

D-1. Land Use

Historically, the lands affected by this amendment have been used for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat and associated recreational activities. A recent Environmental Impact Statement reviewed grazing management practices on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Grass Creek Resource Area (GCRA) and proposed future management policies. The following information was taken from that document detailing agriculture impacts on the Big Horn Basin in general and the GCRA specifically.

"The Bighorn Basin is characterized by a stable economy, moderate population growth, and rural communities which generally provide services at levels commensurate with the size of the populations they serve. The economic base is tied to the land and natural resources such as mining, oil and gas extraction, agriculture and recreation/tourism."

"Many ranchers see the public lands as having their highest and best use in livestock grazing. Other uses are viewed as a potential conflict with grazing and a threat to the rancher's economic independence. A discussion of the public attitudes and values is available in the Socioeconomic Profile of the Bighorn Basin (USDI, BLM 1977) and the Planning Area Analysis (USDI, BLM 1979). Generally, residents like the Bighorn Basin as it is and want to avoid excessive change or growth that could damage the quality of life."

"Production of cattle and sheep is an important land use within the GCRA. Currently, 94 permittees graze livestock on the 162 allotments, encompassing or including 965,000 acres of public land. Cattle account for 75 percent of the authorized use. The remainder are sheep and domestic horses."

"Grazing use is mainly spring/summer/fall but some grazing allotments have year long use. Most sheep use is winter/spring in the desert shrub portion of the area. Both cow/calf and grazing cattle operators are present in the area and sheep operators use both shed and range lambing practices."

Of the lands considered in this amendment application, the Coal and Wind study areas are within the GCRA while the Red Hole Study area is within the Washakie Resource Area. Table D-1.1, page 2, was taken from the GCRAEIS regarding those grazing allotments within the Wind and Coal areas. It is important to note that only a small portion of each of these allotments will be affected by the mining proposed in this amendment.

Grazing use information for allotments in the Red Hole Area affected by this Amendment is reported in Table D-1.2, page 3. Range condition surveys were conducted for pastures in sections 16 and 17, T43N, R93W in 1978 by the Soil Conservation Service (Viktorin and Grandy). Those surveys report that the range affected by this amendment is in mostly high fair to good condition depending on the range site.

Table D-1.3, page 3, lists Wyoming Fish and Game Department planning goals for big game animals in the Wind and Coal study areas.



TABLE D-1.1

LIVESTOCK GRAZING SUMMARY ON ALLOTMENTS AFFECTED BY AMENDMENT 6.

| Study Area | Allotment No. and Name | Acres | | | | AUM'S | | | | Live-stock Class | Historical Season Of Use | Management Category* |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|---------|--------|-------------------------|-------|----------|-------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | | Federal | State | Private | Total | Federal 5yr Ave License | State | Private | Total | | | |
| Wind | 0572+ Individual (2518) | 2,080 1,040 | 0 | 933 | 4,053 | 177 260 | 0 | 228 0 | 668 | Cattle | 5/11-11/30 | M |
| Coal | 0645 Coal Draw | 4,525 | 935 | 965 | 6,425 | 545 | 140 | 119 | 804 | Cattle | 11/01-2/28 | C ₁ |
| Coal | 0647 S. Gebo Common | 2,144 | 0 | 680 | 2,824 | 340 | 0 | 165 | 505 | Cattle | 11/01-2/28 | I |
| Wind | 0642+ Red Canyon (+ Sec. 15) (2539) | 1,293 (+5,262) | 0 | 4,732 | 11,287 | 1,355 | 0 | 1,144 | 2,500 | Cattle | 4/10-8/1; 10/16-12/15 | M |
| Wind | 0610 S. Owl Creek | 840 | 0 | 240 | 1,080 | 108 | 0 | 40 | 153 | Cattle | 5/16-10/15 | M |
| Wind | 0648 Individual | 320 | 0 | 440 | 760 | 18 | 0 | 90 | 108 | Cattle | 5/01-7/15 | C ₁ |

* M = Maintenance; I = Improvement; C₁ = Custodial



TABLE D-1.2
Livestock Grazing Summary on the Allotment Affected
by Amendment-6 in the Red Hole Study Area.

| Allotment No. and Name | Acres | | | | AUMS | Livestock Class | Season of Use |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Federal | State | Private | Total | | | |
| 0658 Red Springs | 1697 | 160 | 152 | 2009 | 385 | Cattle | 6/1-7/15 12/1-12/15 |

The following table is presented only as an overview of partial wildlife use in the Wind and Coal study areas. It was taken from the BLM GCRAEIS to provide estimates of antelope and mule deer population numbers for comparison between big game and livestock use of those areas. Detailed survey results and discussion of wildlife use of the proposed amendment area are provided in D-9, Wildlife. Those discussions should be considered justification for establishing wildlife use as a legitimate premining land use and restoration of wildlife habitat as a legitimate reclamation goal.

TABLE D-1.3
Wyoming Game and Fish Strategic Plan Goals by Allotment
for Antelope and Mule Deer Numbers in the Wind and Coal Study Areas.

| Study Area | Allotment No. and Name | Species | Season | | | |
|---------------|--|-----------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| | | | Winter | Spring | Summer | Fall |
| Wind | 0572 & 2518 Individual | Antelope | 35 | 35 | 7 | 7 |
| | | Mule Deer | 14 | 14 | 19 | 19 |
| Wind | 0642 & Red Canyon (& Sec. 15) (2539) | Antelope | -- | -- | 20 | 20 |
| | | Mule Deer | 101 | 101 | 142 | 142 |
| Wind | 0610 S. Owl Creek | Antelope | -- | 12 | 11 | 11 |
| | | Mule Deer | 7 | 7 | 9 | 9 |
| Wind | 0648 Individual | Antelope | -- | -- | 4 | 4 |
| | | Mule Deer | 7 | 7 | 9 | 9 |
| Coal | 0645 Coal Draw | Antelope | -- | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | | Mule Deer | 27 | 27 | 38 | 38 |
| Coal | 0647 S. Gebo Common | Antelope | -- | 11 | 6 | 6 |
| | | Mule Deer | 11 | 11 | 15 | 15 |
| Total Wind | | Antelope | 35 | 47 | 42 | 42 |
| | | Mule Deer | 129 | 129 | 179 | 179 |
| Total Coal | | Antelope | -- | 16 | 11 | 11 |
| | | Mule Deer | 38 | 38 | 53 | 53 |

