



Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Matthew H. Mead, *Governor*
Jason Fearneyhough, *Director*
2219 Carey Ave. • Cheyenne, WY 82002
Phone: (307) 777-7321 • Fax: (307) 777-6593
Web: agriculture.wy.gov • Email: wda1@state.wy.us

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

April 28, 2011

Duane Spencer, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Buffalo Field Office
1425 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY 82834-2436

Dear Mr. Spencer:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments pertaining to the Draft Environmental Assessments (EAs) and associated 10-year Term Grazing Lease Transfer and Issuance for the Plum Creek (#02441) and Wythom Road (#02334) allotments by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Buffalo Field Office (FO).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As these EAs affect 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 the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA supports Alternative B (Proposed Action), which transfers grazing privileges and issues new 10-year term grazing leases. Alternative B also proposes to keep the total number of Animal Unit Months the same. WDA supports this proposal to maintain grazing preference. We also support dividing the allotments to separate grazing preference among related base properties.

We do not support Alternative A, which eliminates livestock grazing and removes the preference from the grazing base. As the EAs clearly state, livestock grazing on each allotment is an approved activity in the Buffalo Resource Management Plan. Alternative A would cause negative impacts to livestock producers if adjacent private lands were fenced. Choosing such an alternative would have significant negative consequences on livestock grazing permittees, vegetative resources, wildlife habitat, and the local economy.

Peer-reviewed science and monitoring data should underlie decisions made. The EAs utilize science to support the decisions and discussions regarding the continuation of livestock grazing on the allotments. The WDA appreciates the effort of the Buffalo FO to include peer-reviewed science.

In conclusion, the WDA supports the continuance of livestock grazing on each of the allotments. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the scope of the proposed EAs. We encourage continued attention to our concerns and we look forward to hearing about and being involved in 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

Equal Opportunity in Employment and Services

BOARD MEMBERS

Vacant, *District 1* • Jim Hodder, *District 2* • Shaun Sims, *District 3* • John Moore, *District 4* • Alison Lass, *District 5*
Bryan Brost, *District 6* • Jim Price, Jr., *District 7*

YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS

Patrick Zimmerer, Southeast • Dalin Winters, Northwest • John Hansen, Southwest • Bridget Williams, Northeast