



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

April 15, 2016

David Whittekiend
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Supervisor
857 West Jordan Parkway
South Jordan, UT 84095

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining Scoping letter to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on 10 domestic sheep allotments in the Ashley National Forest (ANF) and/or Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests (UWCNF).

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

WDA appreciates the ANF and UWCNF efforts to transparently provide information regarding the intent to analyze and continue domestic sheep grazing across the ten allotments identified. We support the use of the Forest Plan language, recognizing historic domestic sheep grazing pre-dates the forest service and the Wilderness designation. We strongly urge the forest service recognize the value of grazing management of domestic sheep to improve vegetative conditions across the ANF and UWCNF. Improved vegetation conditions reduce soil erosion, reduce fine fuels and fire, as well as improve forage quality for wildlife¹².

WDA submitted previous comprehensive comments, most recently on December 23, 2015. We support the inclusion of these comments as submitted in the development of the range of alternatives. We support decisions based on peer reviewed science and not speculation. Additionally, we would strongly urge the ANF and UWCNF ensure all vacant allotments, closed allotments, and forage reserves are

¹ E. William Anderson, R. J. (1975). Improving Quality of Winter Forage for Elk by Cattle Grazing. *Journal of Range Management*, 120-125.

² Vavra, M. (2005). Livestock Grazing and Wildlife: Developing Compatibilities. *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, 128 - 134.

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Ashley-Wasatch Domestic Sheep Allotments

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identified and compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act prior to and decisions regarding domestic or bighorn sheep management. We look forward to working closely with you as a Cooperating Agency. If you have questions, please contact Justin Williams, Senior Policy Analyst at 307-777-7067.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doug J. Miyamoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "M".

Doug Miyamoto

Director

DM/jw

**CC: Governor's Policy Office
Wyoming Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
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