



Wyoming  
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

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*The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.*

January 5, 2024

Peter Mali  
National Wilderness Program Manager  
1400 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=ORMS-3524>

Dear Mr. Mali,

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Forest Service (NFS), Proposed Directives (Directive), to provide Climbing opportunities on NFS administered land.

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life. As the proposed project could affect our industry, citizens, and natural resources it is important that you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide the opportunity to communicate pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA supports USDA initiating comments on the proposed Directive to provide climbing opportunities on NFS administered land. As described in the announcement: "The proposed directive would provide guidance on climbing opportunities inside and outside wilderness on NFS lands and would provide for climbing opportunities that serve visitor needs; meet land management and recreation policy objectives; emphasize the natural setting of NFS lands; align with natural and cultural resource protection and the Agency's responsibility to Indian Tribes; and are consistent with applicable law, directives, and the applicable land management plan."

Many climbing opportunities and access to climbing areas overlap grazing allotments. Due to increased interest and use in climbing activities, there is potential for conflict with livestock grazing operations within the allotments. Potential impacts to livestock permittees should be included in any new guidance. Impacts include: opened gates, damaged range improvements, potential decrease in Animal Unit Months (AUM) and introduction and spread of noxious weeds.

New facilities (restrooms and parking areas etc.), should be designed to minimize reduction in AUMs to the greatest extent practicable. If any fencing is proposed, WDA encourages the NFS to coordinate with permittees to plan and install fences with little to no impacts to livestock and to maintain access to forage and water. Additionally, the WDA urges the NFS to find ways to manage dispersed camping to reduce impacts to riparian areas and vegetative habitats on NFS lands.

The WDA encourages the NFS to incorporate information on livestock grazing on public lands, to educate the public on the multiple-use directive, and to reduce potential impacts to livestock operations and permittees. The NFS should include signage to alert the public to the presence of livestock and to keep gates closed to alleviate impacts.

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USDA NFS Climbing Opportunities

#ORMS-3524

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Cope, Senior Policy Analyst, at 307-777-7024.

Sincerely,



Doug Miyamoto  
Director

DM/lc

CC: Governor's Policy Office  
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