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Sports
Track athletes make good times, marks

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Dubois, Wyoming

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Right on track



Sterling Baker, left, and Rowan Hawk, right, ran the 110-meter high hurdles in the Rams' opening meet in Riverton on Saturday. Baker was first at 15.86 seconds and Hawk was a close second at 16.18 seconds. Both were state-qualifying times in the event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JULEEN LESEBERG

Accident claims life of Dubois graduate

■ The two-vehicle accident occurred in Carbon County four miles east of Riverside, Wyo.

By CHRISTINE SMITH
EDITOR

A two-vehicle accident last week claimed the life of a former Dubois resident.

According to the Wyoming Highway Department report, Shane Grove, 24, was killed at the scene of the accident that occurred Tuesday, April 1, at approximately 5 p.m. at the junction of WYO 230 and County Road 201, four miles east of Riverside in Carbon County.

The report states that Julie Davis, of Saratoga, was eastbound on WYO 230 making a lefthand turn onto County Road 201 when Grove came up behind her "at a very high rate of speed" in a Ford F-150 truck, attempting to pass Davis on the left.

Grove's vehicle hit the rear of Davis's vehicle and damaged from the rear to the driver's door on the left side of her vehicle.

According to the report, "Grove's vehicle continued down the road eastbound, lost the passenger side front tire, went sideways and rolled and slid along the roadway on the driver's side and then rolled again one more time, possibly going airborne."

Grove was not wearing a seatbelt and during the rollover, he was totally ejected from the cab of the truck.

Alcohol use by Grove is being investigated as a contributing factor in the crash.

Grove grew up in Dubois and graduated from Dubois High School with the class of 2008.

Objections filed to forest plan elements

■ Conservation groups feel planners are not playing by the rules when it comes to the Shoshone plan.

By VIC AUGUSTINE
STAFF WRITER

By the time the objection period closed on the Shoshone National Forest revised management plan in the last week of March, the Wyoming Wilderness Association (WWA) had participated in filing three objections.

Two of them were written in collaboration with other conservation groups including the Wyoming Outdoor Council, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the Wilderness Society

and the Sierra Club. All three of the objections were rooted in legal arguments challenging the methods and means by which the USFS arrived at its ultimate recommendation (Alternative G) for managing the Shoshone forest for the next 15 years.

The objection period is normally used for the review of supplemental information by the chief forester's office previously not introduced during the comment period which could have bearing upon the issue(s) being addressed. Information already presented during the comment period is presumed to have already been taken into consideration in the decision-making process and is given no "standing" (not valid) during the objection period.

But the objection protocol also provides a remedy for circumstances where comments were not submitted due to lack of public awareness that an option within the management plan was

being considered.

The pro and con arguments which would have been made during the comment period can be given standing by the chief forester's office during the objection period under the auspices of "new information." It was under the new information auspices that the conservation groups filed the bulk of their objections and are seeking standing.

The most comprehensive and extensively detailed of the objections, to which all of the groups mentioned contributed, challenged three elements of Alternative G.

Two of those elements were options chosen by forest planners after closing of the public comment period Nov. 1, 2013, negating the public's opportunity to provide input.

The planners decided to allow more motorized use in the Frances Peak and Wood River

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areas and to allow bicycles in the Dunoir Special Management Unit (SMU).

The third element of the objection addresses the Shoshone Forest staff decision to recommend no new wilderness areas.

As is typical of a formal objection, there is a recommended solution included in the document. The recommended solution made by the collaborating conservation groups was to designate all three priority areas as Wilderness which would reverse forest planners' choices in the final draft of the forest plan.

The Sierra Club and WWA also filed a more narrow objection addressing points that are not addressed in the larger group objection. It challenged the validity of the planners' decision to reduce the backcountry non-motorized areas in the Wind River and Washakie Districts to the extent that they have been in the final forest plan draft.

It also objects to opening the Castle Rock and Telephone Draw wilderness evaluation areas within the Wiggins Roadless Area to summer motorized use.

The objection cites motorized use as an intrusion upon outstanding wildlife habitat and activities of non-motorized recreationists. As contiguous roadless areas, Castle Rock and Telephone Draw are described in the objection as some of the "best easily-accessible foot and horseback hunting and summer hiking on the Shoshone." It suggests the recreational and wildlife values of the areas "will be severely compromised if motorized access is allowed."

Within the Castle Rock wilderness evaluation area is a "small and very isolated tract along Lean To Creek" which the final plan has reclassified as a "managed forests and rangelands" (management area 5.1). For very similar reasons as those offered for Castle Rock and Telephone Draw, the objection requests Lean To Creek be returned to backcountry year-round non-motorized (management area 1.3).

The WWA and Sierra Club objection also takes the Forest Service to task for failure to survey and create boundary maps (legal descriptions) of the Dunoir SMU and the High Lakes Wilderness Study Area as mandated by Congressional acts in 1972 and 1984, respectively.

Even though the language of each act includes the phrase "as soon as practicable," the objection asserts that the 42- and 30-year intervals that have lapsed since enactment exceeds the logical definition of practicable. The final plan commits to a partial fulfillment of the mandate in 2019.

The objection asserts that non-compliance with the mandate and

the absence of legal descriptions of the two areas makes enforcement of the Forest Service's own rules difficult, if not impossible.

The solutions recommended are to reverse the decisions made regarding the areas referred to in the objection and to immediately perform the survey and mapping mandated by Congress.

In a solo objection, the WWA addresses in detail the issue of allowing bicycles in the Dunoir SMU. In repeating some points made in the group objection and elaborating upon other points, the WWA challenged the legality of the allowance with numerous citations from government documents including excerpts from previous management decisions of the USFS itself.

The weight of the WWA's objection rests upon several salient points.

The WWA cites the language of the original 1972 act establishing the Dunoir SMU which excluded motorized and mechanized vehicles from the Dunoir. Over the ensuing years there had been, according to the objection, numerous occasions where the Forest Service acknowledged the exclusion and demonstrated no reluctance to uphold it—until recently.

Subsequent to the closing of the comment period, Shoshone forest planners reversed their longstand-

ing position supporting the exclusion of bicycles and included the allowance of their use in the preferred Alternative G.

Justifications for doing so assert the statutory language left use of bicycles up to interpretation. The decision also cited a response to public opinion and an interest in providing a balanced approach to forest use in the Dunoir SMU.

The WWA challenged the decision with numerous citations refuting the premise that statutory language was unclear.

The WWA also cited statistics from the record of public responses which indicate the public comments were, in the majority, in favor of more Wilderness recommendations. Because the Shoshone forest staff indicated that comments could be weighed at their discretion, the WWA asserts the valuation on comments was inappropriately biased toward the use of bicycles.

It is especially galling to the conservation group that planners made the choice in favor of bicycles without giving the public an opportunity to address the issue specifically during the comment period by not including it as an option in Alternate G until after the comment period closed.

The objection further asserts that it is an illegal act for Forest Service planners to make choices in the name of balanced use when the

governing standards of the 1972 law and the Wilderness Act should be given overriding priority.

The solution recommended by the WWA is that the Dunoir SMU should be recommended as wilderness area. It further recommends that even if the status of the Dunoir SMU remains unchanged, the management of the area must comply with statutory directives and prohibit mechanized and motorized use in the final forest plan.

Shoshone National Forest Planner Carrie Christman said in an interview Monday that the objection review process is on track. The chief forester's office in Washington D.C. received 64 valid objections from individuals and groups to which it must respond in

90 days from the closing of the objection period.

Christman said the list of objections was published in the newspaper of record—the Denver Post—on April 4 and the documents in their entirety are available on the Shoshone National Forest forest plan objections webpage: www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/shoshone/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprd3794957&width=full.

On that page are also instructions for members of the public who wish to be involved as an "interested party" in any meetings pertaining to objections.

The deadline for submitting a request to be included as an interested party is April 14.

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