**Have you ever wished you knew what other National Forests around you were doing when you received a question or comment from a permittee or other interested publics regarding consistency?** What about the concerns or rumors regarding your State Department of Agriculture, Stock Growers, Bureau of Land Management, University or Extension Service. While the National Forests in Wyoming haven't totally solved these communications voids, they have made a very large step in that direction.

On May 8, 1996 the Rocky Mountain and Intermountain Regional Range Staff Officers and Forest Range Staff Officers from throughout the State of Wyoming met in Casper to discuss a proposal to improve communications and increase uniformity across National Forest rangelands in Wyoming. The specific proposal was for creation of a Rangeland Management Service Team.

The consensus among those present at the Casper meeting was that the proposal had merit and we could make it work. It was agreed that we would recommend to our respective Forest Supervisors and Regional Foresters that they endorse the Rangeland Management Service Team concept. Meetings would generally be held twice a year at a central location. If issues warranted, special meetings could be called more often. Due to everyone's work load it was agreed the team chair would serve a one year term and then the chair would be transferred to another Team member. Needless to say both the Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors fully supported the Team concept and committed the time and resources to make it work. The Wyoming Range Service Team was official.

The Teams mission, goal and roles statements:

**Mission:**
- Provide communication, coordination, oversight, direction, consistency and leadership for Forest Service rangeland management activities in Wyoming.

**Goals:**
- Improve dialogue and communication between the National Forests, other federal agencies, state agencies, the Governor's Office, industry, the general public and rangeland users.
- Improve statewide program consistency.
- Emphasize products and result oriented tasks (targets, permit administration, issue resolution).
- Breakdown Regional/Forest barriers.
- Work more efficiently, effectively and in a proactive manner.
- Interact proactively with key contacts. Inform and Educate.
- Deal with issue resolution through a common sense approach.

**Roles:**
- Provide leadership/guidance.
- Provide budget and program of work consistency.

**Provide training.**
- Identify annual program emphasis and priorities.
- Share individual Forest uniqueness.
- Build a network.
- Provide appeal resources.
- Provide for dispute resolution.

**The Team identified 11 Wyoming issues that needed to be addressed.**
- Livestock/wildlife conflicts
- Self-monitoring standards
- Base property requirements
- Threatened &Endangered species (Grizzly guidelines, livestock carcass removal etc)
- Noxious Weeds
- Animal Damage Control Environmental Assessment development
- Forest Plan revisions, std etc.
- Doing business efficiently (non-traditional approaches to administration, NEPA, reporting, inventory) or how to get by in the 90's with less funding.
- National Environmental Policy Act and Allotment Management planning schedules.
- Brucellosis

The second meeting was scheduled to coincide with the Wyoming Stockgrowers winter meeting to save travel. Invitations were extended to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land Management, University of Wyoming, Extension Service, Stock Growers and Wyoming Game and Fish Department. White papers were presented on a Vacant Allotment and Base Property Policy for all Wyoming Forests. These documents were discussed, final recommendations made and agreement reached for a final package to be approved at the next meeting.

At the Stockgrowers meeting the Team nominated several livestock operators from both the sheep and cattle industry and three educators to receive "1997 Rangeland Stewards" awards. These awards consisted of Forest Service Centennial Spurs and a framed certificate. They were presented to recognized leaders in the industry and education fields for their dedication to sound resource management. The Team has presented these awards two out of the last three years when outstanding individuals were identified.

The 1997 summer meeting was tied into a field trip at The Nature Conservancy's Red Canyon Ranch. The formal business portion of the meeting followed the second day. All those attending gained insight into what management challenges the Red Canyon Ranch was facing and the progressive methods they were using to address these challenges. At the end of the
has the team really made a difference in wyoming? We think almost anyone you talk to will say that it has. the “team concept” has improved understanding and communications between all parties. we have a better understanding of our differences and if the differences are necessary, we can explain why. nels smith, president of wyoming stockgrowers spent 3 days with the team at one meeting discussing issues. the meeting was very productive in understanding industry concerns and improving communications. as a follow-up from this discussion the team is now meeting with the stockgrowers executive board prior to their biannual meetings to discuss current issues. with the cross-section of the wyoming livestock industry present, many issues or perspectives that most of us were never exposed to come out and are discussed in an open productive forum.

we can’t say we always agree on all the issues discussed at our meetings, but with the improved communications and respect we’ve developed for each other’s opinions, our disagreements remain on a professional basis.

we don’t have all the answers and we’ve missed inviting some individuals or groups that probably should be invited to attend our meetings. as we become aware of someone we missed or an issue arises that needs special representation, the team is not bashful about extending invitations. not everyone invited can or wants to attend. not everyone can attend every meeting, but most feel the meetings are profitable enough that if an individual can’t attend they will send a representative capable of representing their forest or organization in the discussion of current issues before the team.

what makes the team work? from our perspective all those in attendance are very professional, but at the same time know how to have fun. no one on the primary team, or those that have joined us and have become virtually a part of the team, see themselves as any better or different than anyone else. everyone has a chance to speak and be heard. through this channel we all have a better understanding of why the different individuals, groups or agencies view issues differently. to cite a recent example of how we work together--rumors were starting that could have very easily gotten out of hand and adversely affected relationships, two phone calls was all it took to resolve the issues. the relationship between team members, the state and stockgrowers proved very valuable and helpful in this instance.
Can the "Team" concept work for everyone, probably not. Team dynamics are important and won’t be there for every team trying to start a process for improving communications. Our Team clicked and even with only two original Forest Service members still on the Team it is still working. Wyoming is reaping the benefits and the progress we’ve made to date will hopefully keep us going through the rough spots.

**Wyoming Range Service Team**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Team Members</th>
<th>Current Team Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Richmond, R-2 Range Staff</td>
<td>Dave Wheeler, R-2 Range Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Hamner, R-4 Range Staff</td>
<td>Bob Hamner, R-4 Range Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernie Spanogle, Shoshone NF Resource Staff</td>
<td>Joe Hicks, Shoshone NF Range Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Stellingwerf, Bighorn NF Range Staff</td>
<td>Dave Cawrse, Shoshone Resource Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryl Herman, Black Hills NF Range Staff</td>
<td>Ron Stellingwerf, Bighorn NF Resource Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Myers, Medicine Bow NF Range Staff</td>
<td>Terry Padilla, Black Hills NF Range Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie DesLaurier, Bridger-Teton Resource Staff</td>
<td>Bob Mountain, Medicine Bow NF Range Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Wickel, Bridger-Teton Resource Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Author is a Resource Staff Officer, Bighorn National Forest 1969 South Sheridan Avenue, Sheridan, Wyoming 82801, Phone 307-674-26275*