

A Guide for Public Comments

Fremont County Public Lands Initiative

The Fremont County Public Lands Initiative advisory committee needs to hear from you!

After two years of negotiation, the committee has developed draft management recommendations for eight wilderness study areas and other special places. It's time for you to weigh in and share your perspective on these recommendations. Do you want to see more protective designations? Different management options? Are there experiences or values you want to ensure guide management decisions in the future? Share those with the committee.

How to Comment

Learn more and read the management recommendations: fcpli.com

Questions on the recommendations? Email julia_stuble@tws.org

Email your comments to: fcpli.comments@gmail.com

Comments are due June 21st at 5pm.

Attend a meeting! The committee will hold a public meeting on June 28th, at 6pm, at the Fremont County Commissioners' Chambers (450 N. 2nd St, Lander, WY) to incorporate the written comments—advocate for your perspective in person if you can.

Best Practices for Your Comments:

Be personal and specific. Tell your story — share the reasons why you're speaking up for these special places. What experiences have you had that make them important to you? Why do you think they are worth protecting? Discuss how these areas contribute to your quality of life and keep you living and working in Wyoming.

Clearly outline the management you support and don't support. Include mention of the specific management options you support and list those that you want added or modified. Let the committee know where you want to prohibit mining, oil and gas drilling, transmission lines, pipelines, communication towers, new roads, and renewable energy developments.

Is there an area you want designated?

Wilderness and other protective designations can apply to any or all of these wilderness study areas. Tell the committee if you think they deserve one of these designations:

- **Wilderness:** Prioritizes management that preserves an area's natural features, and does not allow for permanent human development. Grazing, range and habitat improvements, firefighting, hunting, fishing, camping, and weed control are also allowed.
- **National Conservation Area:** Protects an area's natural, scenic, and ecological values while allowing certain uses that are prohibited in wilderness, such as motorized access.

Recommended conservation improvements:

Support the decisions for Sweetwater Rocks, Sweetwater Canyon, and Dubois Badlands (with the additional suggestions below). These areas are off-limits to mining, drilling, and other industrial disturbances—and they are special places that deserve to be permanently recognized for their natural and cultural values, and managed forever with those purposes in mind. Specify the values that should guide their long-term management (while affirming the committee’s existing decisions that align with that vision).

Keep the Badlands wild. The Dubois Badlands are made up of fragile soils, and are vitally important for wintering big game. Non-motorized recreation needs to be sensibly managed to maintain the area’s backcountry setting and wildlife habitat. Ask the committee to ensure the BLM prioritizes these characteristics when managing this area.

Permanently prohibit mining in the Whiskey Mountain region. Currently, the agency does not allow mining on the lands surrounding the Whiskey Mountain WSA, but that decision is not permanent. Ensure that mining won’t disrupt bighorn sheep or negatively impact the town of Dubois by urging the committee to make this decision permanent, for both the WSA and its adjacent lands.

Protect the Lander Front. The BLM allows some types of mining on the Lander Front and prohibits others. Residents choose to live in Lander because of the views, wildlife, and recreational opportunities of the Front—our future economic growth depends on safeguarding the Front to maintain Lander as a sought-after place to live. Support the committee’s decision to trade state trust lands—currently vulnerable to mining—so that they will instead be managed by the BLM. Further, ask the committee to support Lander’s future by maintaining the values of the Front and to prohibit all types of mineral extraction in the Red Canyon and Lander Slope areas.

No new roads. The committee made the pragmatic decision not to close motorized use on existing roads in Sweetwater Canyon and Sweetwater Rocks, but these areas do not need new roads. And while motorized use will not be allowed in the Badlands or Whiskey Mountain, this isn’t guaranteed without explicitly prohibiting new road construction. Ask the committee to prohibit new roads in all four of these remarkable places.

Improve public access to both Sweetwater Rocks and Sweetwater Canyon while understanding and supporting the needs of local landowners. Support state and federal land exchanges with adjacent parcels and negotiations to create access to public lands.

Protect Copper Mountain. Called the “White Hills” by those who know it well, Copper Mountain deserves management that maintains its rugged, backcountry experience. Ask the committee to not include Copper Mountain in the study of potential motorized use areas and recommend other ways to ensure this special place stays wild.