

# The Corner Post

Winter/Spring 2018



The Wyoming Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources & Policy Division  
Newsletter



WY. Dept. of Agriculture  
Natural Resources & Policy Division  
2219 Carey Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0100

# SECRETARIAL ORDER 3362

Justin Caudill, Ag Program Coordinator

On February 9th at the Western Conservation & Hunting Expo in Salt Lake City, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed Secretarial Order 3362. This order directs appropriate bureaus within Interior to work in close partnership with state entities and private landowners; to enhance and improve habitat conditions, winter ranges, and migration corridors for antelope, elk, and mule deer in western states. It is intended to improve collaboration between federal, state and private landowners thus improving wildlife management and conservation.

will work with our State partners and others to conserve and/or improve priority western big-game winter range and migration corridors in sagebrush ecosystems and in other ecotypes as necessary.”

The order further directs the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wild Life Service, and National Parks Service to identify Coordinator’s to work with State, Local Government, and landowner to identify active programs focused on big game winter range and/or migration corridors. The order also directs USGS in respect to science data and science needs to: “cooperate with the States,  
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## Quotable Quotes

“I had rather be on my farm than be emperor of the world.”  
-George Washington

\*Cover photo courtesy of Vicki Laraway

Priority states include Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. These States have extensive public lands with sagebrush steppe environments and big-game herds that are highly valued by hunters and tourists. The order states, “Accordingly, the Department



# Agricultural Producer Suicide Rate and Resources in Wyoming



Lucy Pauley, Mediation Program Coordinator

Recent studies have indicated that American farmers may have a higher rate of suicide than veterans. According to the Center for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6525a1.htm>), individuals in the farming, fishing and forestry occupational group have the highest rate of suicide at 84.5 individuals per 100,000. That's even higher than veterans, who have a rate of 35.3 per 100,000. It's a difficult time economically for many agricultural producers around the country. Financial stress, combined with a sense of powerlessness to control prices, weather, and other factors that affect agriculture, and the burden of carrying a family's legacy to the next generation can impact producers' mental health.

This is a difficult subject to address but there are resources available in Wyoming to help producers who feel like they are near the end of their rope. Finances and credit might be a significant source of stress right now. The Mediation Program is available to help resolve agricultural credit issues that arise with local banks or the USDA Farm Services Agency. Mediation

provides an opportunity for both the lender and the borrower to sit down, discuss the situation and possibly develop new solutions that work for both sides. The Mediation Program can also assist producers in finding a financial counselor who can help them take a look at the situation.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger of harming themselves or others, please call 911. If someone is having suicidal thoughts, the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). You can also text WYO to 741-741 for the Crisis Text Line. Both of those lines are available 24 hours a day and there is no charge. The Wyoming Department of Health has more information on suicide prevention on their website at <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/prevention/wipp/suicide-prevention/>.

For more information on agricultural credit mediation or financial counseling, contact Lucy Pauley at (307 ) 777-8788 or email [lucy.pauley@wyo.gov](mailto:lucy.pauley@wyo.gov). ✦

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## Order 3362 (continued from page 1)

the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' program manager for the Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool, prior to developing maps or mapping tools related to elk, deer, or pronghorn movement or land use; and to prioritize evaluations of the effectiveness of habitat treatments in sagebrush communities, as requested by States or land management bureaus, and identified needs related to development."

This order looks to be geared to improve relationships and create the opportunity for meaningful outcomes that will benefit Wyoming's wildlife, culture, and people. As with many of these ideas becoming programs, only through time will outcomes, and/or consequences, be realized. ✦

Americans with Disabilities Act

To obtain this publication in an alternative format, contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at (307) 777-7323.



Chris Wichmann, Manager

Since the beginning of the Trump Administration there have been numerous changes and proposals coming from the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). One proposal coming from the Secretary of Interior is to Streamline the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis which may create major changes on how the BLM approaches NEPA and how we work on NEPA projects.

Under the Obama Administration the BLM started a process to streamline NEPA called Planning 2.0, which drastically changed how NEPA would be performed and how the public would participate in the process. Some Cooperating Agencies were not enthused with Planning 2.0 because it had the potential to affect how Cooperating Agencies' worked with the BLM on NEPA projects. However, after the Administration change, President Trump (March 2017) signed an Executive Order to eliminate the Planning 2.0 Rule (March 2017), and in August of 2017 Secretary of Interior released Secretarial Order (SO) 3355 titled "Streamlining NEPA Reviews."

The intent of SO 3355 is to streamline the NEPA process so the BLM can continue to make sound decisions based on an informed understanding of the potential environmental consequences. It asks the BLM to focus on issues that truly matter rather than amassing unnecessary detail, while reducing paperwork and limiting discussions that are not significant to the proposal.

The Directive associated with SO 3355 may not necessarily be new concepts but are definitely new compared to how the BLM operates today. Directive #1 – Setting Page and Timing Limitations to Environmental Impact Statements (EIS); states EISs shall not be more than 150 pages (300 pages for complex projects) and shall be completed within 1-year of the release of the Notice of Intent. In general, current EISs will take approximately 2-years or longer to complete and can be in excess of 600 pages (or longer). We have seen several Resource Management Plans last over 7-years and contain thousands of pages. The streamlining process does allow for tiering of NEPA analysis and incorporation by reference, which will be key to meeting this Directive. This is a welcomed change but poses a lot of problems for both the BLM and Cooperating Agencies, with the biggest concern of having a defensible document at the end of the process and how the role of Cooperating Agencies change with an expedited schedule.

Directive #2 – Setting Target Page and Timing Limitations for Preparation of Environmental Assessments (EAs); states that page limits and timing of completion of EAs should be developed, along with identifying of common impediments that would hinder proposed targets from being reached. EAs can vary greatly depending on the project, complexity and controversy associated with the proposal. Again, changes to how EAs are managed may pose additional questions and complexities to both the BLM and Cooperating Agencies.

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# DRONES



## A Help for Wyoming Producers?

Joe Budd, Senior Policy Analyst

Drones have been making some large strides lately around the nation and across industries. So can they help agricultural producers in Wyoming? What could be some of the drawbacks of their use?

Drones seem to have added much needed help to certain ag sectors – mainly in crop production. According to PwC, a Polish drone company, there are six major ways drones could revolutionize commercial crop production: 1. Soil/field analyses (for planting patterns, fertilizing, etc.), 2. Planting via drones (alleged to drop planting costs by 85%), 3. Crop spraying (pest abatement), 4. Monitoring (mainly reducing lags of previous tech such as satellites), 5. Irrigation (what's dry, what's wet, etc.), and 6. Health of crops (could be fungus, bacteria, etc.). While all of these sound great, the cost to evaluate these things may be more than the reward. For example, you need a drone that can carry a camera with hyperspectral, multispectral, thermal, visible and near-infrared light scanning, lasers, echoing, or even LiDAR to capture many of the attributes described. Not cheap for the drone or the camera.

So, how might drones help Wyoming producers? We don't have vast fields of corn like Iowa that need monitored but we do produce a respectable amount of row crops. There may be opportunity for producers to use drones to answer specific questions they have. For those that are in the hay business, drones may help you to determine which areas need work in terms of irrigation or which portions of fields are not producing due to other factors. Drones deliver real-time information, as opposed to satellite imagery which tends to be somewhat delayed and is most likely more useful in the next year. On range and pastureland, drones may help with detecting use patterns by livestock and could

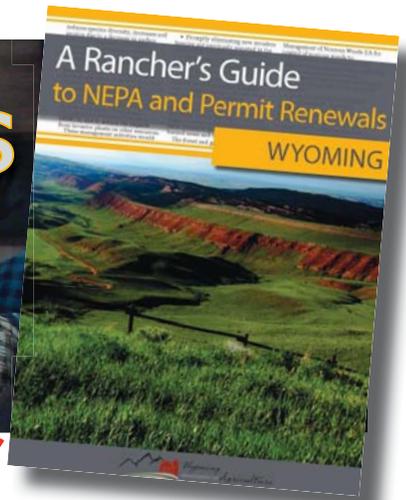
inform grazing strategies or help estimate rainfall patterns across large pastures. In all instances, drones could help identify places where weed infestations exist at a much finer scale than satellite imagery. However, as with any technology, when it works, it's great – when it doesn't, it's pretty frustrating. We also have a tendency to over-use technology when simpler methods may prove equally fruitful.

At any rate, drones seem to be continuing to advance and become more commonplace in multiple industries. There are still a number of lingering questions surrounding their use regarding safety, privacy, and insurance but PwC estimates there is a total addressable value of \$127 billion in drone-powered solutions across all industries with \$32.4 billion of that in the ag sector. If nothing else, maybe it's a way to diversify your portfolio. †

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Justin Williams, Senior Policy Analyst

*Save the date!*

Public land grazing is extremely common for most Wyoming ranchers. Many grazing permits are on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or US Forest Service (USFS) lands, which are good for ten years. Before the permits expire, grazing permittees should work closely with the agency staff to prepare for permit renewal under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Wyoming Department of Agriculture along with the University of Wyoming Extension Service is hosting a NEPA for Ranchers Workshop in Baggs, WY on Friday April 13, 2018.

The workshop will provide grazing permittees an overview of NEPA, understand the nuances between an Environmental Analysis and an Environmental Impact Statement, Cooperative Monitoring details, question and answer with permittees and agency panel, as well as a legal overview for permit renewals. Permittees will leave the workshop with a more thorough understanding of what to expect when their permits are renewed and how to navigate final decisions and appeals. ✦

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**NEPA (continued from page 3)**

In addition, SO 3355 asks for recommendations to further streamline the NEPA process by considering changing other regulations, revising guidance and policies and developing additional Categorical Exclusions (CXs). The expanded use of CXs would be a welcomed change and could definitely help improve and expedite the approval of new activities.

concern then moves to how the BLM will accomplish this task and how does the new NEPA management affect our roles as Cooperating agencies. Time will tell...or we will see soon enough as proposed projects implement this new Directive.

The intent of SO 3355 is very good and should help the BLM move projects forward to completion. However, the

If you need any more information or have questions please contact the Natural Resource and Policy Division 307-777-7323. ✦

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**The Cornerpost Newsletter**  
please contact Michelle MacDonald at: (307) 777-7323 or michelle.macdonald@wyo.gov.  
Our newsletter is also posted on the WDA website at: <http://agriculture.wy.gov/divisions/nrp>.



# Upcoming Events

March 16-18:	Wyoming Bee College, Cheyenne	June 5-6:	WACD Spring Board of Director's Meeting
April 9-10:	Board of Agriculture Meeting, Cheyenne	June 6-9:	WY Cattle Industry Summer Convention & Trade Show, Riverton
April 12-13:	Wyoming Beef Council Board Meeting, Riverton	June 16:	Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust and WSGA Young Producers Assembly 2nd Annual Branding Iron Gold Tournament, Casper
April 13:	NEPA for Ranchers, Baggs	August 5-10:	Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture, Salt Lake City
April 14-15:	Gardening for Success Conference, Cheyenne	August 11-19:	Wyoming State Fair, Douglas
April 18-21:	Wyoming FFA State Convention and Leadership Conference, Cheyenne	August 15-16:	Wyoming Beef Council Board Meeting, Douglas
May 1-4:	Basic Mediation Workshop, Jackson		
May 16-17:	Agricultural Bankers Conference, Torrington		

If you have questions or comments about the information in this newsletter, or to obtain an email copy, please contact Michelle MacDonald, Natural Resources & Policy Division at: 307.777.7323 or [michelle.macdonald@wyo.gov](mailto:michelle.macdonald@wyo.gov).

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