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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Wyoming is home to some of the last remaining long-distance big game migrations in North America, many of which bisect the Bridger-Teton National Forest. I appreciate the efforts of federal land managers to follow the direction of the Wyoming Game and Fish when making land management decisions that will impact wildlife populations. I appreciate the inclusion of state designated and identified big game corridors in the draft assessment, however, additional state-led migration research and data, including the iconic Wyoming Range mule deer migration, are missing from the draft assessment. Forest planning regulations require the best available scientific information to be included in the Assessment, and in order to meet this requirement, additional research and data must be included. Please include, at a minimum, big game habitat maps relevant to the planning area from the USGS Migration Atlas Volumes One through Four.

Outdoor Recreation

As an avid sportsperson, I appreciate the opportunity to explore our public lands throughout the year and recognize their importance to local communities, as identified in the assessment. I have also seen the rapid growth of outdoor recreation on the Bridger-Teton National Forest and want recreation opportunities to be managed to avoid negative impacts to our wildlife populations. Thank you for including current seasonal closures to conserve wintering wildlife and migration corridors along with some research on disturbance impacts. Please expand this section to include the best available scientific information surrounding impacts of recreation on wildlife including summer range, winter range, and dispersed recreation.

Big Game Crucial Range and Parturition

The Supplemental Assessment states "Identifying high priority conservation areas (See Figure 15 and Figure 16) allows managers to focus on key areas to protect. Among the top habitat types to protect are: stopover habitat sites, crucial ranges, parturition areas (i.e., birthing grounds), areas utilized by multiple herds and/or species, travel bottlenecks, and other areas where sensitive behaviors occur" (Page 49). While some of this data is included in the assessment, big game crucial range and parturition areas are not. This information informs managers to how big game use the Forest and should be included in the Forest Plan assessment to create a clear picture of current conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft assessment. Including the "Best Available Scientific Information" in the Assessment is a crucial step in developing updates to the Forest Plan that incorporates the needs of our local communities, respects the distinct roles of state and federal agencies, and conserves the forest's outstanding resources for future generations.