

Date 11-13-08

RECEIVED NOV 14 2008

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Don Simpson, Acting State Director
Bureau of Land Management Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Re: Protest of Dec. 2, 2008 Competitive Oil and Gas Sale

Protest of 14 parcels. Specific parcels protested include: Parcels WY-0812-177, WY-0812-178, WY-0812-179, WY-0812-180, WY-0812-181, WY-0812-182, WY-0812-183, WY-0812-186, WY-0812-187, WY-0812-188, WY-0812-189, WY-0812-190, WY-0812-191 and WY-0812-192.

Dear Director Simpson:

I hereby protest the inclusion of the above referenced parcels in the lease sale advertised by the Bureau of Land Management on October 17, 2008. I request the above parcels be withdrawn from sale because 1) I am concerned about the damage and loss of resources that drilling will have on the Little Mountain area. I have worked in the oil and gas industry. I have seen first hand of what happens to the land once a drilling rig goes into an area. I know that with regulations and stipulations in place damage can and does occur. I believe those risks are greater than I am willing to take. I understand that the United States needs to tap into our own resources and eliminate our dependency on foreign oil. 2) There are many areas in the state of Wyoming that have already been leased and are being developed that can be used and pose less of a threat to the wildlife, land and water than development of the Little Mountain area. For me this area is a piece of Heaven in my own back yard.

I pretty much grew up in the Little Mountain area. Little Mountain and its natural beauty and resources have been important to me throughout my life. My family has hunted in this area as far back as I can remember this was when we were lucky enough to draw tags for elk, deer, and antelope. There are not too many public places that offer the record bull elk, mule deer, and antelope that this area does. Anyone who has spent a great deal of time out in this area knows how important the wildlife in this area is, and it is not part of a National Park, or private game ranch. My brother and I have walked all over this area hunting coyotes and cottontail rabbits. I have seen areas where sage chicken breed, the hiding spots for mule deer and the hang outs for bachelor herds. I was lucky once to have called in a Bobcat. I married a little over two years ago and one of the first places I took my wife was out to Little Mountain. I wanted her to see all the wildlife that lives in the Little Mountain area and experience this place for herself. This year I took my 13 month old daughter on her first elk hunt with my family. I want my children to be able to continue to hunt, explore and appreciate this area as much as I do.

I joined the military a little over 5 years ago. I have spent time in Japan and a tour in Afghanistan. My memories of this area helped me to stay focused while being deployed into a war zone. I relied on my memories of my hikes, the smell of sage brush after a good rain, quiet evenings, and the cool crisp spring air in the mornings, and the sound of birds chirping. Nothing can compare to the excitement of seeing the areas wildlife, or going on your first hunt. My experiences in the military have

provided me with a better understanding and appreciation of what we in America have. Even with the changes that have taken place in the Little Mountain area this area continues to be the most sought after location to draw out for elk, deer and antelope. This area truly is something to be amazed by and protected.

Sometime we forget how important balance is in life. We must continually re-examine how the resources that are used maintain a balance. I have only discussed the wildlife in the Little Mountain area, but I have yet to mention the population of Colorado Cutthroat Trout without assistance this population would not have survived, yet increased to the numbers they presently are. This is not without assistance, I know personally that large amounts of money have been spent to stabilize and rehabilitate the Current Creek water shed area. Back in 1997 Current Creek experienced a devastating blow out of a culvert. Many man hours and untold amounts of money were spent putting in place a fish barrier to prevent entry of unwanted fish populations into the sensitive environment of Current Creek. A grade control structure was built to slow the waters coming down creek to prevent further destruction and unzipping of the creek. These events were a huge environmental wound to the area. Ranching has been a major part of history and the life in Wyoming; however, it too has contributed to the damage seen in the Little Mountain area as well. Fences have been put up to limit access and prevent further devastation to the creek banks from years of over grazing practices. It is amazing how resilient these areas are given the right types of intervention. I am deeply concerned about the Current Creek, Trout Creek, Sage Creek, and Marsh Creek areas, all of the proposed areas up for auction seem to be on the top of the mountain, or a hill. What could happen if contaminants were introduced into anyone of these water sheds? I believe that the entire eco system would be affected not to mention the Flaming Gorge itself. I would greatly appreciate your willingness to withdraw this entire area from the auction in December. Please listen to those of us who know and appreciate this area for what it is. I feel that there have been many events that have taken place in the last 10 -11 years that were not identified in the resource plan of 1997. Taking into account the large amount of acreage burned in the fires of 2000 and 2001. Has anyone taken in to account how sensitive many of those areas are even after 7-8 years? It may take decades for this area to return back to the way it once was.

Respectfully,

Matthew R Travis

Matthew R. Travis
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Mountain Home, Idaho 83647

copy to: ** Governor Dave Freudenthal
BLM - Rock Springs Field Office
Wyoming Game & Fish Department & Commission
Wyoming State Representatives and Senators
Sweetwater County Commission