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**File Code:** 1920  
**Date:** April 11, 2019

Dear Reader,

The U.S. Forest Service, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland, is seeking public input on a proposal to change prairie dog management on the Thunder Basin National Grassland, located in eastern Wyoming. The Forest Service proposes to amend prairie dog management direction in the Thunder Basin National Grassland land and resource management plan to place greater emphasis on control and active management of prairie dog colonies to address significant concerns related to health, safety, and economic impacts on neighboring landowners. The proposed action includes changes to management area boundaries and changes to grassland-wide, geographic area, and management area plan direction that pertains to prairie dogs, short-stature prairie habitat, and associated species management (e.g., mountain plover, burrowing owl, and swift fox).

The Responsible Official for this project is Russell Bacon, Forest Supervisor for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland. A notice of intent to publish an environmental impact statement is expected to be published in the Federal Register on or around April 18, 2019, starting a 30-day public scoping and comment period for this project. During this public scoping period, the Thunder Basin National Grassland will host one public meeting and one online public webinar to provide information on the proposal and opportunities to participate in the planning process.

**Public meeting:**

- Date and Time: May 6, 2019 from 4:30 until 6:30 pm MDT
- Location: Converse County Library, 300 Walnut St, Douglas, WY
- Format: There will be a presentation of the proposed action starting at 5:00, with opportunities to view maps and project information and discuss the plan amendment with grassland staff before and after the presentation.

**Public online webinar:**

- Date and Time: May 8, 2019 from 11:00am to 12:30 pm MDT
- How to Connect: Please see the project website below for webinar login information.
- Format: The presentation is expected to last approximately 45 minutes, and the remainder of the time will be for questions and answers.

Project background information, reference maps, a detailed scoping document describing the proposal, and a document with proposed changes to grassland plan direction are available on the project web site: [http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=55479](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=55479).

A variety of information about Thunder Basin National Grassland restoration and prairie dog management is available at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/MBRTB/PrairieDogs>.



## How to Comment

Comments on this project are requested for a period of 30 days to help identify issues related to the proposed action and develop alternatives. Comments that address specific aspects of the proposed action, identify alternative ways of meeting the purpose and need for the project, or provide suggested language for grassland plan direction will be most useful. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the Forest Service will not be able to send further project information to anonymous commenters.

### Please submit comments using one of the following methods:

- **Submit comments online via the project's public participation portal (preferred):**  
<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=55479>
- **Send comments via mail to:** Thunder Basin Plan Amendment Comments, Thunder Basin National Grassland Supervisor's Office, 2468 Jackson St, Laramie, WY 82070.

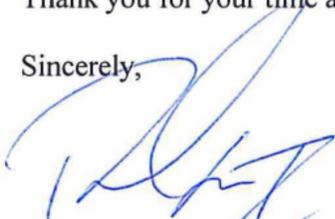
The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to inform the responsible official's decision. If the responsible official decides to amend the Grassland Plan, it will be amended under provisions of the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219, Subpart A). Substantive requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule that are likely to be applicable to the amendment are in sections 219.8(a) and (b), ecological and social and economic sustainability; 219.9, diversity of plant and animal communities; and 219.10(a), integrated resource management for ecosystem services and multiple use.

The decision will be subject to the objection regulations for land management planning (36 CFR 219, Subpart B). Individuals and entities who submit timely, specific written comments during any designated opportunity for public comment will have standing to file an objection. This includes this initial scoping period as well as the 90-day comment period for the Draft EIS, expected to begin in October 2019. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

**For further information**, please contact Monique Nelson, interdisciplinary team leader, at 307-275-0956 or [monique.nelson@usda.gov](mailto:monique.nelson@usda.gov). Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,



RUSSELL M. BACON