

100,220

Northern Arapaho Business Council

P.O. Box 396

Ft. Washakie, Wyoming 82514

Phone 332-6120 — 332-5006 — 307-856-3461



May 12, 2003

Ms. Renee Dana
Project Leader
BLM Rock Springs Field Office
280 Hwy 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

RE: Jack Morrow Hills Supplemental Draft Plan

This letter is regarding the recent draft Jack Morrow Hills Supplemental Draft Plan. The area in question is the 620,000 acre Jack Morrow Hills Study Area of Wyoming's Red Desert, which has been an important cultural landscape for the Arapaho Nation and our ancestors for thousands of years.

To date, we believe that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has produced a plan that fails to protect Native American holy sites and parts of the Jack Morrow Hills Study Area that were used by our ancestors for hunting, medicine gathering and spiritual purposes. We would like to make the following observations regarding the plan:

- The BLM has systematically provided for lesser protection for Native American cultural and spiritual sites than for other resources in the Red Desert or even with similar non-Indian cultural resources.
- The BLM fails to provide the necessary agency support for study and identification of these important sites, as it does for other resources.
- In the limited protections provided (100 ft. buffer zone), the BLM has failed to recognize the distinct differences in fragility, sacredness, and importance of Native American sites. Each type of site will require a varying degree of protection, instead of a one-size fits all approach. With Tribal consultation, the BLM should devise a ranking of protection strategies that will fit with the variety of sites that exist. Strong protection standards should be defined for site types, even for those yet unknown, so that at a minimum, disturbance is avoided prior to further analysis.
- The BLM fails to protect the view sheds of the Indian Gap Trail, the Boars Tusk, other respected features, and the composite of the sacred landscape of the Red Desert.
- Even though very limited in information (and recognizing that only 2% of the lands have been surveyed for cultural resources), the BLM report presents a picture of a landscape with a rich and phenomenal number of Native American traditional cultural and religious sites. To ensure the future protection of the sites known, as well as those yet

undiscovered, the most protective strategies to preventing land disturbance must be instituted, far beyond alternative #2.

- The agency's "preferred alternative" is unacceptable as a plan for protecting Native American sites, due to all the failures noted above. These include: insufficient buffer zones; VRM classifications that are weak and allow too much disturbance to the visual landscape; lack of agency resources for study and identification of these resources; poorly devised "adaptive management process" that fails to provide up-front protection; and failure to protect the overall landscape of the area.
- The Visual Resources Management (VRM) classifications should be increased for the entire area to classes I & II, which the BLM states, "would have beneficial effects on the visual quality of historic resources and Native American 'respected places'".
- Communication sites should be limited on high points, which the BLM acknowledges, "would help protect heritage resources from physical and visual impacts."
- The entire Jack Morrow Hills area should be closed to further oil & gas and mining exploration and development. Existing leases should be bought or not renewed when expired. Preventing these significant land disturbing activities throughout the area is the only way to ensure future protection for Native American sites currently known and those unidentified. Protecting the area's unique wildlife, ecology, historical and cultural wealth for the benefit of future generations—Indian and non-Indian alike—for out weighs the minor & short term mineral potential of the area. The BLM reports states that this "would have an overall beneficial impact on heritage resources by eliminating these surface disturbance activities."
- The agency should invest additional resources in study, consultation with Tribes and elders, identification of traditional native American sites and the development of special protective designations for a range of sites—so as to ensure the highest level of protection for these Native American cultural resources.
- Agency enforcement should be increased to ensure that poachers of artifacts are deterred or prosecuted.

Thank you for taking our thoughts into consideration regarding this timely and important issue. We look forward to working further with you on developing a plan that will provide meaningful protection for American Indian holy sites and areas of cultural importance to the Arapaho Nation within the Jack Morrow Hills Study Area.

Sincerely,


Carlton Underwood, Co-Chairman
Northern Arapaho Business Council

RESOLUTION OF THE
NORTHERN ARAPAHO BUSINESS COUNCIL
WIND RIVER RESERVATION
ETHETE, WYOMING

RESOLUTION NO. 2003-8642

WHEREAS, the Northern Arapaho Business Council ("NABC") of the Northern Arapaho Tribe is the governing body duly authorized by the Northern Arapaho General Council to conduct business on behalf of the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the Northern Arapaho Business Council considers the Jack Morrow Hills Study Area of the Red Desert as a valuable cultural landscape and an important part of our people's heritage.

WHEREAS, the Northern Arapaho Business Council deems the Jack Morrow Hills supplemental draft plan as inadequate in protecting American Indian holy sites, wildlife, scenery and resources of cultural importance to the Northern Arapaho Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Northern Arapaho Business Council deems that the Bureau of Land Management's consultation with the Northern Arapaho Business Council and Tribal Elders as inadequate and must be improved with the Jack Morrow Hills planning process and other processes that will impact the Red Desert.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Northern Arapaho Business Council supports further protections for the Jack Morrow Hills Study Area and seeks to be more actively informed in this important planning process and in other planning process that my impact other parts of Wyoming's Red Desert.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Chairman or Co-Chairman is authorized and directed to sign this resolution on behalf of the Northern Arapaho Tribe.


CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, as Chairman of the Northern Arapaho Business Council, hereby certifies that the Northern Arapaho Business Council consists of six (6) members and that five (5) members were present constituting a quorum, at a duly called meeting of the Northern Arapaho Business Council held on May 6, 2003, and that the foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of five (5) members FOR, zero (0) members AGAINST, Chairman voting, and that the foregoing resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.

DONE AT ETHETE, WYOMING, THIS 6th DAY OF JUNE, 2003.


Carlton Underwood, Co-Chairman
Northern Arapaho Business Council

ATTEST:


Susan Johnston, Secretary
Northern Arapaho Business Council



100,386

Vernon Hill - Chairman
Arlen Shoyo, Sr. - Co-Chairman
Richard R. Burnett - Councilmember
Willie Noseep - Councilmember
Ben O'Neal - Councilmember
William Wagon - Councilmember

May 6, 2003

Ms. Renee Dana, Project Leader
BLM Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191
Rock Springs, WY 82901

Dear Ms. Dana:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Eastern Shoshone Business Council regarding the recently drafted Jack Morrow Hills Supplemental Draft Plan. The area in question, the 620,000-acre Jack Morrow Hills Study Area of Wyoming's Red Desert, has been an important cultural landscape for the Arapaho Nation and our ancestors for thousands of years.

To date, we believe that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has produced a plan that fails to protect Native American holy sites and parts of the Jack Morrow Hills Study Area that were used by our ancestors for hunting, medicine gathering and spiritual purposes. We would like to make the following observations regarding the plan:

* The BLM has systematically provided for lesser protection for Native American cultural and spiritual sites than for other resources in the Red Desert or even with similar non-Indian cultural resources.

* The BLM fails to provide the necessary agency support for study and identification of these important sites, as it does for other resources.

* In the limited protections provided (100 ft. buffer zone), the BLM has failed to recognize the distinct differences in fragility, sacredness and importance of Native American sites, and that each type of site will require a varying degree of protection, instead of a one-size fits all approach. With Tribal consultation, the BLM should devise a ranking of protection strategies that will fit with the variety of sites that exist. Strong protection standards should be defined for site types, even for those yet unknown, so that at a minimum, disturbance is avoided prior to further analysis.

* The BLM fails to protect the viewsheds of the Indian Gap Trail, the Boars Tusk, other respected features, and the composite of the sacred landscape of the Red Desert.

* Even though very limited in information (and recognizing that only 2 % of the lands have been surveyed for cultural resources), the BLM report present a picture of a landscape with a rich and phenomenal number of Native American traditional cultural and religious sites. To ensure the future protection of the sites known, as well as those yet undiscovered, the most protective strategies to preventing land disturbance must be instituted, far beyond alternative #2.

Barbara K. Ferris-Mircau, Executive Secretary (307) 332-3532/4932
P.O. Box 538, Fort Washakie, WY 82514
Fax (307) 332-3055
ShoshoneTribe@washakie.net

* The agency's "preferred alternative" is unacceptable as a plan for protecting Native American sites, due to all the failures noted above. These include: insufficient buffer zones; VRM classifications that are weak and allow too much disturbance to the visual landscape; lack of agency resources for studying and identification of these resources; poorly devised "adaptive management process" that fails to provide up-front protection; and failure to protect the overall landscape of the area.

* The Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications should be increased for the entire area, to classes I & II, which the BLM states "would have beneficial effects on the visual quality of historic resources and Native American "respected places'."

* Communication sites should be limited on high points, which the BLM acknowledges "would help protect heritage resources from physical and visual impacts."

* The entire Jack Morrow Hills area should be closed to further oil & gas and mining exploration and development. Existing leases should be bought or not renewed when expired. Preventing these significant land disturbing activities throughout the area is the only way to ensure future protection for Native American sites currently known and those unidentified. Protecting the area's unique wildlife, ecology, historical and cultural wealth for the benefit of future generations—Indian and non-Indian alike—far out-weighs the minor & short term mineral potential of the area. The BLM reports states that this "would have an overall beneficial impact on heritage resources by eliminating these surface disturbance activities."

* The agency should invest additional resources in study, consultation with Tribes and elders, identification of traditional Native American sites and the development of special protective designations for a range of sites—so as to ensure the highest level of protection for these Native American cultural resources.

* Agency enforcement should increase to ensure that poachers of artifacts are deterred or prosecuted.

Thank you for taking our thoughts into consideration regarding this timely and important issue. We look forward to working further with you on developing a plan that will provide meaningful protection for American Indian holy sites and areas of cultural importance to the Eastern Shoshone Nation within the Jack Morrow Hills Study Area.

Sincerely,



Vernon Hill, Chairman
Shoshone Business Council