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19 October, 2014

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Attention: Toni Griffin
Division of Refuge Planning
134 Union Blvd. Suite 300
Lakewood, CO 80228

Dear Ms. Griffin:

On behalf of The Science Committee of the Wyoming State Chapter of The Wildlife Society (WYTWS), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the *Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the National Elk Refuge*. Changes in management directives have the potential to impact wildlife and their habitats on site. Because of the relatively large size and unique location of the National Elk Refuge (NER), it is critical to take into consideration the interrelatedness of actions that occur on the NER with wildlife on a landscape level.

Please find attached to this document several comments provided by three independent reviewers within the Science Committee of WYTWS. The Science Committee is comprised of wildlife professionals with a diverse array of expertise and experience addressing wildlife and wildlife habitat issues in Wyoming and beyond. Please review the attached document for specific comments based on our view of the Draft Plan.

Given the alternatives provided within the Draft Plan, we believe that Alternative D would be most beneficial for wildlife and their habitats on the NER. This Alternative balances the needs of the mission of the NER while taking into consideration the changes that have occurred since its inception, as well as the intricacies and art of proper science-based wildlife management. The comments provided are based on assessment of the potential impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitats within the project area and surrounding areas. We therefore focus on particular merits of the document with this perspective in mind.

Again, we sincerely thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan. If you have any questions regarding our comments or review to the draft plan, or would like additional comment or review on potential edits to the document before completion, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Eric Maichak
WYTWS President

Dan Thompson
WYTWS Science Committee Chair

DT/em/km

Attachment