



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.

October 22, 2014

Clarke McClung, District Ranger
United States Forest Service
Tongue Ranger District
Bighorn National Forest
2013 Eastside 2nd Street
Sheridan, WY 82801

Dear Mr. McClung:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) scoping comments pertaining to the United States Forest Service, Tongue Ranger District (FS) proposed Lodge ATV Connector Trail 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.

The proposed project crosses at least one livestock grazing allotment and could disrupt operations for the permittee. We specifically ask you to analyze impacts from increased traffic through the area. This may include, but is not limited to: dust impacts to forage resources and reduced palatability, increased risk of livestock/ATV collisions, how increased traffic may affect the permittee's ability to manage the allotment, and general disturbance to livestock due to ATVs. We also insist the FS enforce the proposed 20 foot corridor for camping, firewood gathering and game retrieval as outlined in the scoping document. We ask the FS develop policy clearly discouraging harassment of livestock by ATV users. This should include having all gates clearly marked and posted to inform ATV users as to when to leave gates open, close them or not cross them. We highly encourage the FS to work closely with affected permittees to ensure their concerns are addressed now and moving forward. This could include meeting with them on a regular basis to address issues that arise from implementation of the proposed project.

The FS should also develop a comprehensive invasive species management plan as part of the proposed project and analyze the increased risk of invasive species being brought into the area by ATVs. The plan should ensure any invasive species found within the ATV corridor are eliminated or eradicated in a timely manner.

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

Sincerely,

Jason Fearneyhough
Director

JF/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
Wyoming Wool Growers Association

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