

Phoonswadi-Brewer, Sean

From: Lander RMP
Subject: Comments on The Lander BLM Resource Management Plan Revision

From: Steve Garland [mailto:fivemileranch@live.com]
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2012 10:31 AM
To: BLM_WY_LRMP_WYMail
Subject: Comments on The Lander BLM Resource Management Plan Revision

I am submitting the following comments as manager of FMR Grazing, a Fremont County business that is made up of and supports six families in this community. We hold federal grazing permits on seven different allotments in the Lander Resource Area. Federal land grazing is a very important part of our business, our lives, our customs and our culture.

Our ranch was homesteaded by my wife's family in the 1880's and has been run continuously as a working cattle ranch since then. My wife represents the fifth generation of her family to make a living on this land. We feel we are excellent stewards of our land as well as the land that we have been entrusted to care for by the federal government.

I was very disappointed with the overall tone of your Revised Management Plan. Statements about ranching adding very little to the economy of the county, or the insinuation that ranchers are getting older and dying off, or that most ranches are now owned by out of state corporations seem to indicate the BLM feels we are no longer relevant to your plan. Is that true or was that just the bias of the person that wrote the plan?

All of the alternatives set forth in the plan, including the no action alternative, assumes livestock grazing AUM's will have to be reduced. Why do you start with that assumption? You state that you cannot close areas to grazing without site specific study and therefore did not look at that in the RMP yet you somehow know that grazing needs to be reduced. You document that Standards & Guidelines have only been done on a minority of the allotments yet you seem to know the other allotments will not meet the guidelines and the only choice will be to reducing grazing. Again, is this plan based on facts or just an anti grazing bias?

The plan talks a lot about reducing livestock grazing but the option of reducing feral horse grazing or wildlife grazing is not discussed. You state that Appropriate Management Levels for feral horses are set for each horse area, and you report how many horses you remove each roundup, but you neglect to tell how many horses you left in the area. In the Muskrat Basin horse area you have a set AML of 160 to 250 horses. On the last roundup in 2004 you state you removed 127 horses. What you neglect to tell the reader is that you gathered more than 1000 horses in the area. This means you left at least 873 horses in an area approved for a maximum of 250. Why doesn't the plan address this problem? Ranchers are using an average 79% of their permitted AUM's (according to your data) yet you are using 750% of your feral horse AUM's. If you are writing a plan to manage the land how can this not be part of it?

The plan also does not promote the use of range improvements as a way to help meet Standards & Guidelines. In your preferred option the rancher must have a "Comprehensive Grazing Strategy" in place before range improvements can be utilized. Was the fact that a "Comprehensive Grazing Strategy" was not defined in the plan an oversight or intentional? "Fragmentation" is the justification for not allowing range improvements and further reducing livestock grazing AUM's. I would submit that if you keep reducing grazing most of us will go out of business and will have no choice but to "fragment" all of our deeded lands interspersed in the federal land. Will this achieve the desired objective?

On a specific note, why is allotment number 01633, Stampede Bog, being changed from a category C to category M? I do not believe the percentage of federal land has increased since the last RMP.

Please choose alternative C and help those of us that have been here for over 100 years stay around a little while longer.

Steve Garland
1240 Hwy 789
Rawlins, WY 82301
fivemileranch@live.com