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First name: Carl

Last name: Larson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: From: FS-Comments Intermtn Ashley ForestPlanRevision

Sent: Wednesday, November 6, 2019 12:40 PM

To: clarson@bvea.net; FS-Comments Intermtn Ashley ForestPlanRevision

Cc: Mike Fowlks; Amy Hendrickson; Larry Ogden; Rasure, Nora -FS; Shaun Sims; Vance Broadbent; Eric South; Craig Welling; Mark Anderson

Subject: RE: Comments - Ashley Forest Plan Revision

Thank you I will make sure your comments are entered into our comment and response application.

Lars Christensen  
Collaboration Specialist  
Forest Plan Revision

Forest Service  
Ashley National Forest

p: 435-781-5126 lars.christensen@usda.gov

55 North Vernal Avenue Vernal, UT 84078 [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

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From: Carl Larson [mailto:clarson@bvea.net] Sent: Monday, November 4, 2019 10:54 PM To: FS-Comments Intermtn Ashley ForestPlanRevision <ashleyforestplan@usda.gov> Cc: Mike Fowlks <mikefowlks@utah.gov>; Amy Hendrickson <amy@wyowool.com>; Larry Ogden <OgdenLF@aol.com>; Rasure, Nora -FS <nora.rasure@usda.gov>; Shaun Sims <simshaun@yahoo.com>; Vance Broadbent <vance\_broadbent@yahoo.com>; Eric South <sbars.south@gmail.com>; Craig Welling <craigwelling@yahoo.com>; Mark Anderson <mark.anderson@uintacounty.com> Subject: Comments - Ashley Forest Plan Revision

Attached is the letter with our comments regarding the Ashley Forest Plan Revision along with supporting information as attachments. -Carl Larson

Ashley Forest Plan Revision.docx -TEXT FROM ATTACHMENT INCLUDED BELOW

LARSON LIVESTOCK, INC.

Box 395 Lyman, WY 82937

November 4, 2019

Jeff Schram

Forest Supervisor

Ashley National Forest

ATTN: Forest Plan Revision

355 North Vernal Avenue

Vernal, UT 84078-1703

via e-mail: AshlelyForstPlan@usda.gov

Dear Sir:

We have reviewed the Ashley National Forest draft Plan Revision. Following are our comments that we request you consider for inclusion in the draft Plan:

In Guidelines (FW-GL-WL) item 09, it states, [ldquo]When a domestic sheep or goat grazing permit for an allotment that is in proximity to bighorn sheep is voluntarily waived without preference, the allotment should be analyzed to provide separation of domestic sheep and bighorn sheep bgy either, 1) potential closure of all or a portion of the allotment to domestic sheep/goats, 2) potential conversion to a cattle allotment, or 3) utilization as a forage reserve.[rdquo]

Then in guideline (FW-GL-WL) item 10, is stated, [ldquo]New permitted grazing by domestic sheep or goats should not be authorized unless:

\* Separation of domestic sheep or goats from bighorn sheep can be demonstrated, or

\*

Research demonstrates risk of respiratory pathogen transfer from domestic sheep or goats

To bighorn sheep can be avoided in another way, or research demonstrates respiratory pathogen transfer from domestics to bighorn sheep is no longer an issue.[rdquo]

These guidelines run counter to the management of bighorn sheep in the State of Utah. We refer to three documents which are attached as follows:

1. The [ldquo]Utah Bighorn Sheep Statewide Management Plan[rdquo],
2. The MOU signed by Nora Rasure, Regional Forester, on May 28, 2019 [ndash] (These two documents will be transmitted separately by forwarding a e-mail from Jace Taylor, UDWR dated 7-23-19.)
3. Letter dated 4-27-18 from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Director Mike Fowlks, to Forest Supervisors

Jeff Schramm and David Whittekiend (Attached)

4. Letter dated 2-15-19 from Dr. Margaret A. Highland, DVM. Phd, Dipl. ACVP regarding all species which have been found to harbor the bacterium *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*.) (Attached)

We request that the Guidelines be rewritten to reflect that the State of Utah through the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has the jurisdiction and responsibilities with respect to wildlife and fish on NFS lands. (See MOU signed May 2019, Page 3, Section V B).

We direct your attention to the letter dated 4-27-18 from Director Mike Fowlks and then to the letter from Dr. Margaret A. Highland in items 3 and 4 above. This information should provide you with current knowledge so as to make the proper adjustments to your Guidelines for bighorn sheep management in the Ashley National Forest, in collaboration with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

Carl A. Larson

Carl A. Larson, President

UDWR - Mike Fowlks 4-27-18 P.1.jpg -TEXT FROM ATTACHMENT INCLUDED BELOW

State of Utah  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Division of Wildlife Resources

April 27, 2018  
Jeff Schramm forest Supervisor  
Ashley National Forest  
U.S. Forest Service 355 North Vernal Avenue Vernal. UT 84078  
David C. Whittekiend Forest Supervisor Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest  
U.S. Forest Service 857 West South Jordan Parkway South Jordan. UT 84095

Dear Mr. Schramm and Mr. Whittckind:

It is my understanding that the U.S. Forest Service ("USFS") is finalizing the High Uintas Wilderness Domestic Sheep Analysis Environmental Impact Statement, and that potential disease transmission between domestic sheep and wild bighorn sheep is one component of USFS's analysis. At this time, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources ("UDWR") supports authorization of the domestic sheep allotments under consideration. This population of bighorn sheep has co-existed with domestic sheep in proximity to their occupied habitat for nearly 30 years, and our agency has successfully managed a sustainable population of wild sheep during that time. Should unanticipated management concerns arise in the future, we will actively manage the bighorn population consistent with UDWR's approved bighorn sheep management plans to mitigate potential risks.

Collaboration with land management agencies and public stakeholders is critical in successful wildlife management. We wish to reiterate the positions made in the December 12, 2017 letter sent by Kathleen Clark, Director of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office regarding proposed revisions to the Ashley National Forest Plan, wherein we identified potential habitat improvement solutions that would further minimize the risks of disease transmission to wildlife.

UDWR - Mike Fowlks 4-27-18 P.2.jpg -TEXT FROM ATTACHMENT INCLUDED BELOW

Page ?

April 27, 2018

We appreciate your consideration in this matter and are happy to answer any questions you may have.  
Sincerely,

Michal Fowlks Director

gbh

cc: Eric South, Chairman, Uinta County Commission

[bull]

Dr. Margaret A. Highland DVM - 2-15-19.jpg -TEXT FROM ATTACHMENT INCLUDED BELOW

United States Department of Agriculture  
Research, Education and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

February 15, 2019

Dear Mr. Larson,

As per our phone discussion this morning, the Animal Disease Research Unit (ADRU) of ARS is providing the following information regarding recent scientific research findings on the bacterium *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*. Multiple peer-reviewed publications refer to this bacterium as being only carried by members of the subfamily

Caprinac. This taxonomic subfamily includes only species of sheep and goats (wild and domestic) and muskox. In sampling and testing > 1500 other wild (and captive wild) hooved animals to date, including members of the Capreolinae subfamily (moose, caribou, white tailed deer, and mule deer), bison, and antelope for carriage of *M. ovipneumoniae*, ADRU has identified this bacterium in multiple members of the Capreolinae subfamily (white tail and mule deer, caribou, and moose), and in a bison from MT and multiple from CO. In working with a veterinarian in the Midwest, ADRU has received laboratory results and clinical data from another laboratory confirming white tailed deer can carry *M. ovipneumoniae*. Data from these findings has been published in the CDC's journal: Emerging Infectious Diseases, which is a high impact, open access journal. The publication can be found here: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/24/11/21115-0632> article.

These newly identified species that can carry *M. ovipneumoniae* are consistent with the following quote, taken from a textbook entitled *Mycoplasmas: Molecular biology, Pathogenicity, and Strategies for Control*: "assumptions about restricted host range of mycoplasmas, based on the host from which they were first or frequently isolated, are usually made in the context of nearly complete absence of representative sampling of the vast majority of potential hosts". Also, worth referencing are other peer reviewed publications that have already described *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* carriage in two other non-Caprinae species, including domestic cattle in Colorado (Wolfe, et al. [et al.] 2010) and antelope at a wildlife conservation park in Qatar during a pneumonia outbreak (Gull, et al., 2014). In addition, there are reports of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* in mountain goats in the United States. For example, here is just one news article describing such, and the perceived risk to bighorn sheep: <https://www.national-geographic.com/animals/2015/10/news-disease-cast/> "Mountain-goats threaten bighorn sheep".

Respiratory disease outbreaks in bighorn sheep clearly remains a complex and multifactorial phenomenon, as infection with any of the historically and currently blamed infectious agents, including *M. ovipneumoniae*, does not equate to disease occurrence in this species.

Detailed data supporting the information within this letter can be provided by ADRU upon request.

Sincerely,  
(signature)

,

Margaret A. Highland, DVM, PhD, Dip. ACVP  
VMO Researcher  
USDA, ARS, ARJRU 509-335-6327 (office) [maggie.highland@ars.usda.gov](mailto:maggie.highland@ars.usda.gov)  
&  
Pacific West Area -Animal Disease Research Unit  
P.O. Box 647030, 3003 ADBF, WSU [et al.] Pullman, WA 99164-6630