



Matthew H. Mead, *Governor*
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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.

May 13, 2013

Mr. Richard Vander Voet, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Lander Field Office
1335 Main Street
Lander, WY 82520

Dear Mr. Vander Voet:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments pertaining to Arapahoe Creek Allotment (#17056) Annual Operating Plan (AOP) issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lander 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 this AOP 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 the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA appreciates the effort the Lander FO has devoted to considering flexibility in the Arapahoe Creek Allotment for the 2013 grazing season, as evidenced by allowing for use in the Happy Springs Use Area (if necessary) and allowing water hauling (if necessary). We ask that the BLM remain flexible as weather conditions change throughout the grazing season. BLM allotments are an integral part of agriculture in the Jeffrey City and Lander areas. It is important that permittees continue livestock grazing to assist in maintaining economic viability for both producers and communities. Continuance of livestock grazing on the Arapahoe Creek Allotment allows existing operations to remain in place and provide economic benefits to the area and ecological benefits to the Allotment. In addition, livestock grazing represents irreplaceable environmental and social values, contributing to the preservation of open spaces, scenic vistas, and the traditional image of the historic rural landscapes of Wyoming. Maintaining open spaces provides habitat and less restrictive movement for wildlife than alternative land uses. Allowing flexibility in AOPs assists with the continuance of the important cultural, ecological and economic values that livestock grazing operations bring to the region.

In conclusion, we support the continuation of livestock grazing on the Arapahoe Creek Allotment and look forward to continued cooperation on proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,

For Jason Fearneyhough
Director

JF/jc

CC: Governor's Policy Office
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

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