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Guardians of the Range

Dedicated to the Multiple Use of Public Lands & the American Way of Life

Newsletter No. 69

January 2010

Bighorn National Forest

**January 21, Thursday
Tongue District Meeting
BNF Range Staff & Permittees
Sheridan College
Ag Center - Room 131
1pm - 4pm**

BLM Issue

Talking points on grazing for use in developing the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Big Horn Basin Resource Management Plan Cody & Worland Field Offices

Concerns & Perspectives Guardians of the Range & Wyoming State Grazing Board

These talking points are offered for your use in providing solid input to your county commissioners, conservation district supervisors, Department of Ag staff and other Cooperators who are helping to develop this VERY IMPORANT BLM document.

Be proactive---contact either your county commissioners or your conservation district supervisors and let them know that this content should be incorporated into the final document. BUT, even more important, ask them to share with you how things relative to topics below are being received by the BLM, and are any of these concepts actually going to see the light of day in the draft environmental impact statement that is being developed?

Communication

- The BLM should ALWAYS consult, cooperate, and coordinate, with the permittees on ALL issues affecting the permittee at an early point in the process so permittees can provide feedback to the BLM, and prepare themselves for the ramifications.

- BLM and permittees need to jointly develop site-specific allotment resource objectives, (desired plant communities, maximum/minimum bare ground cover objectives, bank stability on the green line, etc.), and jointly develop a monitoring program to collect field data using science-based evaluation methods.
*Please see **RMP** on page 2*

Annual Meeting

**Saturday, February 6, 2010
10:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Worland Community Center
1200 Culbertson, Worland, Wyoming**

Using carbon to decrease weeds!
Eve Warren, PhD. - Natural Res. Specialist
Worland BLM

Fencing and Sage-grouse Mortality
Tom Christiansen, Sage-Grouse Program
Coordinator, Wyoming Game & Fish

Lines of Leadership
Russell Nemetz, Ag Director
Northern Ag Network

Ron Micheli, Fort Bridger
Candidate for Governor

Shoshone National Forest The picnics may be postponed.... the bugs have come home to roost!

- by Kathleen Jachowski

Denver- Bugs and budgets.....too many of one and not enough of the other. This pretty well sums up the current situation as it may affect the operation of campgrounds on the Shoshone National Forest (SNF).

The final decision has not been made by the Regional Office (R2) staff in Denver as to how many dollars are going to be redirected from the SNFs budget to address both public health/safety and ecological threats as a result of beetle devastation of timber stands in southern Wyoming and northern Colorado.

*Please see **Campgrounds** on page 2*

"Though no-one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end." ~ Author Unknown

Experienced Ranch Help Available

I have on hand the resume of an experienced ranch person. If you are a Guardian member or potential member and would like to have me send you this resume for your consideration, please call or e-mail Kathleen: 307-587-3723 or guardians@hughes.net

SKILL SET:

I am 48 years old, married, and have one grown son in Minnesota. I have done farm and ranch work since I was a teenager, except for some years as an over-the-road truck driver. I have my own tack and tools. I am competent in all aspects of ranching: calving, doctoring cattle and horses, roping and branding, fencing of all varieties, flood irrigating, running pivots haying, and light mechanics. I can operate and maintain almost any type of equipment.

Applicant has four work references and three personal references. Has been working in the Cody area for the past 2 -1/2 years.

RMP continued from page 1

-BLM should clearly convey to permittees specifically what information about their ranch is REQUIRED (and NOT required) by the BLM to be placed into the files, and inform permittees ALL information in the allotment BLM files is available to the public.

- The new RMP should clearly convey an intention by the BLM to give permittees adequate notice of BLM activities in their respective allotments (standards reviews, upland rangeland health assessments, monitoring, "interested public" tours, etc.) and invite permittees to attend those activities. BLM should ALWAYS provide duplicate copies to the permittee of ALL qualitative and quantitative information collected by the BLM in their respective allotments.

- The new RMP should convey an intention by the BLM to advise permittees of anyone signing up as an "interested public" on their respective allotments.

- The BLM should inform the permittee a year in advance of the date for the renewal of a term grazing permit, and convey to the permittee how the rancher can help the BLM in the renewal process.

- If a "no grazing" alternative is to be developed, either in a permit renewal EA or an EIS for the RMP, the narrative about what the land would look like under a "no grazing" alternative MUST be factual and reflect the current state of the art on this subject. (Rangelands in the Big Horn Basin would become unhealthy and NOT look like Tall Grass Prairie under a no-grazing situation.)

- The BLM should periodically offer to review the allotment files with the permittee, and offer to review the current AMP to insure that this document represents the current situation(s) in the allotment. Any changes in terms and conditions in the grazing permit/AMP, and any significant policy proposals in an RMP, (examples: ACEC's and sage grouse), should consider the economic and practical impact of those changes on the permittee and other local entities such as county government and Conservation Districts.

- BLM should recognize their approval of Wyoming Game and Fish wildlife Department objective numbers to be maintained on lands within the boundaries of the Field Office Area means that these wildlife numbers must also be accommodated by the owners of the private lands and State leases in this geographic area.

Please see **RMP** continued on page 4



Correction to the American Horse League on Horse Processing and Wild Horses article in the December 2009 newsletter

The standard animal unit relationship for cows and horses is that an equivalent weight of horse would consume 1.2 as much as a cow. Wild horses, however, graze an area or allotment year around, while cattle do not.

Campgrounds continued from page 1

While a horrific forest health problem exists on the SNF, the magnitude of the problems elsewhere are driving the reprioritizing of where dollars would be best spent.

Locally, the current public discussion/debate centers around the possible closure of all of the campgrounds on the SNF. The preliminary budget discussions between the SNF and Regional Office in Denver considered a drastic (all campgrounds) move. However, at this time, the SNF has the opportunity to provide feedback to the Regional Office in Denver as to why this 'all campground' approach simply would not be appropriate, fair, or needed.

My own conversation with SNF personnel indicates that closure of ALL campgrounds is an extremely remote possibility and they are fairly certain will not happen. However, the reality is that there will be a reduction in the services and/or the campsite availability to which we have been accustomed. We as citizens may have to be carrying out our own trash, paying some higher fees, etc. or tolerating other creative approaches to deal with this problem.

There may well be some very good ideas out there in the 'field of public opinion' that have not yet surfaced. That's a very good reason to send your thoughts and productive comments to the SNF so that more than one mitigating solution might be considered to help all of us live through this tough time.

This BUGS & BUDGET problem which we are facing deserves BOTH our recognition of the unprecedented ecological changes to the entire forest landscape Rocky Mountain-wide; and our patience to help work through it. This forest devastation and all the problems it brings with it cannot be solved quickly. Our nation's love affair with Fast Food Fixes simply does not apply in this situation.

The bugs are here, the money is not, and these realities are not going to change in the immediate future. What this country does have a lot of, however, is resourceful and creative ideas. So---why not sit down at the keyboard or desk and send some of both to: raus@fs.fed.us; karen.mccreery@enzi.senate.gov; pam.buline@barrasso.senate.gov; Ryan.McConnaughey@mail.house.gov; or 808 Meadow Lane, Cody, WY 82414



**Direct from the Director:
The Year 2010 –
Bring ‘er on!**

The month of January frequently makes folks reflect upon what has transpired over the past year in terms of what was and was not accomplished.

The Guardians, however, are expending their time and effort focusing on what is ahead for our members and the communities, both local and national, which benefit from public land grazing.

Issues looming large in 2010 which bear our attention and effort:

CLEAN WATER RESTORATION ACT – This is all about Washington, D. C. being directly involved in your irrigation ditches, stock tanks, spring developments, etc. etc. - this is not an exaggeration!

WATER QUALITY ISSUES – The life blood of sustained forage production and wildlife habitat.

WILDERNESS big push for more designations– this includes not only the proposed Rock Creek area on the Bighorn NF, areas under consideration on the Shoshone NF via its forest plan revision, but an immense proposed increase in acreages in the Rocky Mountain west.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT- Resource Management Plan revision which will affect our members in the Cody and Worland areas – this is an enormously important environmental impact statement.

ELECTIONS – national and local – we need to encourage people with some public land knowledge to run for office, and we need to attend public meetings where we can ask questions of candidates and learn who does and does not know how to provide clear thinking and straightforward answers.

LAWSUITS – Western Watersheds Project is pushing hard on both the NF and BLM areas where the Guardians work. Financial resources to help with legal challenges needs to be increased.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – We’ll want to increase our membership so that more non-paying beneficiaries of our efforts contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of this organization which is so dedicated to their sustained viability.

ENDANGERED SPECIES LISTINGS – Sage-grouse listing decision will happen in February 2010. Regardless of the final decision, livestock grazing plans will all have considerations for the sage grouse from now on

These will directly affect all producers grazing livestock on public lands.

JOINT COOPERATIVE MONITORING & RANGE IMPROVEMENTS – These two parts of the public land grazing picture are going to be needed now more than ever. The prudent person recognizes that the time for talking is over.

DISEASE TRANSMISSION – WILD & DOMESTIC SHEEP – Where do things stand, and what are the ramifications? The sheep industry still does matter to the bottom line of our nation!

WILD HORSES & BURROS – These will continue to hit the national radar screen as anti-agriculture groups push hard for no slaughter, greater horse management areas on BLM lands, less money to manage, etc. etc.. The damage done by the over population of these rascals affects you directly by the destruction of public rangeland health...and the Incorrect and Unfair perceived quick fix is to remove you and your cows and sheep.

PREDATORS – The damage to livestock will increase as predators increase and the court of public opinion continues to try and destroy all such management. This is linked to the same mind-set that drives the out of control populations of wild horses and burros. Public education on this issue is beyond needed. Reasoned arguments for management control must be heard beyond the local meeting room. The American public needs to hear our voice.

INVASIVE WEEDS – These are taking over millions of acres of livestock grazing areas and wildlife habitat. Guess who will be told to leave to make room for the needs of wildlife? We have plenty of productive land for our livestock and wildlife.....but invasive and noxious weeds are creating an ecological and political death trap if we don’t effectively, efficiently, and quickly get this problem under control.

These are only some of the heaving hitting issues which we need to address in 2010. The reason that so many anti-grazing proponents succeed organizationally is because they are well funded and can be where they need to be and do what they need to do to ‘carry the day’. The Guardians are no different. Our organization can only be as strong, effective and viable as its financial resources will allow.

LOTS TO DO! – So let’s get to it with optimism, common sense, ethics, integrity, humor, credible science and financial support!

**CRAIG THOMAS GUARDIANS OF
THE RANGE ENDOWMENT**

Supporting this endowment is a wonderful tax exempt way to show your support for the Guardians’ effort, or to honor a family member or friend. We want to have a sustainable financial resource base to achieve our goals and objectives.

For more details, please contact a board member or Kathleen Jachowski (307)587-3723 or guardians@hughes.net.

Join Guardians of the Range

LIVESTOCK OPERATORS:

\$50 for up to 50 head of cattle
\$1.00 a head from 51 to 1,500 cattle
20 cents a head for sheep

BUSINESSES, INDIVIDUALS & ASSOCIATIONS

without federal grazing permits:

\$25 up to \$100 WRANGLER
\$250 RANGE RIDER
\$500 TOP HAND

\$1,000 GUARDIAN of the RANGE

Please make checks payable to:
Guardians of the Range, P.O. Box 472, Worland, WY 82401

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Guardians of the Range

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Happy New Year!

RMP continued from page 2

-This same principal applies to BLM decisions on what will be the AML numbers of "wild" horses in an HMA. Most horse management areas contain private and State land in-holdings that are unfenced and intermingled with the BLM lands. BLM horse use on private and State lands is an "unfunded mandate" imposed on these lands by the BLM.

-Permittees should provide early communications, (six months before the action is contemplated and in writing), of the desires of the permittee to maintain their range improvements and/or construct new projects. BLM should respond within 30 days of the receipt of the request(s) from the permittee.

Wild Horses & Burros

* Impacts of 'Wild Horses & Burros Act' will continue to negatively impact rangeland resources as it relates to grazing opportunities of public land ranchers. This RMP should address the need to effectively preclude 'politicizing this issue' to the detriment of rangeland resources and public land grazing.

Monitoring and Rangeland Health Trends

* This RMP should emphasize the need for good documentation, and the agency's public responsibility to provide the human resources needed to carry out this responsibility so that agency decisions can be successfully defended in appeals and court challenges.

Special Management Areas

* Establishment of ' special management areas' (SMA) and their variations would marginalize grazing opportunities and grazing rights, which is a serious issue and concern. Proper implementation of existing public land laws and regulations should preclude the need for any such restrictive 'overlays'.

Water Quality

* Water quality challenges must be adequately addressed in the revised RMP. We want to see serious science documented and used to establish the water quality situation in this resource area. We do not want the BLM to simply agree with any challenges to water quality, we want to see the agency clearly establish its own credible assessment of any water quality challenges, and not simply assume a problem exists. We want the BLM to be ahead of the curve on this, and not expend time and money being simply reactive to outside interests.

For the complete list of talking points, including those on AUMs, adaptive management, weed and invasive species, range improvements, sage grouse and adaptive management, please see BLM Talking Points at www.guardiansoftherange.org, under Issues.

Please know that you as a citizen are entitled to some feedback and input during this public process--and such feedback as is legally allowed does not violate any law or public process. All information is not 'predecisional'!

Membership: Pay On Line

You can now become a member, or renew your membership, on line at www.guardiansoftherange.org. Just click on 'Join Our Membership.'

More Efficient Newsletter

To receive your copy of the Guardians newsletter by email, email Kathleen at guardians@hughes.net.

We also now post the newsletter on our website: www.guardiansoftherange.org.