

In Reply Refer To:
4700 (WY050)

February 3, 2014

Scoping Notice
Proposed Double D Ranch Wild Horse Ecosanctuary
Environmental Assessment
Bureau of Land Management

Description of Project:

As part of an ongoing effort to reform its national Wild Horse And Burro Program, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lander Field Office (LFO) is conducting an environmental review for a private and leased land site proposed as the location for a wild horse ecosanctuary in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The proposed wild horse ecosanctuary is located on private and leased lands in west central Wyoming approximately 7 miles north of Lander. Public lands are not included as part of this proposal. The Double D Ranch encompasses approximately 900 acres of sub irrigated and irrigated lands situated at the foot of the Wind River Mountains and adjacent to State Highway 287 in Fremont County. The proposed ecosanctuary could hold up to 250 wild horses gathered primarily from Wyoming public lands administered by the BLM. In addition, the ecosanctuary would be publicly accessible while providing ecotourism and educational opportunities.

NEPA:

To comply with NEPA and Council on Environmental Quality regulations which implement NEPA, the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis. This document will serve several purposes. It will provide the public and governmental agencies information about, and alternatives to, the potential environmental consequences of the project; identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the project and alternatives; and provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision regarding the project. The document will be prepared by an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists.

One essential element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental analysis, identify environmental issues of concern related to long term care of up to 250 wild horses, determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the environmental document, and identify potential mitigation.

Known resource issues or potential conflicts include wild horse viewing, special status plant species, wildlife, special status wildlife species, weeds and cultural or historic issues or sites.

This scoping notice has been prepared to describe means by which government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties may participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

Timing Requirements:

The public is encouraged to participate throughout the process to help identify the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your comments are important. Only written comments will be accepted and should be received by March 4, 2014, to be considered in the analysis process.

Please email your comments to:

BLM_WY_Lander_Ecosanctuary_EA@blm.gov. Please include "Ecosanctuary" in the subject line.

Comments may also be mailed or hand delivered to:

Scott Fluor, Wild Horse Specialist
BLM Lander Field Office
1335 Main Street
Lander, WY 82520

Public comments are most helpful if they are specific. Regulations (40 CFR 1503.36) state that "comments on a proposed action shall be as specific as possible and may address either the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed or both." The most valuable comments are those that cite specific actions or impacts in the document and offer informed analysis of what is presented.

Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For more information, please visit the website at www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/lfo/ecosanctuary.html.

Enclosure: project location map