

SCOPING NOTICE
for
Q Creek Land and Livestock Company, LLC
Cattle to Bison Conversion & Electric Fence Construction

Bureau of Land Management
Rawlins Field Office

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The Q Creek Land and Livestock Company, LLC (Q Creek) has notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rawlins Field Office that it wishes to convert 700 animal units (AUs) of cattle use in the Sullivan Allotment to bison use.

In order to effectively manage bison grazing, Q Creek proposes to construct approximately 70 miles of electric fence on private, state, and BLM-administered public land. Some of this fence would replace existing fencing and some would be in new locations. Q Creek proposes to construct three types of electric fence, depending upon location. The first would be a three-wire fence with wire spacing of 20, 30, and 40 inches from the ground. The second would be a five-wire fence with wire spacing of 14, 22, 30, 40, and 50 inches from the ground. The third would be a four-wire fence with wire spacing of 14, 20, 30, and 40 inches from the ground. The company proposes to keep the fence electrified year-round and to electrify the top and bottom wires of the fences.

LOCATION

The Sullivan Allotment of the Q Creek Land and Livestock Company, LLC, is located in northeastern Carbon County, beginning about 14 miles north of Medicine Bow, Wyoming, along Wyoming Highway 487, and continuing northwest along this highway and Wyoming Highway 77 for approximately 26 miles.

A map showing the Q Creek Land and Livestock Company, LLC and Sullivan Allotment is included with this Scoping Notice.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND POLICY

Resource Management Plan

The Great Divide Resource Management Plan (RMP, November 8, 1990) directs management of BLM-administered public lands within the analysis area. The objective for Livestock Grazing Management, as stated in the RMP is to, "enhance livestock grazing while maintaining a balance between economic uses and the enhancement of wildlife habitat, watershed, and riparian areas, and while maintaining or improving range condition over the long term."

Requests for changes in seasons of use or kind of livestock will be considered case-by-case.

The environmental analysis that will be prepared for the Q Ranch proposal will incorporate appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the RMP.

Rawlins Field Office Electric Fence Policy

One, two, and three-wire electric fences may be built on public lands, as long as the top wire is no higher than 42 inches and the bottom wire is a minimum of 16 inches from the ground. If the bottom wire is 16 inches from the ground, it will not be electrified to allow antelope passage; a 20-inch bottom wire spacing

Q Creek Land & Livestock Co, LLC, Scoping Notice

will be required if the wire is electrified. A 42-inch top wire is passable by mature mule deer and elk, whether electrified or not. The middle wire should be a minimum of 12 inches below the top wire. Electric fences are psychological barriers to livestock movement more than physical barriers; therefore, if livestock are properly trained, three wires or less should be effective. To avoid damage to new fences, the wires will be flagged to help reduce wildlife impact on the fences.

More restrictive fences (i.e., additional wires or different spacings) will require case-by-case review. In addition, fences that will be electrified for long periods of time (especially during critical wildlife periods) may require additional evaluation. Documentation of impacts to wildlife caused by more restrictive fences will be determined and mitigated. In areas of special concern, such as crucial winter ranges, monitoring and evaluation may be required.

In addition, electric fences within the field office will have warning signs posted at all reasonable public access points. Areas of heavy public use may require fence ladders or crossings. All previously-permitted electric fences will be retrofitted with signs.

This is an interim policy for the Rawlins Field Office. As additional information is collected throughout the environmental assessment process, modifications may be made to the above policy.

Allotment Management Plans (AMP)

The Sullivan AMP is a deferred rotation and simple deferred grazing system on 21 different pastures. There is a total of 171,937 acres of land within the allotment. Only five pastures within the allotment are proposed to be used by bison.

IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following issues and concerns have been identified by the BLM to-date. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather a starting point for public input and a means of identifying the resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis.

- Wildlife passage/migration through electric fences
- Wildlife/bison conflicts
- Public access through electric fences/safety
- Public safety in relation to bison in allotment
- Highway safety/bison viewing
- Adjacent landowner concerns (e.g., bison control, animal health issues)

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Based on the current understanding of issues, concerns, and opportunities and established objectives from other plans, an interdisciplinary team (IDT) made up of the following specialists and skills has been identified:

Interdisciplinary Team Leader
Rangeland Management Specialist
Recreation Planner
Wildlife Biologist
Archeologist
Soil Scientist

Hydrologist
Geologist
GIS
Public Affairs Specialist
NEPA Specialist

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND TIMING REQUIREMENTS

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encourage to

Q Creek Land & Livestock Co, LLC, Scoping Notice

participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process. Your comments are due by April 12, 2000, and should be submitted to:

Cheryl Newberry, Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Rawlins Field Office
1300 North Third Street
P.O. Box 2407
Rawlins, WY 82301

email: rawlins_wymail@blm.gov

Public scoping meetings to discuss the proposal are scheduled for 7 p.m., March 21, 22, and 23 at the following locations:

March 21, 2000

Natrona County Agricultural Resource & Learning Center
2011 Fairgrounds Road
Casper, Wyoming

March 22, 2000

Village Square
302 Sage Street
Medicine Bow, Wyoming

March 23, 2000

Center for Conferences and Institutes, Room 130
Laramie County Community College
1400 E. College Drive
Cheyenne, Wyoming

The following individuals, agencies, and organizations will receive a copy of this scoping statement:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
U.S. Senator Craig Thomas

U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Cubin
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Senator Mike Enzi

STATE AGENCIES

Governor Jim Geringer
State Representatives
State Senators
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Wyoming State Clearinghouse

MUNICIPALITIES

Mayor-Hanna

Mayor-Medicine Bow

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Carbon County Commissioners

Carbon County Planning Commission

Q Creek Land & Livestock Co, LLC, Scoping Notice

Natrona County Commissioners

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

Northern Arapahoe Tribal Council
Ute Tribal Council

Shoshone Tribal Council
Shoshone-Arapahoe Joint
Tribal Council

ADJACENT LANDOWNERS/GRAZING PERMITTEES

5 Bar T Ranch Inc.
Bummer Ranch
John R. Ellis
Heward Enterprises
Ron Heward
McKee Ranches
T. B. Ranches, Inc

Bates Creek Cattle
Ellis Ranch
Warren F. George
Robert D. Heward
Leo Sheep Co.
Nine V Ranch
Fred Werner

MEDIA

Casper Star-Tribune
KTWO TV - Casper
KTWO Radio- Casper
KUYO - Casper
KQLT/KASS - Casper
Wyoming State Tribune/Eagle
KJJL - Cheyenne
KMUS - Cheyenne
KFBC - Cheyenne
KUWR - University of Wyoming
KOWB - Laramie
KIMX - Laramie
Saratoga Sun

Rawlins Daily Times
KRAL - Rawlins
KGWC TV - Casper
KVOC - Casper
KTRS - Casper
KGAB/KING - Cheyenne
KRAE - Cheyenne
KRRR - Cheyenne
KZCY - Cheyenne
Laramie Daily Boomerang
KLDI - Laramie
Grassroots Advocate - Casper

OTHER AGENCIES, INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Audubon Society
Wilderness Society
Carbon County Coalition
Field Museum of Natural History
Department of Geology
Murie Audubon Society
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Stockgrowers Association
Wyoming Woolgrowers Association
Biodiversity Associates/Friends of the Bow

National Wildlife Federation
Carbon County Stockgrowers
Wyoming Association of Professional
Archaeologists
The Nature Conservancy
Sierra Club
Wyoming Sportsmen's Association
Wyoming Public Lands Council
Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Wyoming State Grazing Board