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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.

April 10, 2024

Patrick Champ, District Ranger
USDA Forest Service-Bearlodge Ranger District
P.O. BOX 680
Sundance, WY 82729
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=65540>

RE: North Sand Forest Management Project

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments regarding the U.S Forest Service-Bearlodge District, North Sand Forest Management Project (Project) Scoping Notice.

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 proposed Project will encompass approximately 11,062-acres in the Black Hills National Forest-Bearlodge Ranger District (BRD). The Proposed Action identifies the use of mechanical and vegetation thinning and prescribed fire treatments in the Project area. The WDA fully supports the Project proposal to use management practices to improve the health and productivity of the forest, decrease opportunities for disease and fire, and maintain and/or restore forest cover to desired conditions.

The WDA urges the BRD to consider the benefits of proper livestock grazing management for post-project recovery. There are situations when properly timed high intensity, short duration grazing may be beneficial. In order to meet vegetative objectives, the BRD should work with livestock grazing permittees to develop flexible opportunities for livestock grazing in the Project area and avoid relying on rest and deferment as a management tool. Additionally, the WDA encourages BRD to utilize sheep and goats to help meet desired conditions and better manage less desirable vegetative communities in the forest.

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

Sincerely,

Doug Miyamoto
Director

DM/lc

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

Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming County Commissioners Association
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