

Neil O. Schiche
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Buffalo, Wyoming 82834

February 1, 2011

Laura Bies, PhD
Director of Government Affairs
The Wildlife Society

Dear Ms. Bies:

The Wildlife Society has recently issued a draft position paper regarding feral horse that has been brought to my attention.

I am a retired Federal Forester/Wildlife Biologist/Supervisor that has spent my career with the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, with details to Washington D.C., New Mexico, and Oregon. Moreover, I have observed first hand, wild horses, wild horse gathers, and wild horse interaction with the land and other wildlife in Wyoming for years.

Futhermore, my background is similar to the father of wildlife management, Aldo Leopold, in that I have owned a "sand" farm in Wisconsin, spent time in New Mexico as a Forester, and am both a professional Forester and professional Wildlife Biologist, like Aldo. This connection has served me well in objectively viewing and understanding the multitude of issues facing wildlife in the west.

Regrettably, your position paper is scientifically refutable, gives the appearance of being steeped in political overtones, would be professionally damaging to the wildlife profession if published in final form, and would certainly not be viewed favorably by Aldo if he was alive.

It also has been disturbing to read a recent article in Audubon magazine, and letters to the editor from the Wyoming Game and Fish, that attempt to attribute unacceptable wildlife impacts to wild horse without a comprehensive understanding and attempt at addressing a multitude of impacts occurring to our western landscape that, cumulatively, are the real threat to wildlife.

I am sure that the members of the Society understand the real impacts to wildlife out west are rooted in cumulative adverse activities that fragment and degrade the landscape and it's connectivity through accelerated oil and gas development, roads, fences, utilities, subdividing, and rampant Off Road Vehicle activity. Additionally there are direct impacts to important wildlife vegetation by poorly regulated cattle grazing, and destruction of vegetation on and around winter ranges by elk, that are both often swept under the rug by wildlife professionals due to the political ramifications of addressing such impacts.

There are many well informed wildlife professionals such as Craig Downer and Paul Polechla that have thoroughly and objectively studied the relationship of wild horses with the land and other wildlife species. It would behoove the Wildlife Society to take seriously their comments and insight to prevent further damage to the profession of wildlife management through release of the presently drafted position paper to final print.

Thank you,

/s/ Neil O. Schiche
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Post Bach. Forest Economics and Finance, University of Montana

Transmitted via electronic mail

