



Wyoming
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Mark Gordon, Governor
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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.

May 20, 2024

Patrick Champa, District Ranger
USDA Forest Service-Bearlodge Ranger District
P.O. BOX 680
Sundance, WY 82729
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=65539>

RE: South Slope Winter Burn Project

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments regarding the U.S Forest Service-Bearlodge Ranger District (BRD), South Slope Winter Burn Project (Project).

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 burn approximately 8,382-acres in the BRD. The BRD will use fire on south-facing slopes to reduce the accumulations of grass, brush, fallen trees and other hazardous fuels. BRD plans to burn approximately 500-acres a year to accomplish project goals. The WDA fully supports the proposed Project to use fire management practices to reduce fuel loading and accomplish other vegetative objectives to improve conditions on the forest.

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. WDA opposes a mandatory 2-year rest, often used as part of agency vegetative treatments. Additionally, the WDA encourages BRD to utilize livestock grazing in such a manner to help reduce fine fuels on BRD as an added tool in fire management practices.

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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