



## WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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January 9, 2020

WER 13395.01

Bridger–Teton National Forest

Pinedale Ranger District

Draft Environmental Assessment

Livestock grazing on the

Sweetwater, Blucher Creek and East Squaw Creek Allotments

Sublette and Fremont Counties

Rob Hoeschler

Pinedale Ranger District

PO Box 220

Pinedale, WY 82941

Dear Mr. Hoeschler:

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment for livestock grazing on the Sweetwater, Blucher Creek and East Squaw Creek Allotments in the Pinedale Ranger District. We offer the following comments.

### **Terrestrial Considerations:**

These three allotments provide important parturition and spring-summer-fall use for elk and mule deer. Global Positioning System (GPS) collaring efforts associated with mule deer in the Sublette Herd indicate habitat use in these allotments by the migratory segment of this herd, along with other mule deer that winter east of the mountains near Lander. The Department places a priority on management of habitats used in summer and fall by mule deer based on research indicating the nutritional condition of does at the end of fall is correlated with reproductive success. A majority of the spring and fall use by elk and mule deer is below timberline. Any old fences that are in disrepair or not to wildlife-friendly standards should either be removed or repaired so they do not pose hazards to wildlife.

The Department supports rotational grazing and the monitoring of annual utilization and long-term trends. We support efforts to manage vegetation communities towards their ecological potential and to provide forage for wildlife in addition to livestock in these areas. Despite the fact that cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) was not found during the preliminary field review, this invasive annual grass is known to occur in close proximity on surrounding land ownerships. The Department encourages and supports continued vigilance towards this

Rob Hoeschler  
January 9, 2020  
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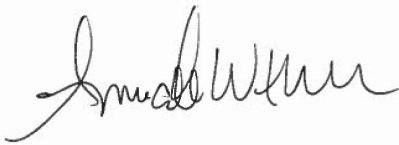
invasive species and the development of a treatment plan if cheatgrass is found within the allotments.

**Aquatic Considerations:**

We have no aquatic concerns pertaining to this grazing reauthorization.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Troy Fieseler at (307) 367-4353.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Withroder", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Amanda Withroder  
Habitat Protection Supervisor

AW/kr/ap

cc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Troy Fieseler, Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Brandon Scurlock, Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Chris Wichmann, Wyoming Department of Agriculture