

In summary, the Wyoming Wool Growers Association opposes any extension of the proposed Washakie Wilderness area for the following reasons:

1. There now exist in Wyoming enough areas of land designated as Wilderness Area.

2. Wilderness Areas, because of the restrictions on predator control, serve as a breeding area for coyotes which move into sheep ranges to seek and destroy and, thus, have caused and will cause more Wyoming sheepmen to go out of the wool growing industry, thus causing an adverse effect on the many communities in Wyoming.

Therefore, we urge the Forest Service to be most cognizant of the extremely important role the lands they administer contribute to the production of our nation's food and fiber, and respectfully submit that the multiple use principle is the greatest good for the greatest number.

STATEMENT OF THE WYOMING STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Chairman: The Wyoming Stock Growers Association has a membership of about 2500 ranchers located in the State of Wyoming. Many of these ranchers graze their livestock on the high mountain ranges in the summer months. Although grazing, where already established, is allowed in Wilderness Areas, we have always been somewhat fearful that multiple use groups that are interested in preservation rather than utilization of our natural resources, might bring enough pressure to bear to cause the elimination of grazing from Wilderness Areas sometime in the future.

Our Association has gone on record as not objecting to the original Washakie Wilderness proposal, which would transfer the status of this area from "Primitive" to Wilderness. We feel that grazing is the utilization of a recurring natural resource which would be wasted and become a fire hazard if not used, and it is compatible with recreation and all other beneficial uses in a Wilderness Area. However, we are not in favor of any expansion of the area beyond the confines of the original Primitive designation of this Washakie Area. The original land lies high on the mountain range and includes lands that are only usable for summer grazing permits. If any expansion were granted we contend that lands would then be included that are now being used for fall and early spring grazing and could possibly include some areas that would be considered ranch headquarter lands.

We also feel that only very limited areas of our forest lands should be "locked up" in Wilderness classification because we must remain interested in the future development of our natural resources to their fullest economic and practical level. The Wyoming Stock Growers Association believes that Wyoming will have sufficient areas of Wilderness and Parks to meet the needs of our society once the Washakie primitive area is declared a Wilderness, and we are opposed to the inclusion of any more of our Forest lands in the Wilderness system except for the express purpose of squaring up the boundaries to fit the topography of any given area.

We would like to remind the Committee that once an area is locked up in a Wilderness designation this can only mean that only a very few "privileged" persons will ever be able to see or enjoy the beauty of the area. The severe restrictions placed on access to Wilderness Areas alone have much to do with making travel through these areas extremely slow and expensive. The items of time and cost necessarily eliminate the use of these areas to the mass of our general public.

In behalf of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and the Fremont County Cattlemen's Association, whose members live close to the Washakie Forest Area, we would like to state that we believe that the ever increasing population growth of our nation and the world proves that there will be a need for all our Public Lands to be administrated under the multiple use concept in order to fill our needs for food, fiber, timber, minerals and recreation.

We feel that many of these public land areas can be developed to a larger extent than has been the case in the past, so that they may achieve their maximum economic and practical level under the multiple use concept. This will require range improvement practices such as seeding, brush spraying, road building, and numerous other management practices which are not allowed under Wilderness designation.