

Bjornsen, Alan

From: Bob Budd [bbudd@state.wy.us]
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2010 9:23 AM
To: Brian Rutledge; Bill Hill; Chris Keefe; Mark Winland; Jonathan Madill; Paul Ulrich; Clint McCarthy; Peter McDonald; Brian Kelly; Pat Deibert; Rene Braud; Doug Thompson; Helen Jones; Jason Fearneyhough; Ryan Lance; John Andrikopoulos; Donna Wichers; John Emmerich; Penny Bellah; Xavier Montoya; Carol Bilbrough; John Corra; Susan Child
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Subject: Fwd: CONNECTIVITY IN NE WYOMING

FYI. The NE group meets today.

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>>> Bob Budd 5/12/2010 11:08 PM >>>
Tom,

I have heard several requests from the NE LWG for more "guidance" on how to address the connectivity issue. In the past week, the Governor has sent a letter of recommendation to the BLM in Buffalo for short-term guidance in that regard. In essence, he has asked the BLM to hold off permitting in an area outlined in his letter, and expedite permitting outside that area, pending recommendations from the NE LWG. It is my understanding the BLM has agreed to do so.

Relative to "guidance" for the LWG, I have shared the discussions and recommendations of the SGIT with the Governor, and he has agreed that the LWG should be asked to discuss connectivity in the context agreed upon by the SGIT in the Laramie meeting in April. Those are:

1. Connectivity areas should not be wide swaths that do not contain suitable habitat, but should actually relate to areas Sage grouse are known to use.
2. The physical attributes of greatest importance will be habitat structure, actual use patterns, and width of corridors actually required to facilitate movement.
3. Connectivity areas should not preclude development, but should be evaluated in the context of seasonal movement, allowable activity, and allowable levels of disturbance. The current recommendation is that disturbance should be equivalent to no more than three wells per section in those areas of highest value - this may need to be reviewed as well.
4. Connectivity areas should not be considered "core areas," and should not hold the same level of scrutiny or stipulations as core areas.

6/49

It is my hope that BLM, Game and Fish, industry, and others can sit at the same table and have an honest and open discussion around areas currently leased that might allow us to develop a strategy which will meet the rather critical need of addressing connectivity issues in northern Wyoming in the context of mineral resources that are most (and least) critical to the companies involved.

The worst case scenario is the proverbial western movie, where each side waits for the other to draw first, and they all shoot each other in the end. I have heard from all parties that they will not put their "cards on the table, unless....." That will serve no purpose at this point. Instead, I would ask that the LWG ask for the following from all parties:

1. Give us your best information.
2. Be honest about your aims and needs.
3. Do what is right for Sage-grouse and the State of Wyoming.

I honestly believe this is a chance for everyone in that part of the world to make a real impact on our statewide effort, and I have a great deal of confidence the LWG will get it right. As you know, as a member of the first team to deal with these issues, we have placed our greatest faith in the knowledge, passion, and understanding of people closest to the land.

I regret that I cannot attend the meeting, but I hope this helps to focus the conversation. I will be available by phone that day, and am happy to participate if it is helpful.

Please forward this to the local working group members, and any others you would like to share it with. Thank you for your continued efforts, Tom. You have done a tremendous job.

Bob

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EX. 6