



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Wyoming High Desert District
Rawlins Field Office
1300 North Third Street
P.O. Box 2407
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-2407

In Reply Refer To:
4700 (WYD03)

Scoping Notice

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Proposed Deerwood 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), Rawlins Field Office (RFO), is conducting an environmental review for a private 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 a private ranch in southeastern Wyoming approximately 30 miles west of Laramie. Public lands are not included as part of this proposal. The Deerwood Ranch encompasses 4000-acres, and is situated in Wyoming's Centennial Valley. The proposed ecosanctuary could hold up to 400 wild horses gathered from Wyoming public lands, although, initially, the number of horses would be approximately 250. In addition, the ecosanctuary would be publicly accessible while providing ecotourism opportunities.

NEPA

To comply with the NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations which implement the NEPA, the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis (EA). The environmental document will serve several purposes. It will provide both the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the project and alternatives, 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 (IDT) of the 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 EA, identify environmental issues of concern related to the long-term care of up to 400 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: recreational activities such as hunting, wildlife and wild horse viewing, special status plant species, wildlife, and special status wildlife species, and cultural or historic sites.

This scoping notice has been prepared to describe means by which governmental 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 EA process to help in identifying 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 May 1, 2012, to be considered in the EA process.** Please note, public comments submitted for this scoping review, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of the respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure at the address below during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Please submit your comments to:

Marcell Astle, Range Management Specialist
BLM, RFO
1300 North 3rd Street
P.O. Box 2407
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301
Fax: (307)-328-4373

E-mail comments will only be considered if received at the following address:
BLM_WY_Deerwood_Ranch Ecosanctuary_EA@blm.gov
(Please include "**Ecosanctuary**" in the subject line.)

Public comments are most helpful if they are specific. The 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.

Enclosure:

1 - Map