



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.

December 2, 2009

Mr. Rick Metzger
Shoshone National Forest, Wind River Ranger District
PO Box 186
Dubois, WY 82513

Dear Mr. Metzger:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Scoping Notice for the proposed development of Scott Well #2 in the Wind River Ranger District of the Shoshone National Forest (SNF).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposed project affects 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 us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

We understand this natural gas development project includes the development of one well consisting of less than three acres of surface disturbance and approximately two-tenths of a mile of new road. The proposed project will create minimal impacts to livestock grazing in the area. However, we do offer the following comments on the proposal.

Specific individual effects upon livestock grazing needing analyzed include: increased on- and off-road traffic, construction of new roads, increased number of vehicles in the area causing death or impairments of livestock, cut fences, gates left open, decreased palatability of vegetation and forage from road dust and development activities, unsuccessful reclamation of disturbed areas, and the introduction and spread of noxious weeds.

We strongly encourage SNF staff and Hudson Group to work closely and consistently with affected grazing permittees and agriculture producers to learn of their concerns and recommendations regarding this project. It is imperative that SNF officials continuously inform livestock grazing permittees who are directly or indirectly affected by natural gas development of the issues, decisions, and resulting actions regarding this proposal. We support compensatory mitigation discussions between Hudson Group and livestock permittees to lessen livestock stress and economic impacts to grazing permittees from this development.

In addition, timely and successful reclamation and mitigation are needed and should be required. Reclamation and mitigation requirements and the consequences of Hudson Group failing to accomplish this reclamation and mitigation should be clearly stated.

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Peer-reviewed science should underlie decisions made by the SNF. The analysis needs to identify the science supporting the decisions and discussions regarding this project.

Decisions in the proposed plan should allow SNF officials, grazing permittees and private landowners the opportunity to work cooperatively. We encourage flexibility to make the best site-specific, case-by-case decisions that are in the best interests of the affected resources and citizens throughout the life of this plan.

In conclusion, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the scope of the proposed action. If the exploratory well is successful and a new Application for Permit to Drill is received, the WDA requests notification and the opportunity to be involved in the larger analysis. 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 Planning Office
Farm Bureau
Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Stockgrowers Association
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