



MURIE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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BUREAU OF LAND
MANAGEMENT
CASPER FIELD OFFICE

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October 18, 2006

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Casper RMP/EIS
BLM Project Manager, Linda Sloan
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper WY 82604-2968

Dear Ms Sloan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Resource Management Plan.

The Murie Audubon Society supports Alternative B of the draft plan. Alternative B emphasizes conservation of physical, biological, and heritage resources along with constraints on resource uses.

The preferred alternative (Alternative E) identifies the most lands for disposal of all the alternatives, yet some of the lands listed for sale (see Map 40) are also listed on Map 23 as Crucial Winter Range for large game animals. This seems a contradiction of several stated goals and objectives of Biological Resources to "maintain and improve seasonal habitats" as well as limiting access to public lands in areas where there are already limited lands for public use. While the sale of some isolated, small parcels of land would be in the interest of management goals, larger tracts need to be thoroughly analyzed before disposal is recommended.

The management practices afforded by Area of Critical Environmental Concern status in Alternative B are more desirable than the Special Management Area designation for Southern Bighorns/Red Wall and North Platte River areas. Meanwhile Cedar Ridge and the Black-tailed Prairie Dog complex aren't given much protection at all under the Preferred Alternative.

Also the Salt Creek and Wind River areas are given Special Management Area status in the Preferred Alternative where very little protection is given to Greater Sage-Grouse, Ferruginous Hawks or other indigenous wildlife as they would have under Alternative B. These SMAs seem to be "sacrifice" areas where the only stated goal is to "Manage the SMA to facilitate oil and gas exploration and production." More stringent controls on oil and gas leasing and production operations are needed than are being offered in the Preferred Alternative.

We would also ask that wilderness designation be proposed for the South Fork of the Powder River.

Sincerely,

Bruce L. Walgren
President, Murie Audubon Society