



Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF *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.

September 21, 2016

Mrs. Rhonda O'Byrne
Project Manager
United States Forest Service
Black Hills National Forest
1019 North 5th St
Custer, South Dakota 57730

Dear Mrs. O'Byrne:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) scoping comments pertaining to the United States Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest (FS) proposed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Black Hills Resilient Landscapes Project (project).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life. As the proposed project could affect our industry, citizens, and natural resources it is important that you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide the opportunity to communicate pertinent issues and concerns.

We fully support the FS's proposal to proactively manage for more resilient and resistant forest systems and move towards objectives within the FS Resource Management Plan. We encourage the FS to use every available tool including, but not limited to: prescribed fire, cutting, timber sales, and targeted livestock grazing. We also encourage the FS to review and use the Final Report from the Governor's Task Force on Forests. The report can be found at: http://www.uwyo.edu/haub/ruckelshaus-institute/files/docs/forests/forest%20task%20force%20report_final.pdf.

Additionally, no mandatory rest/deferment schedules should be established for livestock grazing (i.e., mandatory "two years rest"); the timeframe in which grazing can recommence should be based upon objectives and sound science, not arbitrary timelines. If any livestock grazing allotments are affected by the project the FS should explore ways in which to limit or mitigate impacts. This may include opening closed allotments or using forage reserves to defer grazing until objectives have been met. No Animal Unit Months (AUMs) should be lost due to this project and the FS should review stocking rates post-treatment to determine if more forage is available for livestock.

In conclusion, we thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward to reviewing the future EIS.

Sincerely,



Doug Miyamoto
Director

DM/jb

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

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