

July 8, 2011

Dale Deiter
Jackson Ranger District
P.O. Box 1689, Jackson, Wyoming 83001

RE: Willow Creek Grazing Allotment

Dear Mr. Dieter;

The opportunity to enhance or restore wildlife habitat, scenery and natural resources occurs infrequently and requires dedication, skilled staff and an informed public. The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance has worked for over 30 years on behalf of our 2,000 members to make sure that human activities are in harmony with these values. There is no greater place to do this than in Jackson Hole. The landscape provides not only stunning beauty, but habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife. We appreciate being able to comment, with wildlife in mind, on the transfer of the Willow Creek grazing allotment permit to the Bridger-Teton National Forest with the intent to close this allotment.

The packet that was provided to the public in order to elicit comments contains ample information to support this proposal. Points that the Conservation Alliance believes are most significant in this decision are discussed here:

- The terrain and associated vegetation are not conducive to grazing. Steep narrow valleys with perennial streams, wetlands, and rocky slopes concentrate animals in small areas with inadequate or unsuitable forage. This concentration results in great negative impacts on the landscape and difficulty in grazing management. Wildlife and recreational use are enough to exceed utilization standards without accounting for cattle impact.
- The poor condition of range improvements also contributes to the inability to easily distribute cattle throughout the allotment. The cost for improvements needed and the trespass of cattle onto adjoining private property are of concern for an allotment that appears to only be marginally appropriate.
- The area is rich in significant wildlife values, and Willow Creek flows through it. Willow Creek has recently been designated as Wild and Scenic as part of the Snake River Headwaters Legacy Act, requiring a higher standard of protection for Outstanding Remarkable Values.

The Conservation Alliance has always agreed with the Forest Service multi-use concept, but we stress the fact that not all uses are appropriate in all places. We feel that this area should not be used for grazing but managed for other uses. We would like to see the Willow Creek allotment closed to grazing.

Thank you for considering these comments and please keep the Conservation Alliance included in discussions on the future disposition of vacant allotments on the Jackson Ranger District and the management of forage reserves.

Sincerely,

Louise Lasley, Public Lands Director
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance