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Medicine Bow-Rout NFs
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Thunder Basin Plan Amendments Comments
Forest Supervisor's Office
2468 Jackson Street
Laramie, WY 82070

82070\$6535



Jim Darlington
162 Darlington Rd.
Newcastle, WY 82701

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Jim & Lisa Darlington
162 Darlington Rd.
Newcastle, WY 82701

January 7, 2020

Thunder Basin Plan Amendments Comments
Forest Supervisor's Office
2468 Jackson Street
Laramie, WYO 82070

Dear Comment Reviewers:

Thank you for this opportunity to make comments to the 2020 National Grassland Plan Amendment. We would rule out any support at all for Alternatives 1 and 4, but could support either 2 or 3, if some changes were made to them.

We lean towards the Grasslands-wide alternative, mainly because it doesn't seem very fair to put all the burden on just a few permittees unless they are somehow fairly compensated for their sacrifice.

First of all we believe that the Forest Service should be complying with Laws of the state of Wyoming. The prairie dog is considered a pest in this State, and should not be promoted in any way. The Wyoming Game and Fish Black Footed Ferret Recovery Plan says that there must be support from affected stakeholders prior to consideration of any reintroduction, therefore we don't believe any further effort should be expended promoting this idea, until such support has been achieved.

In reviewing the Summary of the Amendment Plan, we noticed on page ii, under Alternative 1, the closing sentence that, "There would continue to be a target of 33,000 prairie dog colonies." WOW!!! We trust that was a typo, and not a Freudian slip, and that you meant acres??

Density control should be listed as one of the plague management tools, as I have been pointing out for years. The plague always comes along at some point when dog numbers reach a certain density, and always will - so please wake up and admit this fact. Wasting money trying to control the facts of nature is not a very wise use of taxpayer monies. Zinc phosphide never results in a 100% kill anyway, but treating high density colonies in the entirety every few years may actually benefit the dogs by thinning the herd and preventing the plague from getting going in the first place, thus negating a need for controlling it.

We wonder why the Cheyenne River S.I.A. is even mentioned in the same breath as prairie dog management. Seems like that should be a separately addressed issue, and is just another distraction.

Many, if not all, of the so called prairie dog dependant species exist outside of prairie dog colonies, but are admittedly harder to spot where there is vegetation to hide in. There have been videos of prairie dogs eating mountain plover eggs - no wonder these birds are having so much trouble increasing their numbers.

We don't believe there should be any recreational shooting restrictions, as per Alternative 3.

We would favor a one mile boundary zone between N.G. dogs and those on private or state lands. A quarter of a mile is such a short distance for the dogs to spread that this policy is only going to result in continuous treatments in the effort to keep federal dogs federal.

We believe that the dates for treatment listed on the pesticide labels should be used on the N.G., and that further restrictions not be placed on use of control methods. We would also be in favor of allowing use of burrow fumigants, of course only by people smart enough to recognize burrowing owl droppings. There are no long term residual effects involved that we are aware of.

As a member of the collaborative stakeholder group, it gets very frustrating providing recommendations in good faith based on years of experience to the Forest Service staff when it becomes apparent that these recommendations are constantly ignored. Thank you for this opportunity to comment anyway.

Sincerely yours,
 
Jim & Lisa Darlington