



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

August 26, 2013

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests
Laramie Ranger District
Attn: Frank Romero
2468 Jackson St.
Laramie, WY 82070

Dear Mr. Romero,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Pole Mountain Vegetation Project Notice of Proposed Action on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests (MBRNF).

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.

The WDA supports the MBRNF's Proposed Action to burn and mechanically treat 8,653 acres of vegetation, inclusive of conifer and conifer-encroached sagebrush sites. We offer the following comments for the MBRNF to consider, as this project will likely have temporary impacts to grazing permittees, agriculture producers, landowners, and other citizens, both in and near the project area.

We support efforts to reduce mountain pine beetle infested trees as well as restore the vegetative age-class diversity, while meeting the objectives in the MBRNF Forest Plan. The burn and mechanical treatments of the proposed areas will not only improve forest health, but also improve wildlife habitat and livestock forage by creating an open canopy and re-establishing herbaceous vegetation.

We encourage the MBRNF to consider and analyze some of the following impacts upon livestock grazing: introduction and spread of noxious weeds, increased number of vehicles in the area causing death or impairments of livestock during project implementation, damage to fences and other range improvements, as well as other detrimental social and economic impacts upon livestock operators and livestock management operations.

We strongly encourage MBRNF officials to work with all livestock grazing permittees and private landowners potentially impacted by implementing this project. We request MBRNF officials evaluate the

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time needed before grazing can resume on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with livestock grazing permittees, rather than establishing or adhering to a predetermined timeline. We encourage managed livestock grazing at the first feasible opportunity.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide scoping comments on the proposed project. We encourage continued attention to our concerns and look forward to hearing about and being involved in proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Fearneyhough". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jason Fearneyhough

Director

JF/jw

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