

Business 3J

COMMISSIONER AGENDA ITEM REQUEST

Proposed Commissioner Meeting Date: 04/09/2024

Pre-Meeting Date: 04/04/2024

Department: Natural Resources

Submitted By: Edward Smercina

Staff Contact: Edward Smercina

Type:

Consent Agenda

X Business Item

Public Hearing

Title of Requested Item For the Agenda: Consideration of an Approval of a Letter of Support for the Blanco Ranger District for Proposed Habitat Improvements.

Requested Commissioner Action: Approval

Item Review:

Legal Review

Finance Review

Within Budget Appropriation - Funding Source:

Not Within Budget - Explain:

Non-monetary Consideration – Explain:

X Documents Attached

Documents Emailed Separately



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF RIO BLANCO COUNTY, COLORADO
RIO BLANCO COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
555 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 599
MEEKER, COLORADO 81641
970-878-9430

May 9, 2024

Curtis Keetch via email: Curtis.keetch@usda.gov
Blanco Ranger District

The Board of County Commissioners of Rio Blanco County, Colorado supports the proposed Southwest Blanco Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project and the potential positive impact it could have on the National Forest System lands in the Blanco Ranger District southeast of Meeker.

This project will improve the health and safety of the land as the animals that live there. The proposed treatment will help to lessen the intensity of wildfires, and help ensure the safety of the firefighters trying to help control them when they do break out.

If you need anything additional, please let us know. Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is "Doug Overton" and the second is "Jennifer O'Hearon".

Board of County Commissioners
of Rio Blanco County, Colorado

Doug Overton
Chairman

Jennifer O'Hearon
Commissioner
bocc@rbc.us

Ty Gates
Commissioner

Vicky Edwards <vicky.edwards@rbc.us>

Fwd: News Release: Comments sought on proposed habitat improvements in Garfield and Rio Blanco counties

1 message

Edward Smercina <edward.smercina@rbc.us>

Wed, Mar 27, 2024 at 9:24 AM

To: Doug Overton <doug.overton@rbc.us>, Ty Gates <ty.gates@rbc.us>, Jennifer O'Hearon <jennifer.ohearon@rbc.us>, Larry Jones <larry.jones@rbc.us>, Vicky Edwards <vicky.edwards@rbc.us>

Edward Smercina
Rio Blanco County
Emergency and Natural Resources Manager
Email: edward.smercina@rbc.us
Office (970) 878-9586

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ginny Harrington** <ginny.a.harrington@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 26, 2024 at 6:52 PM

Subject: Fwd: News Release: Comments sought on proposed habitat improvements in Garfield and Rio Blanco counties

To: Ginny Harrington <ginny.a.harrington@gmail.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Boyd, David - FS, CO** <David.Boyd@usda.gov>

Date: Tue, Mar 26, 2024 at 3:46 PM

Subject: News Release: Comments sought on proposed habitat improvements in Garfield and Rio Blanco counties

To: Boyd, David - FS, CO <David.Boyd@usda.gov>

Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service News Release

Contact: Curtis Keetch, Blanco District Ranger

970-366-0669 curtis.keetch@usda.govwww.fs.usda.gov/whiteriver

Comments sought on proposed habitat improvements in Blanco District

Proposal would treat up to 14,121 acres in Garfield and Rio Blanco counties

MEEKER, Colo. (March 26, 2024) – The White River National Forest is seeking public comments on a proposed wildlife habitat improvement project that would treat up to 14,121 acres of National Forest System lands in the Blanco Ranger District southeast of Meeker over the next 15 to 20 years.

The Southwest Blanco Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project would use a combination of prescribed fire, mechanical and hand cutting of shrubs and trees, weeding, and seeding and planting to create more diversity in size and ages of aspen and mountain shrubs.

"This project would increase the amount feeding areas for elk, mule deer and other wildlife species while maintaining important habitat these species use for cover," said Blanco District Ranger Curtis Keetch.

A secondary benefit of opening the thick, continuous stands of aspen and mountain shrubs is reducing fuels, which would lessen the intensity of unwanted, large wildfires and give firefighters a place to more effectively engage wildfires when necessary.

Vegetation treatment would occur within a total proposed 37,810-acre project area comprised of four treatment units in Garfield and Rio Blanco counties. The project would not exceed 500 acres of mechanical/hand/weeding treatments per year and 1,000 acres of prescribed fire per year, with the total combined treatments not to exceed 1,500 acres per year for the entire project area.

More information, including maps and information about how to comment, is available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=65795>. Comments will be most helpful if received by April 24, 2024.

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David Boyd
Public Affairs Officer

White River National Forest

c: 970-319-4895
david.boyd@usda.gov

[900 Grand Ave](#)
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
www.fs.fed.us



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2 attachments



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

White River National Forest

Forest Service News Release

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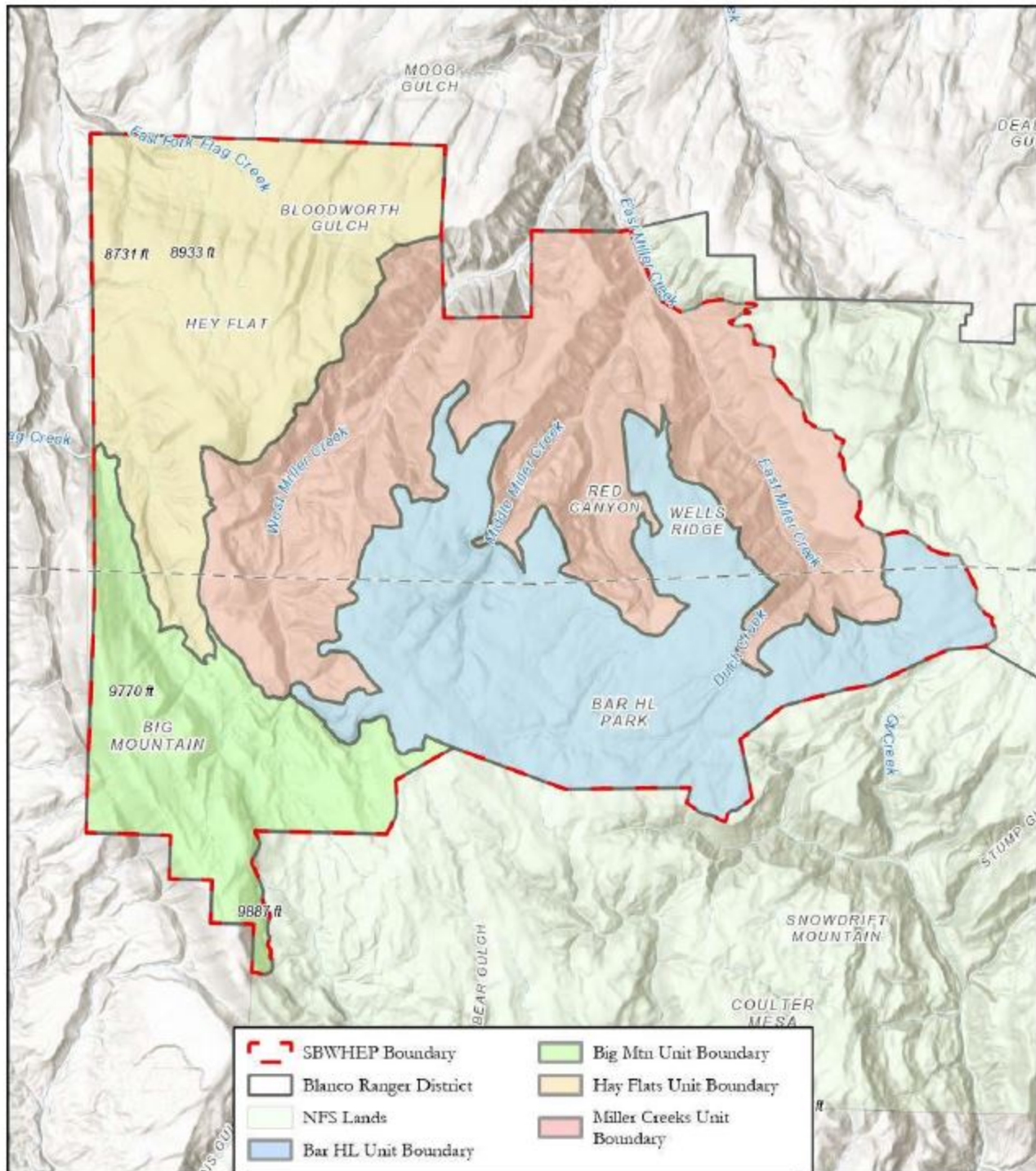
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**Southwest Blanco
Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project
Treatment Area Units**

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, USFWS, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Esri, USGS

2024

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N

