

Pike & San Isabel National Forests, Cimarron & Comanche National Grasslands

Waldo Canyon Fire Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Implementation Fact Sheet



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WALDO CANYON BAER IMPLEMENTATION Aerial Mulching Treatment Fact Sheet

On August 18, the Pike and San Isabel National Forests, Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands awarded the aerial mulching BAER treatment contract to Bradco Environmental.

The mulching treatment was recommended by the BAER assessment team to protect life and provide for public safety. The treated areas are expected to provide an overall approximate reduction in post fire water run-off and sediment flow by 20%. The BAER assessment team previously identified specific areas within the burn to be treated by aerial mulching to provide immediate ground cover.

A total of 3,038 acres on National Forest System lands will be treated with agricultural straw (Ag-Straw) and shredded wood (Woodshred). The Ag-Straw is from Colorado and the Woodshred is being created on-site by a contractor who is felling hazard trees along roads within the Waldo Canyon Fire area. The felled hazard trees are then processed into shredded wood chips by a grinder and aurally applied to the treatable areas with the burned area.

Bradco Environmental began the aerial application of the Ag-Straw mulch on Saturday afternoon, August 25, within the interior units of the burn area and applied Woodshred on burn area interior units on Sunday, August 26. The company has five helicopters available for the aerial mulching treatments and should be completed by mid-September.

FACTS:

- The Waldo Canyon Fire burned a total of 18,247 acres (14,422 acres of National Forest System land) (147 acres of Department of Defense land) (3,678 acres of private land) in El Paso County, in the State of Colorado.

- Slopes within the burned area need to meet certain criteria to be considered for a mulching treatment such as: moderate to high soil burn severity areas, and slopes between 25 to 60%.
- 3,038 acres of the 14,422 acres of Forest Service land that burned in the Waldo Canyon Fire met those criteria.
- Aerial mulching using Woodshred on 49 units totaling 1,958 acres.
- Contract specifications require Woodshred to be applied to Waldo Canyon slopes at 70% coverage at a ½-inch depth.
- Aerial mulching using noxious weed-free Ag-Straw on 28 units totaling 1,080 acres.
- Contract specifications require Ag-Straw to be applied to Waldo Canyon slopes at 85% coverage at a 1-inch depth.
- Ag-Straw mulching is prescribed for gentler slopes with less wind impacts.
- Woodshred mulching is prescribed for steeper slopes that are prone to increased wind occurrences.
- The BAER team has field inspectors working in the burned area inspecting all aspects of the aerial mulching treatment efforts: Inspecting the Ag-Straw to ensure it is noxious weed-free; inspecting the Woodshred product that is being produced on-site in the burned area to ensure that the mix of large and fine wood chips are correct; and inspecting each mulching unit to ensure that contract specifications for mulch coverage and depth are met.
- The helicopters are capable of carrying approximately 2,200-3,200 pounds of mulch per load (varies due to the amount of fuel in the helicopter during each mulching-drop).
- The federal government cost for the aerial mulching contract is approximately \$4.8 million.
- Bradco Environmental's contract states that it has 30-days to complete the aerial mulching project.