



SARATOGA-ENCAMPMENT-RAWLINS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

101 Cypress Avenue P.O. Box 633 Saratoga, WY 82331
Phone: 307-326-8156 www.sercd.org

May 1, 2019

USDA Forest Service, Region 2
Rocky Mountain Region
Attn: Objection Reviewing Officer
1617 Cole Boulevard, Building 17
Golden, CO 80401

Submitted electronically
r02admin_review@fs.fed.us

To Whom It May Concern,

The Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District (SER CD) appreciates the timely release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Draft Record of Decision (dROD) for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland (Forest), Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis Project (Project). Russell M. Bacon, Forest Supervisor, is the responsible official.

The SER CD is one of the Cooperating Agencies working with Forest personnel throughout the development of the Project. We provided continual input into the process and submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement as indicated in FEIS Appendix B: Response to Comments, letter number 90. We commend the efforts of the LaVA Project leadership for including cooperating agencies early in the development and design of the project. Responsiveness to cooperating agencies' issues and concerns is appreciated and has greatly improved from pre-LaVA timeframe projects.

The SER CD agrees with the identified purposes and associated needs for the project. We strongly support the Modified Proposed Action (Proposed Action) and vegetation management activities, including prescribed fire, mechanical, and hand treatment methods, that could be applied on up to 360,000 acres. We agree the Project will mitigate hazardous fuel loading; provide for recovery of forest products; enhance forest and rangeland resiliency to future insect and disease infestation; protect infrastructure and municipal water supplies; restore wildlife habitat; enhance access for forest visitors and permittees; and provide for human safety.

While we are pleased with the FEIS and dROD documents, we are concerned with the potential for changes made during the objection process. In the event objections are received on the Project FEIS and dROD, the SER CD requests to be notified of all objection resolution activities and meetings. We also request a seat at the negotiation table as an **active** participant as a Local Cooperating Agency in any discussion during the objection resolution process.

We look forward to partnering with the Forest during Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis Project implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arla Strasser".

Arla Strasser
Board Chair

AS/lc

CC: Honorable Governor Mark Gordon, Wyoming
Russell M. Bacon, Medicine Bow National Forest Supervisor
Melissa Martin, LaVA Project Manager, Medicine Bow National Forest
Carbon County Commissioners
Beth Callaway, State of Wyoming Governor's Policy Office
Bobbie Frank, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Chris Wichmann, Wyoming Department of Agriculture