

MAWG "Middle Ground" Proposal

Jackson Hole Conservation Area Prescriptions

We recommend the designation of several Jackson Hole Conservation Areas (JHCA) totaling approximately 214,000 acres to be comprised of specific parcels of federal lands within Teton County. JHCA designation recognizes the outstanding wildlife, conservation, recreation, and other values of proposed JHCA lands. The specific lands to be managed as JHCAs are set forth in Section 2.C.

Below are the specific JHCAs and their approximate acreages, recommended by this proposal:

Pacific Blackrock - 13,286 Acres
Camp Creek - 2,541 Acres
Palisades - 72,296 Acres
Munger - 9,638 Acres
Phillips Ridge - 9,946 Acres
Mt Leidy / Spread Creek - 100,000 Acres
Shoal South - 6,286 Acres

We recommend that JHCA lands continue to be managed by their respective land managing agency consistent with the prescriptions set forth below. Note: where specific land designations and management prescriptions are recommended for particular parcels of federal lands (Subsection 2.C. below), the general prescriptions described herein should likewise apply unless specifically modified in those recommendations.

The Committee recognizes that the federal land manager (the U.S. Forest Service or USFS) will and should retain discretion to apply its expertise in managing JHCA lands. We think it critical that such discretion be guided by a clear and implementable statement of the purposes for which those lands should be managed, which statement should inform USFS decision-making in implementing the Committee's recommendations regarding JHCA management prescriptions.

The Committee recommends that the anticipated legislation include a purpose statement declaring:

"The purpose of this legislation is to create a management structure for travel, commercial and recreational uses that promulgates and facilitates the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Management purposes are to maintain the area's recreational, scenic, cultural, ecological, and wildlife values. Management consistent with purposes and only uses consistent with the purposes are permitted."

The Committee's management recommendation for JHCA lands are as follow:

JHCA lands should be managed according to the following prescriptions:

1. Wildlife management.

- One of the principal goals of these recommendations is to provide for and ensure active management of JHCAs for wildlife conservation. To accomplish that objective, the

USFS shall consider and prioritize management of JHCAs for wildlife conservation in Forest Planning and related activities.

- The USFS will collaborate and cooperate with the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish, and, when required by law or otherwise as appropriate, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to manage wildlife and wildlife habitat to provide for and maintain healthy populations of the full range of fish, wildlife and plant species native to Teton County. These actions may include encouraging habitat improvement projects, scientific research, and low density recreation designed and managed with wildlife principles in mind, and may likewise include restrictions on recreational use and the active engagement of programs to control and arrest the spread of noxious and invasive plant and animal species.

2. Habitat and resource conservation

- No commercial logging. Commercial timber removal shall be prohibited within JHCAs.
- No oil and gas leasing or development, no commercial mineral extraction. Activities, including prospecting, leasing, or other forms of contracting or sale, for the purpose of gathering information about or development of oil and gas, other hydrocarbon resources, and locatable or leasable minerals other than sand and gravel, shall be prohibited within JHCAs.
- Dams, power projects, and transmission lines. Prospecting for water resources, and development of new water retention reservoirs, water-conservation works, hydropower projects, and transmission lines shall be prohibited within JHCAs.
- Let vestigial roads molder; protect resources. Where moldering and currently closed roads from historic commercial logging or other activities exist within the boundaries of JHCAs, managers may take such actions as they deem appropriate to limit damage to resources associated with road-induced erosion from slope failures, snowmelt impacts, and stormwater runoff, and otherwise allow, facilitate, or accelerate the reversion of these vestigial roads to trails or undeveloped land.

3. Transportation system management

- No new roads. No new passenger vehicle roads may be constructed or permitted within JHCAs.
- No temporary roads, no aircraft landing, no motorboats. Except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), or as otherwise provided in these recommendations, there shall be no temporary road, no motorized access equipment except for over-snow motorized and summer motorized recreational equipment as specifically addressed in Section 2.B.5 below, no motorboats, and no landing of aircraft within any JHCA.
- No recreational helicopter access. Except as otherwise provided in these recommendations, helicopter-access recreation is prohibited. Where the control of invasive plant and animal species or human rescue operations reasonably require the

overflight, aerial treatment, and landing of aircraft, including helicopters, such use of aircraft shall be permitted.

- USFS Travel Management Planning to continue. JHCAs shall be managed pursuant to USFS Forest Planning (including resource protection) and Travel Planning processes and requirements, providing USFS the flexibility to open, close and otherwise manage trails and resources as conditions change in the years ahead.

4. Facilities

- There will be no buildings, structures or installations within any JHCA other than cell tower and relay system facilities and those installations necessary for conservation and management activities by federal and state land management agencies. Installation and maintenance of any such facilities or installations must be performed consistently with the prohibition against new or temporary roads, and aircraft landing.

5. Recreation management

- Dirt-based motorized recreation (dirt bikes, ATV/UTV, Electric MTB) shall be allowed subject to management pursuant to USFS Forest Planning (including resource protection) and Travel Planning processes and requirements.
- Mountain bike and snowmobile use shall be allowed subject to management pursuant to USFS Forest Planning (including resource protection) and Travel Planning processes and requirements.

6. Commercial activities

- Commercial guiding services allowed. Commercial guiding services may be performed within JHCAs as necessary for activities that are proper for realizing the recreational or other backcountry conservation purposes of the areas. Commercial guiding services shall be managed pursuant to applicable USFS Forest Planning and commercial use processes and requirements.
- Commercial Heli-skiing is allowed within certain areas of the JHCA, in accordance with USFS permitting, (Reference: High Mountain Heli-Skiing Final Environmental Impact Statement, issued on June 30, 2005 by the National Forest Service,) or as per future permit revisions.
- Livestock grazing permitted; allotment retirement allowed. Existing livestock grazing activities shall be permitted to continue subject to management pursuant to applicable USFS Forest Planning and commercial use processes and requirements. The USFS shall accept the donation of valid existing leases or permits authorizing grazing activities within the JHCA, and shall terminate the grazing permit or lease. The USFS shall ensure a permanent end to grazing on the lands covered by such permit or lease. If the land covered by the donated lease or permit is also covered by an existing valid lease or permit that is not donated, USFS shall reduce the authorized level of use to reflect the donation and to ensure a permanent reduction in the level of grazing authorized on that land. The USFS shall have the authority to retire and ensure a permanent end to grazing on lands covered by grazing allotments that may have been

administratively retired or which may subsequently be retired with the consent of the then-permitted grazing allotment holder.

7. JHCA boundaries, inholdings, and land exchanges

- JHCA boundaries should be established a distance of fifty (50) meters from the edge of established roads and one-half (.5) miles from privately-owned lands.
- Inholdings, State lands. The Forest Service may acquire privately owned land or State of Wyoming lands within the perimeter of any JHCA if (1) the owner agrees to such acquisition or (2) the acquisition is specifically authorized by Congress.
- The USFS may acquire land or interests in land within or adjacent to JHCAs by donation, exchange or purchase from a willing seller.
- The USFS shall seek to complete an exchange of two parcels of lands owned by the State of Wyoming located within the Bridger-Teton National Forest.
- Any lands acquired by the USFS within designated Wilderness or within the JHCA, whether by donation, purchase, or exchange, shall be managed as Wilderness or as a part of the JHCA, as the case may be.

8. Specific resource area designation and management

We recommend a variety of specific resource area designations and management prescriptions, subject to the following general conditions:

- When an area is proposed for designation and management as Wilderness, the Wilderness boundary should be drawn to provide (a) a minimum buffer of one-half (1/2) mile from private property, and (b) to follow readily-identified natural boundaries such as rivers, streams, cliff bands and the like.
- JHCA boundaries should be established a distance of one-half (.5) miles from privately-owned lands.

a. Palisades JHCA

We recommend designating the Palisades WSA as the Palisades JHCA. We recommend the following management proscriptions.

1. Mountain Biking

(a). Northern Recreation Zone - Mountain Biking in the Northern Recreation Zone will be allowed to continue as is. Trail maintenance and new trails shall be allowed in accordance with regular USFS Travel Management regulations and procedures.

(b). Outside the Northern Recreation Zone - Mountain Biking will be limited to 5 existing trails, and be seasonally restricted to July 1 through and August 31. Listed below are the 5 trails, which will be remain classes 1 and 2 as per the USFS trail maintenance matrix:

Big Elk Creek
S/N Fork Fall Creek Trail
Dog Creek
Cabin Creek
Green Knoll/Hunter Trail

2. Snowmobiling

(a). Snowmobiling will be allowed in the entire JHCA, but there will be no additional parking areas created or expansion of existing parking areas.

(b). Snowmobilers will have access to the Mail Cabin trailhead after April 1 and via a travel corridor, passage through the Mosquito-Stateline Non-Motorized Zone to areas further south.

3. Heli-Skiing

(a). Heli-Skiing will be allowed throughout in the JHCA in accordance with USFS permitting.

3. Summer Motorized Single Track

1. A single summer motorized single track trail will be allowed traversing the JHCA East to West to connect the existing motorized trail system in the Mosquito Creek area with exiting trails in Idaho. This new single track motorized trail must be built within the Palisades JHCA Northern Recreation Zone.