News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
http://fs.usda.gov/mbr

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Gillette to Host Third Thunder Basin Collaborative Learning Workshop, Public Invited

(DOUGLAS, Wyo.) May 12, 2016 – The University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources will convene the third collaborative learning workshop regarding the greater Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG) landscape on Thurs., May 19.

All workshops are being held on behalf of the U.S Forest Service (USFS) and the upcoming event will take place from 1-4 p.m. at the George Amos Memorial Building in Gillette, Wyo.

Street address for the event is 412 South Gillette Avenue, and the building houses the Campbell County Building & Planning Office, as well as a University of Wyoming Extension Office.

The interactive meeting will explore recent scientific research on the National Grassland and discuss future desired conditions for the TBNG.

Staff from the Ruckelshaus Institute will facilitate the meeting and USFS staff will be present to interact and listen. Interested public who have ties to the National Grassland or somehow utilize these public lands are encouraged to attend.

In January the first of three scheduled workshops was held in Douglas, Wyo. The history and values surrounding the Grassland were discussed. Current available science and current conditions were discussed at the March meeting in Newcastle, Wyo. Both previous learning workshops were well attended.

The Ruckelshaus Institute and the Forest Service would like to thank Eastern Wyoming College and the Weston County Senior Center, who hosted the first two events in Douglas and Newcastle, respectively. Both locations offered their facilities free of charge for the purpose of the community events.

This series follows the completion of a Ruckelshaus Institute-produced situation assessment, which was conducted in spring 2015 regarding prairie dog management on the TBNG. Now, the Forest Service is moving forward with development of a long-term, stakeholder's group which will address the prairie dog issue, and possibly other topics on the Grassland.

The purpose of this learning series is to provide substantive and place-based information to this group, which ultimately will assist the Forest Service in finding adaptive and effective management solutions.

The series will address the past, present and future of the Thunder Basin National Grassland. The objectives of the collaborative learning workshops are to provide stakeholders the opportunity to learn and discuss the history of this National Grassland, explore with scientists' recent research regarding the Grassland, and explore the future of the Grassland. These will be highly interactive workshops which build on each other to provide all stakeholders the opportunity to give meaningful input to the Thunder Basin Stakeholder's Group.

This approach by the USFS parallels the recently released final report from the Governor's Task Force on Forests, which recommends creation of local collaborative working groups to address local forest management issues.

Results from the afore-mentioned situation assessment are available at the following web site: www.uwyo.edu/haub/ruckelshaus-institute/collaborative-solutions/thunder-basin/index.html

The TBNG, covering nearly 550,000 acres, is located in northeastern Wyoming in the Powder River Basin between the Big Horn Mountains and the Black Hills. Elevations on the National Grassland range from 3,600 feet to 5,200 feet and the climate is semi-arid.

Wildlife abounds year-round on the National Grassland, while it also provides forage for livestock and is underlain with vast mineral resources. Land patterns are very complex because federal, state and private lands are intermingled.

The National Grassland provides a diverse range of opportunities for recreation including hiking, sightseeing, hunting, fishing and motorized recreation. There are no developed campgrounds; however, dispersed camping is allowed. The Douglas Ranger District (DRD) administers the Thunder Basin National Grassland.

For more information about management of the Thunder Basin National Grassland, contact the DRD at (307) 358-4690 or stop by at 2250 East Richards Street in Douglas between 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon.-Fri.

The University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources has a history of assisting agencies with land and resource management issues, most recently assisting the Laramie Ranger District with information gathering on the Pole Mountain road system and facilitating the Governor's Task Force on Forests.

The Ruckelshaus Institute's collaborative solutions program supports natural resource stakeholders, policy makers, and managers in making decisions about the future.

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