



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Animas City Mountain Prescribed Burn FAQs

Tres Rios Field Office, Colorado

What is the project?

The Bureau of Land Management Tres Rios Field Office has planned a prescribed fire treatment for up to 717 acres on Animas City Mountain in Durango, Colorado to reduce the risk of high-intensity wildfire, improve forest health and wildlife habitat.

How will the burn be completed?

The BLM has completed an extensive planning process (called a Prescription) that was developed by fire experts who utilize fire behavior computer modeling software combined with decades of experience conducting prescribed burns in southwest Colorado to develop the plan. The plan involves implementing it in smaller areas, called burn units. Animas City Mountain has been divided into seven burn units. The smoke permit allows approximately 360 acres to be burned per day. Crews are expected to begin burning from the top of the mountain, slowly lighting an edge that has already been thinned with chainsaws and using ignition folks and helicopter/drone to light the interior in a strip pattern.

When will this prescribed burn occur?

Ideal timing for the project occurs during the Spring and Fall when conditions are more favorable for low-intensity fire. Fuel (vegetation) and weather conditions must fall within a predetermined "prescription" that is known to yield desirable results. Implementation of the burn will depend on weather and the availability of fire personnel to conduct the operation and could take place as early as the spring of 2022. The burn is expected to take 2-4 days for ignitions, with additional days to patrol the area and extinguish hot spots

What about the smoke coming from the prescribed burn?

Unlike a wildfire, which produces uncontrolled long-duration high-intensity smoke, prescribed burns produce controlled smoke for a shorter timeframe. The BLM has worked with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Air Quality (CPDHE) smoke regulators since 2018 to develop a smoke permit that accomplishes this burn with minimal smoke impacts to the community. Several smoke monitors will be in place within the community to monitor smoke impacts throughout the burn, and the BLM will only proceed when conditions are within the permitted thresholds. Ignitions will end in the late afternoon to early evening, reducing smoke impacts overnight when smoke typically settles into valleys and drainages.

What kind of safety measures is the BLM taking to make sure the fire does not spread to town?

The BLM is committed to managing this burn in a way that is safe, controlled, and aligned with the values all the Durango Community cares about, such as clean air and healthy forests. The life, health and property of the local community is BLM's number one priority, so this burn plan was designed strategically by a team of fire experts to only occur under the safest conditions. BLM fire personnel will be utilizing the latest computer modeling software and up-to-date weather and vegetation conditions to manage the burn safely.

How are prescribed burns different from human-caused or naturally occurring fires?

Prescribed burns are subject to strict guidelines like when, how, and under what conditions burns should be conducted. Importantly, prescribed burns are planned by BLM's fire professionals, who have extensive fire experience. Fire is a natural part of the local ecosystem, and many plants and animals benefit from its presence. However, it is best when fire managers can control when and where it occurs.

What are the effects on wildlife and their habitat?

By removing some of the understory, this prescribed burn will open areas to improve wildlife corridors and habitats. Gambel oakbrush will resprout and be more palatable for wildlife. Competitive grasses can come in and reduce the amount of Gambel oakbrush sprouts while providing new nutrient rich browse.

How will the prescribed burn on Animas City Mountain impact the watershed, and will it cause debris flows in the future?

Prescribed burns mimic what historical natural occurring wildfires would have done, but in a safer, controlled manner, with fewer impacts and consequences on watersheds. This project will burn the vegetation above the surface and leave the root systems intact, which will help prevent soil erosion and debris flows. The BLM plans to burn in the spring and fall, giving vegetation time to regenerate, further reducing erosion risk. This burn will have a small mosaic-like footprint on the landscape that will have minimal impact on the local watershed.

For More Information:

InciWeb – Animas City Mountain Prescribed Burn: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7688/>

Social Media: SWD Fire Facebook @BLMMontroseFireUnit or <https://www.facebook.com/BLMMontroseFireUnit>

SWD Fire Twitter @SWD_Fire

Animas City Mountain Prescribed Burn Contacts:

Email: 2022.CO.ACMRX@firenet.gov

Phone: 970-403-5576



**Animas City Mountain RX
InciWeb QR Code**