

Regional air quality - Western Slope

The Western Slope Region includes nine counties on the far western border of Colorado. A mix of mountains on the east, and mesas, plateaus, valleys and canyons to the west form the landscape of this region. Grand Junction is the largest urban area, and other cities include Telluride, Montrose, Delta, Rifle, Glenwood Springs, Meeker, Rangely and Craig. The population of this region is 325,046, according to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau estimates. The population in this region increased by 5.3% between 2010 and 2020. Primary industries include ranching, agriculture, mining, energy development and tourism. Dinosaur and Colorado National Monuments are located in this region.

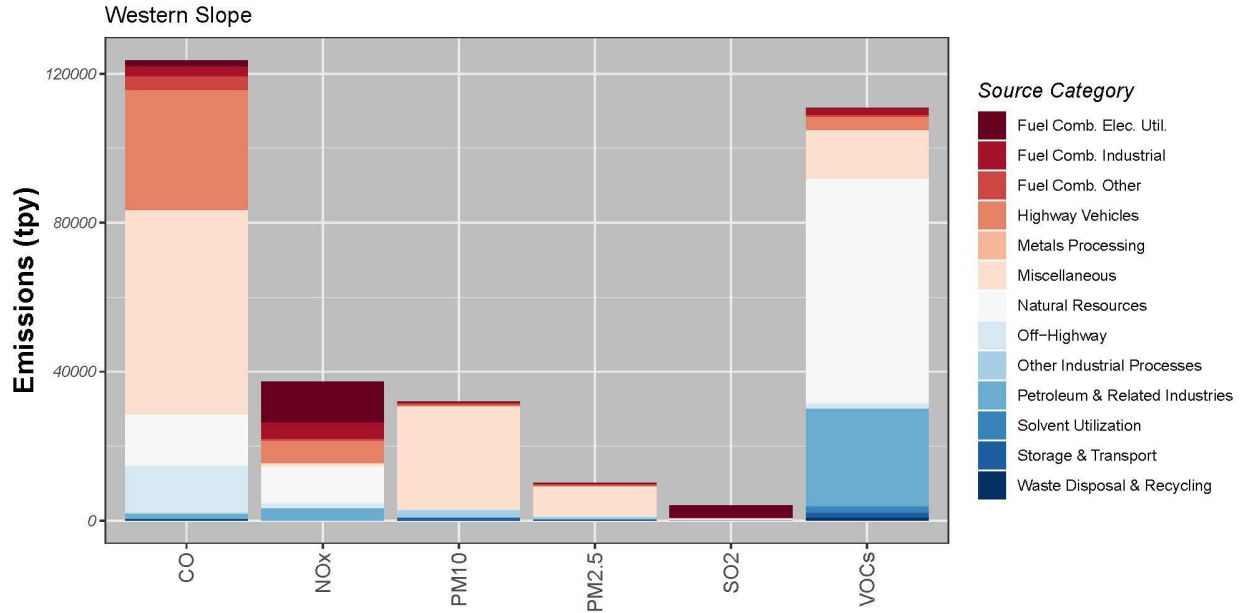
All of the Western Slope Region presently complies with federal air quality standards. However, elevated ozone levels were recorded in the Rangely area during the winters of 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, which resulted in violations of the 2008 ozone standard. The area has not experienced such elevated ozone concentrations since that time. The 3-year average (2015-2017) ozone concentration is below the 2008 NAAQS, so a “nonattainment designation” is not appropriate for Rangely. The Grand Junction area experiences elevated wintertime PM_{2.5} concentrations due to inversions, though the area has not violated the federal standard.

Air Pollution Sources

- Motor vehicles.
- Oil and gas development.
- Craig coal-fired power plant.
- Coal mines in Delta, Rio Blanco and Moffat counties.
- Sand and gravel operations.
- Windblown dust.
- Wildfires.
- Prescribed fire.

Air Pollution Control Measures

- Early 2019 closure of Nucla power plant that was scheduled for 2022.
- Future closure and emissions reductions from controls at the Craig power plant. Unit 1 will be retired no later than December 31, 2025, Unit 2 will be retired no later than September 30, 2028, and Unit 3 will be retired no later than December 31, 2029.
- ColoWyo coal mine is set to retire no later than December 31, 2031.
- Statewide controls on oil and gas production.
- Statewide emission standards for consumer products and architectural and industrial maintenance coatings.
- Smoke Management Program for prescribed fire.
- Fugitive dust control plans.
- PM₁₀ control plan for Telluride includes: wood-burning control measures, street sweeping and sanding controls, use of chemical deicers, and paving of dirt roads.
- For Rangely, oil and gas emissions control measures are being developed for production areas across the Utah state line, which are the major influence on elevated ozone concentrations in the area.



Regional air quality - Central Mountains

The Central Mountains Region consists of 12 counties in the central area of the state. The Continental Divide passes through much of this region. Mountains and mountain valleys are the dominant landscape. Leadville, Steamboat Springs, Cañon City, Salida, Buena Vista and Aspen represent the larger communities. The population of this region is about 241,886, according to 2020 U.S. Census Bureau estimates. The population in this region increased by 7.1% between 2010 and 2020. Skiing, tourism, ranching, mining and correctional facilities are the primary industries. Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park is located in this region, along with several wilderness areas. All of the area complies with federal air quality standards.

Air Pollution Sources

- Motor vehicles.
- Holcim Portland cement plant in Fremont County.
- Sand and gravel operations.
- Hayden power plant.
- Climax Molybdenum Mine.
- Coal mines in Gunnison County.
- Wildfires.
- Controlled burning.

Air Pollution Control Measures

- Power plants: dry limestone scrubbers to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions, fabric filter baghouse to control particulate emissions, selective catalytic reduction at the Hayden plant installed in 2018 to control NO_x emissions. Hayden Unit 1 will be retired no later than December 31, 2028, and Unit 2 will be retired no later than December 31, 2027.
- Holcim Portland Cement plant: fabric filter baghouses, selective non-catalytic reduction emissions for NO_x reduction, wet limestone scrubbers for sulfur dioxide reduction.
- Smoke management program for large controlled burns.