

Conversation Contents

Media Inquiry - AP re Craters of the Moon

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Sent: Fri May 26 2017 13:43:49 GMT-0600 (MDT)
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Subject: Media Inquiry - AP re Craters of the Moon

Keith Ridler of the Associated Press in Idaho called Lisa Cresswell, Planner in the Twin Falls District, after seeing the Federal Register Notice for the Craters of the Moon RMP Amendment that published today. He asked why the BLM selected Alternative C and wondered why it didn't appear all that different from Alternative A.

Lisa explained that the plan amendment didn't result from a need to improve resource condition, but more from the court order. She also explained that the GRSG ARMPA was completed and addressed all the sage-grouse concerns of the Court, and that the Court had agreed that would be satisfactory. All that remained was for us to address grazing. Explaining that we now operate under ARMPA, which provides a whole suite of guidance for sage-grouse protection, seemed to satisfy his question.

He asked about targeting grazing and cheat grass. Lisa clarified that we aren't doing targeted grazing to control cheat grass; that was never the goal. We are "directing" grazing toward perennial crested wheat grass seedings and away from native plant communities in an effort to help sagebrush get established in the old, mono-culture seedings from the 1970s.

He asked about wildfires in the Monument and Lisa explained that wildfire is the major cause of sagebrush loss in the Monument, not grazing. The BLM has done a lot of seedings after fires and range conditions have actually improved over the last 10-20 years. He asked what we seed with. Lisa explained that in the past the BLM used crested wheat grass, but these days we use native species whenever possible, such as sagebrush and bitterbrush.

Expecting a story this afternoon.

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