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News Release

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Third Thunder Basin National Grassland Cooperative Working Group Meeting is June 7

(DOUGLAS, Wyo.) June 1, 2017 – The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will host a cooperative working group meeting on Wed., June 7, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the Campbell County Fire Department Training Center, 701 Larch St., in Gillette, Wyo.

This will be the third of six scheduled gatherings in 2017 for the land management and resource cooperative working group. Their current primary focus is prairie dog colony management on the Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG). The meeting will be facilitated by the University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources.

The group discussions are open to the public, however, only government representatives may participate in the working group. In order to meet Federal guidelines regarding cooperative working group meetings, only local, state, Federal, and tribal government representatives may participate in this particular group. The government agencies have shared responsibility and interest in the TBNG. Any members of the public who are interested are encouraged to attend and observe the dialogue.

It is anticipated that in each meeting the cooperative working group will primarily share information, discuss options, and problem solve. The agenda for the June 7 meeting will focus on information sharing from multiple agencies, charter formation, and exploration of implementation options for on-the-ground efforts.

The meetings are part of a USFS effort which encourages open, inclusive, transparent, and consistent communications with all interested parties, specifically neighbors to and users of USFS-managed lands. Discussions will use the Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan, as well as associated plans and strategies as guiding documents.

This outreach effort by the USFS is in response to requests from state and local governments, as well as a summary report from last year's public engagement sessions, for the agency to establish multiple collaborative venues for community-based information sharing.

The next series of meetings will be in Douglas. A public Learning Series Workshop will be Wed., Aug. 23, and the Cooperative Working Group meeting will be Thurs., Aug. 24.

Online information on Thunder Basin Prairie Dog Colony Management by the U.S. Forest Service can be found here, fs.usda.gov/goto/MBRTB/PrairieDogs. Online information from the Ruckelshaus Institute on Thunder Basin Collaboration can be found here, uwyo.edu/haub/ruckelshaus-institute/collaborative-solutions/thunder-basin/.

The Douglas Ranger District administers the Thunder Basin National Grassland. For more information about management of the TBNG, call (307) 358-4690 or stop by 2250 East Richards Street in Douglas between 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon.-Fri.

The University of Wyoming Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources has a history of assisting agencies with land and resource management issues. Their collaborative solutions program supports natural resource stakeholders, policy makers, and managers in making decisions about the future.

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