



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

June 21, 2010

Public Comments Processing
Attn: (FWS-R6-ES-2009-0013)
Division of Policy and Directives Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Sir or Madam:

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) revised proposed rule, the associated draft economic analysis and draft environmental assessment and the amended required determination section for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) (PMJM) in Colorado.

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposal has major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it is important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

We understand the designation of these areas primarily impacts Colorado landowners, developers and businesses, however, the WDA would like to express our concern regarding the designation of 418 miles of rivers and streams in the 11 units located in Colorado as critical habitat for the PMJM. The PMJM researchers are diligently working in Wyoming to gather information regarding the necessary habitat for PMJM. Current research, which is available through Wyoming Natural Diversity Database indicates variability in PMJM habitat requirements. Research may indicate riparian areas as ideal locations for most PMJM, not all riparian areas will have PMJM inhabiting the area. Therefore, we cannot support the Service designating habitat without research proving the PMJM can and will live in the designated habitat within the 418 miles.

In regards to the Service seeking information to revise their designation for potential effects of climate change, the WDA will not support this revision. Research has yet to identify the current habitat, including average precipitation and temperature, let alone adding the widely speculated factor of climate change. Unless the Service has unbiased, repeatable, scientific research indicating any variations and factors impacting the PMJM, we will not support this revision or inclusion.

BOARD MEMBERS

Juan Reyes, *District 1* • Jim Hodder, *District 2* • Shaun Sims, *District 3* • Jim Bennage, *District 4* • Joe Thomas, *District 5*
Bryan Brost, *District 6* • Jim Price, Jr., *District 7*

YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS

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

6/21/2010
Prebles Mouse
Page 2

The Service is seeking information regarding the possible economic impact to landowners, businesses, the communities and other parties. Certainly the

Again, we want to reiterate our concern regarding the proposed addition of 184 miles of critical habitat in Colorado. We thank the Service for accepting our comments and urge the Service to continue to keep us informed of the latest information regarding the Preble's mouse in all states where the mouse is present.

Sincerely,



Jason Fearneyhough
Director

JF/jw

Cc: Governor's Planning Office
WDA Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Game and Fish Department