

# Cooperating agencies meeting Shoshone National Forest Forest plan revision

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*July 31, 2013*

*Big Horn Federal Bank  
Thermopolis, Wyoming*

## **Attendees**

*State of Wyoming:* Mark Conrad (Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality), Rick Huber (Wyoming Game and Fish), Tim Woolley (Wyoming Game and Fish), Jay Hein (Wyoming State Forestry), Rebekah Fitzgerald (Governor's Office), Jessica Crowder (Wyoming Department of Agriculture), Judy Wolf (Wyoming SHPO), Ron McKinney (Wyoming State Trails), Josh Milek (Wyoming State Trails), Larry Bentley (Wyoming Department of Agriculture)

*Conservation Districts:* Kristin Tilley (Shoshone Conservation District), Reg Phillips (Dubois-Crowheart Conservation District), Steve Jones (Meeteetse Conservation District), Steffen Cornell (Meeteetse Conservation District)

*County Commissions:* Keith Grant (Big Horn County), Bo Bowman (planner- Hot Springs County), John Lumley (Hot Springs County), Loren Grosskopf (Park County), Steff Kessler (Fremont County), Doug Thompson (Fremont County)

*Forest Service:* Joe Alexander (Shoshone National Forest), Bryan Armel (Shoshone National Forest), Carrie Christman (Shoshone National Forest), Susan Stresser (Shoshone National Forest)

*Audience:* Cheryl Chatham (Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region), Julia Stuble (Wyoming Outdoor Council), Kim Wilbert, Dick Inberg (Wyoming Wilderness Association and Backcountry Horsemen), Karen McCreery (Senator Enzi's Office), Ryan McConnaughey (Congressman Lummis' Office), Pam Buline (Senator Barrasso's Office), Travis Benton (ERG), Barbara Cozzens (Greater Yellowstone Coalition)

## **Purpose of meeting**

- Review the Forest's response to cooperator comments on the draft forest plan
- Discuss next steps in the plan revision process including the timeline and objection process

## **Discussion of response to comments**

- Bryan gave an overview of the types of comments received and how they were addressed
- Plan contains other referenced guidance that can set sideboards for operations

- Aspen regeneration goal is not site specific, rather a Forest-wide goal including roadless areas
  - Patch size for harvest is guided by management area
  - Plan is not prescriptive on the use of tools to achieve desired conditions
- Timeline for the availability of a sufficient supply of rust resistant whitebark pine seedlings for restocking is estimated to be three years
- Grizzly bear status – won't need to change the plan after delisting, the incorporated conservation strategy will cover
  - Plan will not become an impediment to delisting
  - If delisted, USFWS must approve the conservation plan
- Sage-grouse is not a key issue on the Shoshone
  - Bryan will check with Joe Harper to see if the Governor's executive order is referenced in the plan
  - Shoshone has non-core habitat for the sage-grouse
- Slide #2, Livestock – will the Conservation Strategy, the state management plan, and the forest plan all be compatible?
  - Add “as applicable” to the end of slide #2 Livestock, page 59
  - Add WGF, USFWS to “managers” on slide #2 Livestock, page 59
  - Process should be consistent to facilitate de-listing (of the grizzly bear)
  - Joe: we must follow the Conservation Strategy for delisting to work
  - Concern about the language to “retire” allotments
  - Jessica likes #2 Livestock management approach as a guideline
    - Jessica will email suggested language
  - Joe: language should leave options open
  - Could allotment be offered to another permittee?
  - Want to encourage the protection of allotments
  - Add language to “transfer” allotment
  - Language regarding removal of bear
  - Modification of grazing is key
- What happens with an unwilling permittee? Find another solution.
  - We will wordsmith slides 58-59
- Tracked ATVs – glossary definition?
- Discussion of winter range, exemption areas (for winter motorized use), seasonal exemptions, extensions
- Heritage Resources, #5, slide 96 add “counties” to coordination list

### **Discussion regarding next steps: timeline and objection process**

- Let cooperators know of any changes to the documents resulting from the Regional Office and Washington Office reviews
- Discussion regarding objection process – opportunities for cooperator involvement as interested parties

### **Public comments**

- Kim Wilbert: lack of an in-depth analysis of public comments to assess public's view on desired conditions for the Forest Service

- Dick Inberg: reviewed the SCAC letter, did SCAC members fully review? Concern that wilderness needs to be viewed as multiple use. Noted that non-vehicular language is in the enabling legislation for the Dunoir Special Management Unit.
- Julia Stuble: July 30 letter from the Wyoming Outdoor Council was shared with members of the forest plan cooperators group. This letter analyzed the content of public comment letters regarding desires for conservation versus development on the Shoshone National Forest.

### **Closing comments**

- Meeting was productive
- We will continue our dialog as we finalize documents and prepare the record of decision
- The Cooperators persistent involvement in the revision process over a number of years has resulted in a quality plan and will contribute to successful implementation of the plan

End of notes/cc