

- WALLY J. JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN
- JOHN K. KOLB, COMMISSIONER
- RANDAL M. WENDLING, COMMISSIONER
- REID WEST, COMMISSIONER
- DON VAN MATRE, COMMISSIONER

80 WEST FLAMING GORGE WAY, SUITE 109 –
GREEN RIVER, WY 82935
PH: (307) 872-3890 - FAX - (307) 872-3992

April 19, 2016

Kimberlee Foster
Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Dear Ms. Foster,

The Sweetwater County Commissioners support the inclusion of the Greater Little Mountain Coalition's Management Proposal for the Greater Little Mountain Area in the Preferred Alternative/Alternative D of the Rock Springs Field Office's Resource Management Plan revision. The Coalition's recommendations are described on the attached map showing the proposed Master Leasing Plan boundary of the Greater Little Mountain Area.

Sweetwater County supports including the Coalition's proposal for the following reasons:

- **Collaborative Process:** The Greater Little Mountain Coalition (GLMC) developed its proposal with the support of a broad group of partners, including Bowhunters of Wyoming, Muley Fanatic Foundation, Southwest Labor Council, Steelworkers Union 13214, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, and more than 2,500 hunters, anglers and recreationists. Moreover, the GLMC coordinated with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) on its proposal, and the GLMC proposal incorporates the recommendations the WGFD submitted to the BLM for the Greater Little Mountain Area (GLMA).
- **Wildlife and Recreational Opportunities:** Hunting, fishing, hiking and other recreational activities depend on elk, mule deer, antelope, moose, trout and numerous other species that are abundant in the GLMA. Many residents of Sweetwater County and Wyoming thrive on these activities and they are a key component of why we choose to live here. Therefore, it is essential that the fish and wildlife habitat contained in the GLMA be preserved. The Coalition's proposal provides appropriate protections for some of the areas that are vitally important to Sweetwater County residents – including the Sage Creek, Currant Creek, Red Creek, Pine Mountain and Sugarloaf Basin areas.

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- **Economic Impact:** The Coalition's proposal provides a balance between the biological needs of fish and wildlife and the economic realities of developing oil and gas in Sweetwater County. Hunting, fishing, recreation and oil and gas development are all important components of Sweetwater County's economy. The management prescriptions in the Coalition's proposal will help to preserve and enhance the economic base fish and wildlife bring in to the County while relaxing restrictions on oil and gas development in the Salt Wells area to allow for year round drilling. Both measures will add to the economic stability of the region.

In sum, Sweetwater County believes that hunting and fishing opportunities can be preserved alongside responsible oil and gas development. The management recommendations in the Coalition's proposal will help to strike that balance. We support and recommend the adoption of the Coalition's proposal as part of the Preferred Alternative/Alternative D in the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan revision.

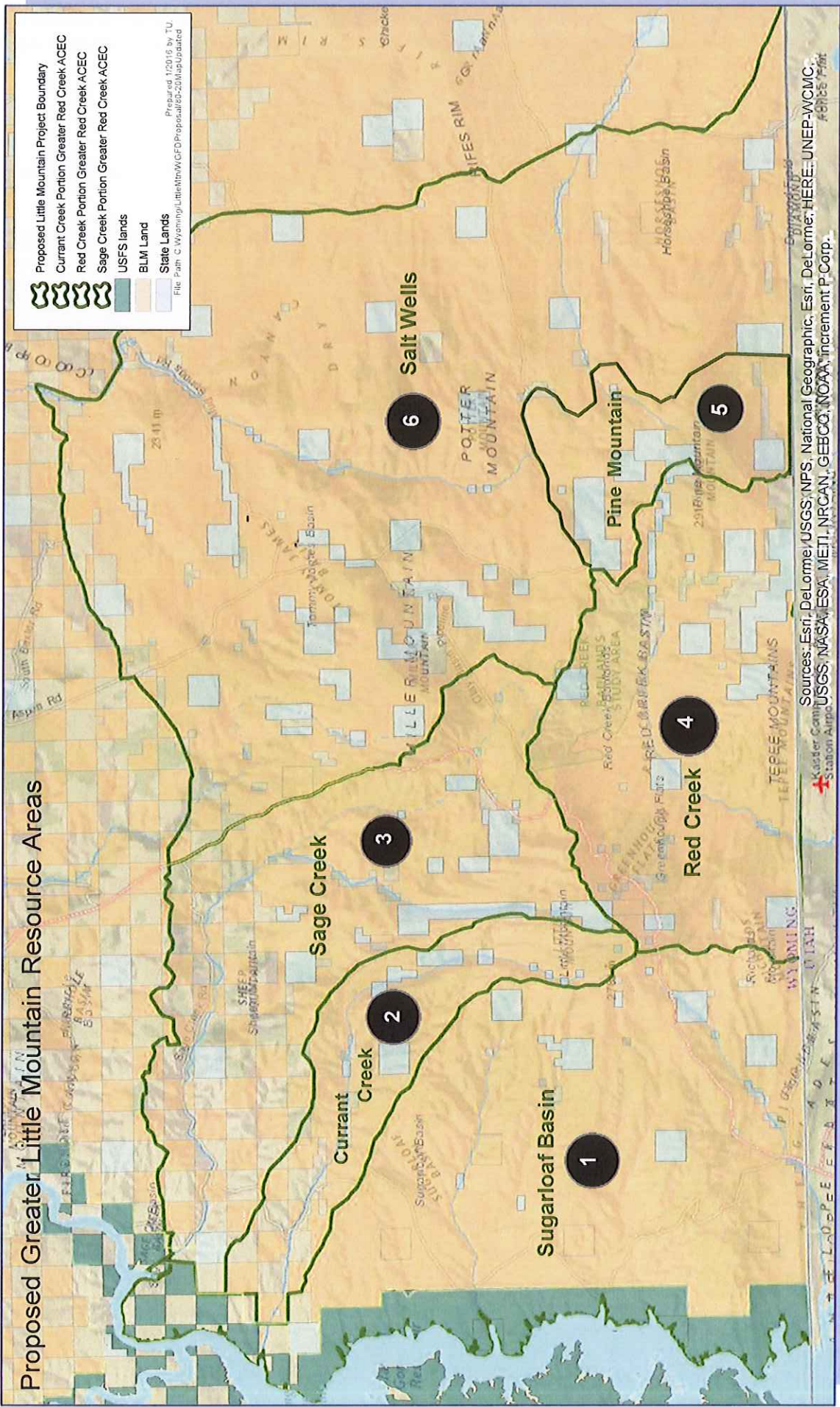
Should you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me at 307-872-3897.

Sincerely,



Wally J. Johnson, Chairman
Sweetwater County Board of County Commissioners

CC: Jerimiah Rieman, Natural Resource Policy Advisor, Governor's Office, Wyoming
Mark Anselmi, Commissioner, Wyoming Game and Fish
Joy Bannon, Field Director, Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Josh Coursey, Chief Executive Officer, Muley Fanatic Foundation
Tasha Sorensen, SCP Field Representative, Trout Unlimited



- 1** Proposed no surface occupancy for mineral development to protect critical wildlife habitat, recharge areas for springs & creeks, and Flaming Gorge from sedimentation and siltation.
- 2** Keep it like it is--no surface occupancy for mineral development to protect stronghold populations of native Colorado River cutthroat trout and prime deer, elk and pronghorn habitat. This area, along with Sage Creek & Red Creek watersheds (map areas 3 & 4) represents the heart of the highly productive Greater Little Mountain ecosystem.
- 3** Proposed no surface occupancy for mineral development to protect Colorado River cutthroat trout and prime mule deer and elk habitat.
- 4** Keep it like it is--a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a mineral withdrawal area. Maintain management objectives identified in the 1997 Green River RMP, protecting overlapping critical habitat for multiple big game species and streams containing native Colorado River cutthroat trout.
- 5** Portions of proposed no surface occupancy to protect groundwater recharge area, critical big game habitat, and important Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat. Other portions should maintain highly specialized management prescriptions.
- 6** Available for energy development by engaging in the use of responsible development practices that protect critical and sensitive wildlife habitat and watersheds.