



Wyoming Agriculture

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The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.

January 10, 2013

Joe Hicks
Shoshone National Forest
Wapiti Range District Office
203A Yellowstone Avenue
Cody, WY 82414

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Scoping Statement for an Environmental Assessment (EA) to incorporate adaptive livestock grazing management on the Big Creek, North Fork Winter Range, Rand Creek and Robbers Roost, Blackwater, Crow Creek, Goff Creek, Grinnell Creek, June Creek, Libby Creek and Name It Creek allotments on the Wapiti Ranger District of the Shoshone National Forest (SNF).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposed EA affects our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, it's important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA supports the proposed action to continue to authorize livestock grazing and incorporate adaptive management on all eleven allotments to meet Forest Plan direction. This proposal allows SNF personnel the flexibility to change livestock grazing management in a timely manner to maintain and enhance rangeland conditions. Furthermore, we support the use and development of range improvement projects to achieve healthy rangelands for the benefit of livestock and wildlife.

Following are the WDA's specific comments to the Scoping Statement:

Purpose and Need

The WDA appreciates that SNF personnel will use monitoring to determine if and when changes to livestock grazing management are needed and we strongly encourage joint cooperative monitoring continue.

Project Design Features

"When long-term drought situations occur, range permittees will be notified in writing that reductions in season of livestock numbers may be anticipated."

The WDA strongly recommends the SNF works closely with livestock grazing permittees in the event of long-term drought. This includes more than simply providing notification of livestock reductions in writing. We recommend changing this design feature to "When long-term drought situations occur, SNF personnel will work with range permittees to identify and implement livestock grazing management strategies in response to drought conditions."

Equal Opportunity in Employment and Services

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“Defer wildfire or prescribed burn areas from livestock grazing for a portion or all of the following two growing to ensure re-growth of forage species.”

The WDA does not support using a pre-determined timeline to determine when livestock can resume grazing on burned areas. We recommend the following changes to increase flexibility following fire. “Based on site-specific monitoring and evaluations, consider deferring wildfire or prescribed burn areas from livestock grazing for a portion or all of the following two growing seasons to ensure re-growth of forage species. Deferment periods may vary (increase or decrease) based on monitoring and evaluations.”

In conclusion, the WDA supports the authorization of livestock grazing in the eleven allotments. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Scoping Statement. We encourage continued attention to our concerns and look forward to hearing about and being involved in future proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,



Jason Fearneyhough

Director

JF/jc

CC: Governor’s Policy Office
Rocky Mountain Farmer’s Union
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming Stock Growers Association