

Jan. 25, 2011

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Sportsmen applaud Forest Service for its decision to keep
Wyoming Range habitat intact**

Federal agency says 44,720 on the eastern front of the Wyoming Range will
not be leased for oil and gas drilling

JACKSON—Sportsmen for the Wyoming Range (SFWR) today congratulated the U.S. Forest Service for officially pulling 44,720 acres of potential oil and gas leases in the Wyoming Range off the table.

“This is a significant development, and it shows that hunters and anglers have an important voice when it comes to how public lands are managed,” said Steven Brutger, Wyoming Energy Coordinator for Trout Unlimited, a member of the broad coalition that includes dozens of hunting and fishing organizations, as well as rod and gun clubs all across Wyoming. SFWR has opposed drilling on these proposed leases for years, noting that the area in question is too important to the Wyoming Range’s big-game herds and its native trout fishery.

The 44,720 acres removed from drilling lies on the eastern front of the Wyoming Range. However, this withdrawal should not be confused with valid leases owned by Plains Exploration and Production Co. The Plains leases, which encompass 77,000 acres of the Wyoming Range, were purchased in the early 1990s. True to their word SFWR and its partners support those valid rights, which are protected under the Wyoming Range Legacy Act. At the same time they are working with federal agencies and industry to ensure that irreplaceable fish and game habitat is protected should any development occur in that area.

“For those of us who hunt and fish in Wyoming with our families and our friends, today’s news is welcomed, indeed,” said Joy Bannon, Field Director of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, another of the SFWR partners. “This land is just too important, too valuable, to drill, and we’re thrilled the Forest Service agrees with hunters and anglers all across Wyoming.”

Over a year ago, the USFS announced its preferred alternative to withdraw the acreage from potential leasing, but the withdrawal only became official today with the Forest Service’s Record of Decision on the matter.

