



Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

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

November 20, 2023

W. Thadd Berrett
District Ranger
Bighorn National Forest
Powder Ranger District
1415 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY 82834
307-684-7806
<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=64474>

Dear Mr. Berrett,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments regarding the proposed Climbing Management Plan (Plan) for the Tensleep Canyon climbing area.

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life. As the proposed project could affect our industry, citizens, and natural resources it is important that you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide the opportunity to communicate pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA supports the Bighorn National Forest (BHF) initiating scoping to develop a Plan for the Tensleep Canyon climbing area. The area encompasses 26,537 acres in the BHF, with over 1,350 climbing routes. Increased use, overcrowding, human and health and safety from waste and parking on the highway, and protection of natural resources are major reasons for developing a Plan.

Part of the Plan area overlaps several grazing allotments. Due to increased use, there is potential for conflict with livestock grazing in the allotments. Potential impacts to livestock permittees should be considered during Plan development. These impacts include: opened gates, damaged range improvements, potential decrease in Animal Unit Months (AUM) and introduction and spread of noxious weeds.

New proposed facilities (restrooms and parking areas etc.), should be designed to minimize reduction in AUMs to the greatest extent practicable. Additionally, the WDA urges the BHF to find ways to manage dispersed camping to reduce impacts to riparian areas and vegetative habitats in the Plan area.

The WDA encourages the BHF to incorporate information on livestock grazing on public lands, to educate the public on the multi-use directive, and to reduce potential impacts to livestock permittees. BHF should include signage to alert the public to the presence of livestock and to keep gates closed to alleviate impacts.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Cope, Senior Policy Analyst, at 307-777-7024.

Sincerely,



Doug Miyamoto
Director

DM/lc

CC: Governor's Policy Office
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Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board
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