

THE WIND RIVER BREEZE

JULY 2008

Dear Neighbor,

Many people have written to the BLM in support of expanding the protected areas along the Congressionally-designated National Scenic and Historic Trails. A number have written moving stories of their personal re-enactment of the emigrant experience. Because of this interest, the Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision will consider the

impacts of expanding the protected area along the trails. Public input is a critical component of the RMP revision process. Please let us know what is important to you in the management of public lands.

Sincerely,
Bob Ross
LFO Field Manager



AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACECS)

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are designed to protect or preserve certain qualities or uses. To be designated as an ACEC, an area must meet the relevance and importance criteria listed in BLM planning guidance and require special management to protect and prevent irreparable damage to relevant and important values. While an ACEC may emphasize one or more unique resources, other existing multiple-use management can continue within an ACEC so long as the uses do not impair the values for which the ACEC was established. In the Lander planning area, there are nine existing ACECs (see table below).

The BLM resource specialists, cooperating agencies, and the public have proposed an additional 20 areas to be considered for ACEC designation. These areas will be evaluated using the relevance and importance criteria and the need for special management. Areas that meet all the requirements will be considered for the new RMP. The Lander Field Office encourages additional nominations for ACEC designation. Please contact the Lander Field Office if you would like to nominate an area for ACEC designation.



The table below describes the existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the Lander Planning Area.

All acreages are approximate.

Area	Acres	Value(s) of Concern
Lander Slope	25,000	Wildlife habitat and scenic quality
Red Canyon	15,000	Steep slopes, scenic quality, and wildlife habitat
Whiskey Mountain	7,800	Bighorn sheep winter range
East Fork	1,000	Elk crucial winter range
Dubois Badlands	5,000	Bighorn sheep habitat, scenic quality, and erosive nature of badlands
South Pass	12,000	Significant cultural values
Green Mountain	18,000	Elk crucial winter range and historic values
Beaver Rim	7,000	Sensitive plants, unique plant communities, raptors, visual resources, cultural, geological, and paleontological values
Oregon/Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail	22,600	National Historic Trail including intact ruts, swales, and settings

National Historic Trails

During the 1800s, thousands of pioneers emigrated west to build new homes or to seek their fortune and return east. Early European settlers found the passes and routes to the Pacific Coast and filled in blank spaces on maps that represent country, known only to the Native Americans. In the Lander planning area, several of these routes are present, including the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express Trails, all of which follow the same corridor through central Wyoming. The Lander portion of the trail corridor has many miles of well preserved trails and numerous important historical sites. State stops, telegraph stations, military posts, and river crossings that played important roles in the history of the trails are found along these routes. In addition, the landscape surrounding the trails in this area looks much like it did 150 years ago when the first emigrants passed through.

One area of national historical significance is South Pass. South Pass is the gently sloping hump of the emigrant trails, rising to an elevation of 7,526 feet. This feature provided emigrants with a relatively easy place to cross the Continental Divide. Historians estimate approximately 500,000 pioneers "went westering" along the South Pass area during the great overland wagon train migrations. Nearly 70 percent of emigrants were bound for California, with others headed for the Willamette Valley in Oregon, the Great Salt Lake region in Utah, and a few intermediate destinations. South Pass is also the locale of Wyoming's 1867 gold rush. Hundreds of miners and others hoping to make their fortune in the area founded the mining camps of South Pass City, Atlantic City, and Miner's Delight. For more information on National Historic Trails, please contact the Lander Field Office.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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COMMON ACRONYMS:

ACEC: Area of Critical Environmental Concern

BLM: Bureau of Land Management

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

LFO: Lander Field Office

NHT: National Historic Trail

RMP: Resource Management Plan



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