



Board of Lincoln County Commissioners

Robert E. King
Chairman
Thayne, Wyoming

Kent Connelly
Vice-Chair
Kemmerer, Wyoming

Jerry T. Harmon
Afton, Wyoming

925 Sage Avenue, Suite 302, Kemmerer, WY 83101 Phone: 307-877-2004
Email: commission@lcwy.org

April 17, 2018

U.S. Representative Liz Cheney
2120 Capital Avenue Suite 8005
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Senator Mike Enzi
SR 379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-5004

Senator John Barrasso
SD 307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-5003

RE: Support for Congressional Legislation Releasing Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) in Lincoln County, Wyoming

Honorable Congressional Delegates:

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners are totally supportive of the Congressional Legislation fully releasing Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), and appreciate all your continued efforts to eliminate WSAs on our behalf as well as the State of Wyoming. Lincoln County has approximately 2,619,816 acres, of which approximately 2,016,219 (nearly 77%) are administered by federal and state agencies and their management decisions made on these lands greatly impact the economy, culture, health, safety, and quality of life in Lincoln County and its residents.

Lincoln County has two (2) WSAs – Raymond Mountain, located entirely in Lincoln County, and shared Palisades WSA (shared with Teton County). It has been our experience that most special designations result in single purpose or non-use and are detrimental to Lincoln County's area economy as well as most of State of Wyoming, life styles, culture and heritage, and the WSAs are the most restrictive of all federal land designations. Lincoln County has consistently opposed special designations.

Raymond Mountain WSA – contains 32,936 acres of BLM land, 1,320 acres of State land and 200 acres of private land. This WSA is located north of Cokeville. It is bounded on the north by State Highway 89 and on the east by the IGO Speedway, a historic stock trail. A cherry stem road penetrates the WSA along Huff Creek to private inholdings.

Shared Palisades WSA - Lincoln County contains 62,637 acres (Teton County contains 71,780 acres) of a total size of 134,417 acres; 79,517 acres are administered by Bridger-Teton National Forest and 54,900 acres are administered by Caribou-Targhee National Forest.

Lincoln County's position on Wilderness Study Areas include:

- The only legal designations of WSA are those designated under the Wilderness Act of 1964 and under section 603 or the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLMPA). On Bureau of Land Management administered lands, the opportunity to create additional wilderness ended in 1991 except as authorized by Congress.
- The 1999 Wilderness Study Area Planning Project and the Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures H6310-1 were legally and technically flawed.
- Public lands that were determined to lack wilderness character during previous wilderness review processes cannot be managed as if they were wilderness based on new or revised views of wilderness character. These areas were studied and released and they must remain subject to the full range of multiple uses.
- Any new wilderness designations in Lincoln County by Congress must be based on a collaborative process in which support for the designation is unanimous among all parties – federal, state and county officials.
- Any new wilderness designations or inventories must be provided for by Congress and created in cooperation with the County and the State.
- All WSA pending Congress, which were not recommended for wilderness designation by the Secretary of the Interior, shall be released and managed for multiple use and sustained yield.
- Wilderness designation is not an appropriate, effective, efficient, economic or wise use of land. These lands can be adequately protected with existing management options.
- The creation of wilderness limits access for the elderly and the physically impaired. All wilderness management plans must provide for access for these individuals to the fullest extent possible, and provided for by law.
- Wilderness management must provide for continued and reasonable access to and development of property rights within the area and provide for full use and enjoyment of these rights.
- Management must ensure that a wilderness designation does not affect or override State authority over water resources and that the State's substantive and procedural laws controlling appropriation and allocation of water resources remain the primary authorities governing the water of Lincoln County. Wilderness designation does not create a reserved water right.
- Any interests in ditches, reservoirs or water conveyance facilities and easements or right-of-ways associated with those interests will be protected from impairment or diminution by wilderness or other special use designations.
- WSAs released by Congress must be managed based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The management plans must be amended in a timely manner to reflect change in status.
- One of the key considerations in developing wilderness recommendations is manageability and the area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character. Raymond Mountain WSA is not manageable as wilderness and the entire WSA is landlocked and inaccessible to the public, including to BLM personnel. Also some WSA designations have been done as the area is scenic, and provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation (hunting, etc.) as well as primary recreation activity (hiking, backpacking, nature study and sightseeing). There are a lot of areas that are scenic and provide hunting and recreation activities that are not unique to these WSAs.

We thank you for your consideration and assistance to fully release Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) in Lincoln County, and within the State of Wyoming. If you have any questions please contact us.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LINCOLN COUNTY, WYOMING



Robert E. King, Chair



Kent Connelly



Jerry T. Harmon