



# WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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October 23, 2020

WER 14516.00  
Office of State Lands and Investments  
Commercial Development Proposals on State Trust Land  
Teton County

Jason Crowder  
Deputy Director  
Office of State Lands and Investments  
122 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Jason.crowder@wyo.gov

Dear Mr. Crowder,

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) has reviewed the commercial development proposals on State Trust Land located in Teton County. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

House Bill 162 directs the Office of State Lands and Investments (OSLI) to “*identify potential increases or decreases to public access for hunting, fishing and other current recreational activities*” on State Trust Lands in Teton County. The Department supports maintaining or enhancing public access, hunting and fishing opportunities, and other wildlife-oriented recreation in Teton County. More specifically, we support maintaining or enhancing existing uses on the following parcels, which provide crucial habitats (either singly or in combination) for moose, elk, mule deer, or bighorn sheep, and also provide public access for fish and wildlife-oriented outdoor recreation:

Section	Township	Range	Acres	General Location
36	43	115	640	Kelly-U.S. Forest Service-Grand Teton National Park
36	42	115	640	Flat Creek Canyon
36	41	116	640	Woods Canyon-Cache Creek
33	41	116	78.83	East Gros Ventre Butte
32	41	116	76.19	East Gros Ventre Butte
29	41	116	120	East Gros Ventre Butte
28	41	116	80	East Gros Ventre Butte
36	40	117	640	Butler Creek
36	40	116	640	Porcupine Creek

### **T43N R115W Section 36 Kelly Parcel**

This parcel arguably offers the most recreational opportunity of all the State Trust Land parcels in Teton County. The parcel lies along the only access road into and out of the Gros Ventre drainage, and as a result, sees a significant amount of year-round public use. In the late summer/fall, this parcel is used by both elk and bison hunters throughout those respective hunting seasons. This parcel provides crucial habitat for many species of wildlife throughout the majority of the year, including elk. Under OSLI management, this parcel provides important access for hunting recreation and elk and bison management. Regardless of agency ownership (Grand Teton National Park or OSLI), this parcel provides a significant amount of public access for various outdoor recreation opportunities, and we support continued management of this parcel to allow public access for hunting.

### **T42N R115W Section 36 Flat Creek Canyon**

This parcel is a popular access route for late season elk hunters in Hunt Area 80, and also receives a significant amount of summer recreation. It is surrounded by U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land on all sides and provides crucial winter habitat for both elk and bighorn sheep. Currently there are no specific development proposals associated with this parcel. We support continued management of this parcel to allow public access for hunting.

### **T41N R116W Section 36 Woods Canyon-Cache Creek**

This parcel is surrounded on all sides by USFS lands. The trail up Woods Canyon is a popular access route for late season elk hunters in Hunt Area 80, as well as a popular area for myriad outdoor recreation opportunities including wildlife viewing. The parcel provides crucial winter habitat for mule deer, bighorn sheep, and elk. The Department supports continuing existing management and uses on this parcel, potentially in conjunction with a voluntary fee box, as is proposed.

### **T41N R116W Sections 28, 29, 32, 33 East Gros Ventre Butte**

Due to the proximity to Jackson, these parcels offer a fair amount of recreational opportunity. The Department receives regular inquiries from sportsmen regarding hunting on these parcels that are just outside of Jackson town limits. These parcels provide crucial winter habitat for mule deer, and a significant number of mule deer utilize these sections throughout the entire year. The Department supports the proposed conservation of these parcels to maintain public access for wildlife-oriented recreation.

Jason Crowder  
October 23, 2020  
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**T40N R117W Section 36 Butler Creek**

This parcel is surrounded on two sides by USFS lands and provides an important access point for hunters both on the parcel and to the Bridger-Teton National Forest. It is heavily used by sportsmen during the hunting season for elk, deer, moose, and mountain grouse. This parcel provides crucial winter habitat for both elk and moose, and is adjacent to an elk calving area. Commercial development that is incompatible with existing uses may negatively impact wildlife and wildlife-oriented recreation within this parcel. The Department supports conservation-oriented proposal options that would maintain existing public access and uses.

**T40N R116W Section 36 Porcupine Creek**

This parcel is surrounded on three sides by USFS lands and provides an important access point for hunters both on the parcel and to the Bridger-Teton National Forest. This parcel is used by sportsmen for elk hunting, and provides crucial winter habitat for both elk and moose. Currently there are no specific development proposals associated with this parcel. We support continued management of this parcel to allow public access for hunting.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Doug McWhirter, Jackson Region Wildlife Management Coordinator, at (307) 733-2321.

Sincerely,



Amanda Losch  
Habitat Protection Supervisor

AL/ct

cc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Doug McWhirter, Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Chris Wichmann, Wyoming Department of Agriculture