of air pollution because fire is a natural combustion process that releases air pollutant emissions. The amount and size of emissions depends on the size and intensity of the wildfire.

Prescribed fires give managers the greatest control over the size and intensity of the fire because they can time and plan the burning conditions under which they ignite, and they can use ignition techniques that reduce emissions. Therefore, prescribed fires provide the greatest management flexibility in controlling smoke production and impacts in smoke-sensitive and high visibility areas.

Fire managers must consider the potential impacts to air in developing prescribed burn plans. They have to acquire a smoke permit from the state, and their burns can only be conducted if the established federal and state standards for air quality can be met or mitigated in an acceptable manner. Prescribed fires are conducted under favorable burning conditions, when smoke dispersal is good, and the amount of emissions and the direction of the smoke dispersal are monitored throughout the burn.



It is important to note that while prescribed fires do impact air quality in the short-term, they help reduce the risk of more long-term impacts from larger, more intense wildfires that can burn for longer periods. These uncontrolled wildfires typically cause greater air pollutant emission levels and occur under unfavorable smoke dispersion conditions, which ultimately result in more extreme and widespread air quality impacts.



The burns accomplished and the size and timing of burns depend on funding and burning conditions.

OURAY

Davewood

The Davewood projec
southwest of Montrose
burning 600 acres. The
ponderosa pine with
The primary purpose
fuel loadings in the un
a stand-replacement
the adjacent private

Escalante

The Escalante project
southwest of Delta. Th
acres. The area is dom
a mountain shrub und
were logged for beetl
and some trees in the
toe. Another portion
The primary purpose
the diseased trees to
and reduce the unde
minimize the risk of a
that could threaten th
structures to the south

Log Hill

The Log Hill project ar
Ridgway. The project
The dominate fuels in
juniper woodlands tha
The primary purpose
mule deer and elk ha
for large, destructive
private property and

located 12 miles
ject will entail
e fuels in the area is
in shrub understory.
tment is to reduce
o minimize the risk of
e that could threaten
homes and cabins.

cated 18 miles
be treated is 800
y ponderosa pine with
ortions of the area
ne about 4 years ago,
e infested with mistle-
d about 3 years ago.
tment is to eliminate
ainst future infestation
s and ground fuels to
lacement crown fire
property and
thwest.

ted 8 miles north of
burning 300 acres.
are pinyon pine and
cently roller-chopped.
tment is to improve
reduce the potential
at could threaten the
In the area.

Sand Mountain

The Sand Mountain project area is located 3 miles east of Crawford. The area to be treated is about 900 acres. The project area contains mountain shrub intermixed with pinyon pine and juniper. The purpose of the burn is to reduce the heavy amount of fuel at the lower elevations to lower the risk of wildfire to the private land. At higher elevations, the purpose is to improve wildlife habitat so the CDOW can reintroduce Bighorn Sheep into the area.

Government Springs

The Government Springs project area is located 10 miles south of Montrose. The project will entail burning 300 acres. The dominate fuels in the area are pinyon pine and juniper woodlands that were recently roller-chopped. The primary purpose of the treatment is to improve mule deer and elk habitat and reduce the potential for large, stand-replacement wildfires that could threaten the private property and structures in the area.

Transfer

The Transfer project area is located 20 miles southwest of Delta. The project will entail burning 200 acres. The dominate fuels in the area is ponderosa pine with a mountain shrub understory. The primary purpose is to reduce fuel loadings in the understory to minimize the risk of a stand-replacement crown fire that could threaten the private property to the north of the treatment area.

Paxton

The Paxton project area is located 9 miles west-soutl
west of Montrose. The project would entail burning a
total of 900 acres over the next 3 to 4 years. The fuel
consist of old chainings which have recently been
roller-chopped to reduce long-term fire danger and
improve habitat. The primary purposes of these burn
are to further reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to
major powerlines which cross the Uncompahgre
Plateau, and to improve and maintain mule deer
habitat into the future. Burning could occur for 4 to 5
days in both the Spring and Fall.

Roubideau

The Roubideau project area is located 14 miles
west of Montrose and 17 miles southwest of Delta.
The fuels consist of old chainings which have recentl
been roller-chopped to reduce fuels adjacent to
structures and to improve wildlife habitat. The primar
purposes for burning these roller-chopped areas are
to reduce the risk of severe wildfires near residences
along Transfer Road, and to improve and maintain
mule deer and elk habitat for the next 20 to 30 years
Burning could occur for 4 to 5 days in both the Spring
and Fall.