



Mark Gordon, *Governor*
Doug Miyamoto, *Director*
2219 Carey Ave. • Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: (307) 777-7321 • Fax: (307) 777-6593
Web: agriculture.wy.gov • Email: wda1@wyo.gov

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

August 13, 2020

ATTN: Shoshone NF Travel Management Planning Project

Mark Foster
SNF Environmental Coordinator
Shoshone National Forest
808 Meadow Lane Avenue
Cody, WY 82414
SNF.FS.shonfcomment@usda.gov

Dear Mr. Foster,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Shoshone National Forest Travel Management Plan Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Shoshone National Forest (SNF).

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 SNFs efforts to work closely with the public to address multiple-use, including off-highway vehicles (OHV), over-snow vehicles (OSV), wildlife, livestock grazing, and recreation. We offer the following comments to the EA, which we urge the SNF to consider as part of the final decision.

WDA does not have comments on specific roads to keep open, closed or limited to specific uses, but rather encourage SNF to diligently meet with and gather information from users, including but not limited to livestock grazing permittees, hunters, off-highway and over-snow vehicle users and other recreationalists.

The WDA asks SNF staff to meet individually with grazing permittees and private landowners and ask what roads are necessary for them to manage their livestock and grazing operations. Specifically, staff should ask permittees which roads they use for fence maintenance, stock tanks, and water development sites, mineral placement, loading and unloading sites for livestock, animal husbandry, etc. All of the above uses should be covered under "Administrative Use." We ask SNF to ensure livestock grazing permittees have access to their allotments and can use roads for the administrative uses listed above.

WDA strongly supports SNF collaborating with interested agencies, organizations, and individuals to eliminate duplicative roads and to develop and implement a reclamation plan on all closed roads. Reclaiming these roads will reduce soil erosion, increase forage for livestock and wildlife, as well as reduce unauthorized use by motorists.

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WDA encourages SNF to reduce the impact on grazing allotments and supports the changes made in Alternative 3 to further decrease impacts. We encourage SNF to work with permittees and interested agencies in future actions taken in the project area to reduce the cumulative effects of changes to the travel management of the area.

We understand the complexity of meeting multiple-uses and interests on the Shoshone National Forest. We believe with on-going communication there is a solution to address environmental resource damage, improve wildlife habitat, allow livestock grazing management, while providing a wide array of recreation. We look forward to working closely with you as a Cooperating Agency. If you have questions, please contact Scott McDnald, Senior Policy Analyst at 307-777-7024.

Sincerely,



Chris Wichmann
Manager, Natural Resources and Policy Division

CW/sm

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
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