



Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Dave Freudenthal, *Governor*
Jason Fearnelyhough, *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.

June 29, 2010

Mike Phillips, Assistant Field Manager-Resources
Bureau of Land Management, Worland Field Office
PO Box 119
Worland, WY 82401

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments pertaining to the Environmental Assessment (EA) and associated livestock grazing permit renewals for the South Gooseberry Group Allotment No. 00507 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Worland 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 EA 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 supports Alternative 1, which renews grazing permits while keeping the total number of Animal Unit Months (AUMs) the same. WDA supports this proposal to maintain grazing preference.

We do not support Alternative 2, which eliminates livestock grazing and removes the preference from the grazing base. As the EA clearly states, livestock grazing on the South Gooseberry Group Allotment is an approved activity in the Grass Creek Resource Management Plan. In addition, monitoring data presented by the BLM shows range conditions are meeting rangeland health standards and vegetative conditions are optimal. Choosing Alternative 2 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 BLM decisions. The monitoring data presented in the EA strengthens the decision to continue livestock grazing on the allotment. The EA needs to identify the science supporting the decisions and discussions regarding the continuation of livestock grazing on the allotments.

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

The WDA appreciates the efforts of the Worland FO staff in working with permittees to develop livestock management practices in this allotment and strongly urge them to continue this practice.

In conclusion, the WDA supports the continuance of commercial livestock grazing on the South Gooseberry Group Allotment. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the scope of the proposed EA. We encourage continued attention to our concerns and we look forward to hearing about and being involved in proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Fearneyhough". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason Fearneyhough
Director

JF/jc

CC: Governor's Planning 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 State Grazing Board
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association