



# Trail News

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019

From the

## Meeteetse Conservation District

[www.meeteetse-conservery.net](http://www.meeteetse-conservery.net)

P.O. Box 237 • 1906 State Street • Meeteetse, WY 82433

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## AMOUNT & FREQUENCY OF RAIN IMPACTS HAY QUALITY

The classic late-summer, early-fall rain showers are both a friend and a foe for producers across the country who put up a hay crop. While most certainly won't turn down a year with ample rain, the frequency and amount of rainfall can pose a challenge when it comes to putting up high-quality hay for the winter months. According to Dr. Kim Mullenix, Extension animal scientist in the Department of Animal Science at Auburn University, and Brian Pugh, Oklahoma State Extension agronomy specialist; rain can cause several things to occur when hay is being cured in the field prior to baling. "The first of these issues is leaching," according to Mullenix. "Dry hay, or hay closer to baling, is more susceptible to leaching losses than fresh-cut forage. Nutrient leaching causes dry matter loss, increased fiber and decreased energy value of forage." The two note respiration losses are the second issue caused by rain. According to Pugh, increased or prolonged respiration occurs when hay is not allowed to dry sufficiently to stop the plant's metabolic processes. He states hay must reach moisture content levels of less than 30 percent for respiration to be reduced to acceptable levels, and hay rained on when relatively green will continue to respire for longer

periods of time, resulting in loss of forage nutrients and dry matter yield. Oftentimes, in an effort to dry out their wet hay, producers will handle their windrows more than they normally would. Pugh notes since leaves tend to dry quicker than stems, increased raking of windrows shatters the leaves from the stems. He also notes since more of the soluble nutrients are in the leaf tissue, the loss of leaf blades while raking and baling can reduce hay quality substantially, while also resulting in reduction of dry matter yields. Pugh points out microbial breakdown is the fourth issue that may occur. "Microbial breakdown occurs when fungi, molds and other microorganisms begin to feed on the downed hay," states Pugh. "These organisms develop rapidly in moist, warm conditions and feed on the dead plant material. Hay lying on the ground, remaining wet for a long period of time becomes the perfect environment for these organisms to live and breed." Pugh also notes these organisms are able to quickly consume plant nutrients and destroy plant cell structure resulting in loss of dry matter yield and nutrient content. Given time they will completely rot the hay. Rain damage increases with the amount of rainfall, duration of a rainfall event and timing relative to hay when harvested, according to Mullenix. If rain occurs shortly after cutting, it is usually less damaging than if it occurs when hay has already had significant time to dry in the field. "Even if hay has been rained on multiple times, it is important to get the forage out of the field to minimize the impact of excessive thatch on forage regrowth for the next hay harvest," according to Mullenix. "Higher moisture bales may undergo heating, and also provide for a favorable environment for mold growth." Both Pugh and Mullenix stress the importance of collecting forage samples from rain damaged hay to send in for nutrient analysis. Pugh states, "One fact seems to hold true, and that is a producer cannot tell what the actual quality of hay is until they get it tested." Mullenix notes if producers have rain-damaged, low-quality hay, they should use it to feed the cows in their herd with the lowest nutrient requirements.



## PRIVATE LANDS

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) will make up to \$50 million available to help create or expand state government and tribal programs encouraging landowners and land managers to allow public access to their land for hunting, fishing and other wildlife-dependent recreation. NRCS is accepting proposals through Nov. 27 from state governments and tribes for the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program.

**\*\*REMINDER\*\*** - Fall ranching seminar November 7th @ 10am-3pm at 1906 State Street in Meeteetse lunch provided! Call us at 754-8836 or send email to [dstreet@parkcounty.us](mailto:dstreet@parkcounty.us) or [meeteetse@conservery.net](mailto:meeteetse@conservery.net) to let us know you're coming.

**!Visit our Facebook page! <https://www.facebook.com/MeeteetseCD/>**

## LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST BLM OVER NEW GRAZING PROGRAM

The Western Watersheds Project has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court claiming the Interior Department is withholding information about a new grazing initiative. The lawsuit was filed on Sept 24th and alleges the grazing program is harming endangered species and western habitats. The program in question called “Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations” was announced by former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in 2017. Zinke said the program would offer unprecedented flexibility to grazing permit holders, while also protecting public lands. The program has been implemented in 6 western states: Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, Nevada and Oregon. Scott Lake, the Idaho Director of Western Watersheds says, “This is the latest example of the Administration favoring industrial agriculture over conservation, biodiversity, and wildlife. Outcome-based grazing appears to be a ploy to put private ranchers in charge of grazing on public lands, and sidestep standards that might otherwise protect our lands and wildlife.” The group is asking the court to force the Interior Department to release information about the program. They fear that without a public comment or environmental review, threatened species like greater sage-grouse and salmon will be at risk. The Bureau of Land Management plan for the Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations says it emphasizes, “Conservation performance, ecological outcomes, and cooperative management of public lands that will also provide greater opportunity for an operator to manage ranching operations that are both economically and environmentally sustainable.” The BLM has also stated that the new program is an effort to allow livestock grazers to better respond to factors like drought and wildfire. Renewal of BLM leases is dependent on grazers meeting the conditions of the grazing permit, which includes the health of the rangeland.



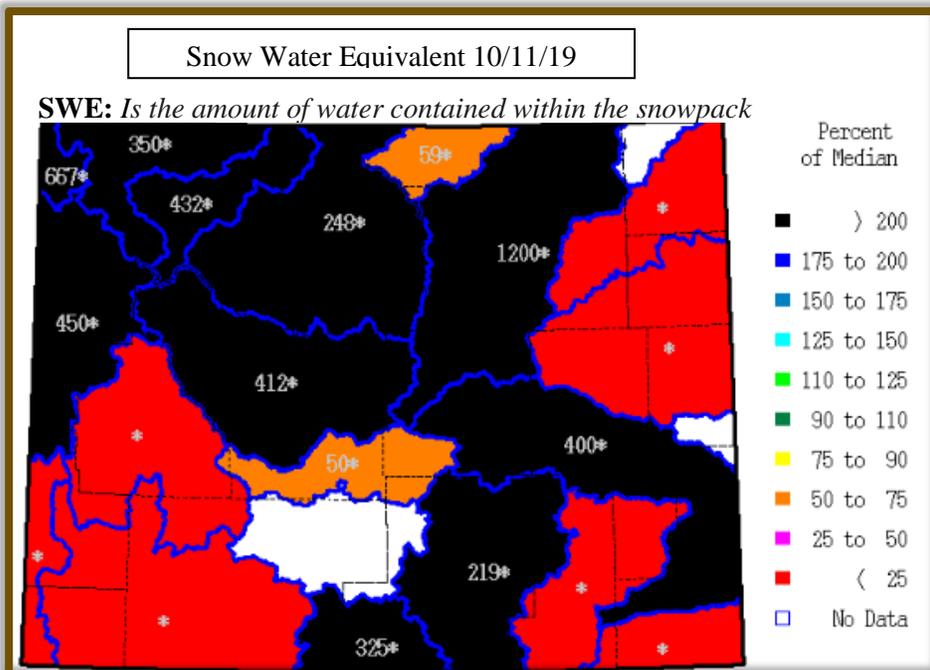
## BLM TO BEGIN WILD HORSE GATHER NEAR WORLAND

The Bureau of Land Management announced today that it will conduct a wild horse gather operation in the Fifteenmile Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA) on or about Oct. 17, 2019. This operation is in line with the BLM’s commitment to maintaining healthy wild horses on healthy, productive public rangelands. The Fifteenmile HMA is located approximately 35 miles northwest of Worland, Wyoming, in Washakie, Big Horn and Park counties. Based on recent aerial surveys, the BLM estimates that the HMA’s population is approximately 700 horses, while the appropriate management level (AML) is 100–230 horses. In addition, the horses are moving outside of the established HMA into areas not identified for their management. The BLM Worland Field Office will remove approximately 600 wild horses to return the population to the low range of the AML. Horses that have moved outside the HMA boundary, including onto private and state lands, will be removed. While the gather is underway, public lands will remain open unless closures are deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Because of low-flying aircraft, all drone use will be prohibited within 20 miles of the immediate gather area. Temporary road closures may also be necessary to permit movement of wild horses during gather operations. Members of the public are welcome to view the daily gather operations, provided that doing so does not jeopardize the safety of the animals, staff and observers, or disrupt gather operations. The BLM will escort the public to gather observation sites located on public lands. Observers must provide their own transportation—the BLM recommends a four-wheel drive, high clearance vehicle. Those interested in viewing the gather must notify Sarah Beckwith at [sbeckwith@blm.gov](mailto:sbeckwith@blm.gov) or (307) 347-5207. Wild horses that are removed will be available for adoption to qualified applicants through the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Program. Animals not adopted will be cared for in off-range pastures, where they retain their “wild” status and



protection under the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act. To learn more about the BLM’s Wild Horse and Burro Program and adopting a Wyoming wild horse, visit [www.blm.gov/whb](http://www.blm.gov/whb) or contact the national information center at (866) 468-7826 or [wildhorse@blm.gov](mailto:wildhorse@blm.gov). For more information about the Fifteenmile gather and to view daily reports once the gather is underway.

Visit [www.blm.gov/wyoming/2019-fifteenmile-gather](http://www.blm.gov/wyoming/2019-fifteenmile-gather) or contact Cam Henrichsen at (307) 347-5100.



**NEXT MCD BOARD  
MEETING: THURSDAY  
NOVEMBER, 7<sup>TH</sup> @ 9:00 A.M.  
1906 STATE ST. MEETEETSE  
~PUBLIC IS WELCOME~**