

SCOPING NOTICE
BLM PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
Mesa Sagebrush Fertilization Project

On May 2, 2011, the Pinedale Anticline Project Office Board of Directors considered and approved a proposal submitted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to conduct a fertilization treatment of sagebrush on the Mesa. Prior to consideration and approval, this project proposal was posted by the BLM for public comment. Prior to the decision to approve the project, the public was afforded an opportunity to make oral comments to the Board.

The Bureau of Land Management Pinedale Field Office (PFO), in conjunction with the Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO), is proposing to treat up to 3,091 acres of sagebrush with aerially applied nitrogen, not to exceed 80 lbs/acre, in the fall of 2011. The project is proposed to be implemented in two parts with the first application to be approximately 1,000 acres in the fall of 2011. If proven successful, the remaining 2,091 acres may be treated in the fall of 2012.

The proposed Mesa Sagebrush Fertilization Project (MSFP) is located entirely on public land approximately 10 miles southwest of Pinedale, Wyoming in Sublette County within the western portion of the Mesa on the northern part of the Anticline and within the Mesa Common and Luman Individual Allotments. The legal description of the project area is: T32N R110W Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13 and 24; and T32N R109W Sections 6, 7, 18 and 19. Terrain is relatively flat, with elevations ranging from 7,400 to 7,500 feet.

The project area is well documented for its importance to wintering mule deer from the Sublette Mule Deer Herd and has historically wintered 3,000-5,000 of these animals. Fertilization may help to offset direct and indirect habitat losses on and adjacent to natural gas development sites in the Pinedale Anticline Project Area by increasing sagebrush production, enhancing available winter forage and potentially increasing palatability and nutrient quality.

In the fall of 2010, 468 acres to the north of this proposed project area underwent fertilization treatment with the same goals and objectives; this proposal would expand on that project.

The PFO is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the effects of implementing the MSFP and is seeking public comments to help identify potential issues, concerns, ideas and alternatives to be addressed in the EA.

Mail or deliver written comments by July 15, 2011 to Theresa Gulbrandson, wildlife biologist, PAPO, 1625 West Pine, P.O. Box 768, Pinedale, WY 82941; or fax to 307-367-5329; or email to theresa_gulbrandson@blm.gov with "Mesa Fertilization" in the subject line.

For more information, please contact Dan Stroud, habitat biologist PAPO, at 307-367-5387 or dan_stroud@blm.gov.