

RESOLUTION 02 – 18

Support for WCFRED Position on Endangered Species

WHEREAS, in 1998 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM) as "threatened"; and

WHEREAS, the FWS admits in the Proposed Critical Habitat Rule that "much of the biology and ecology of the Preble's is still not well understood"; and

WHEREAS, the FWS is still willing to charge ahead with decision making that will bring economic hardship to the region's communities and disrupt the lives of our citizens to protect a species that may or may not currently exist in Wyoming and might not have ever lived in Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, the PMJM Critical Habitat Rule will serve as the blueprint for future Endangered Species Act (ESA) actions because it will be the first plan completed in the State of Wyoming whose effects will fall primarily on private property; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Critical Habitat Rule's effects, which will devastate Platte, Laramie, Converse and Albany Counties, their economies and residents by: Decreasing the tax bases; Disrupting the custom and culture of the communities by forcing the liquidation of ranches and farms thus destroying the open spaces and the uniqueness of the region; Accelerating the rural to urban migration by eliminating small farms and ranches that will further open the door to the type of urbanization that has plagued Colorado and the Rockies; and

WHEREAS, the harsh ESA restrictions add to the burden on our residents at a time when they are already struggling with the effects of a record setting drought, record low commodity prices and the downturn in the national economy; and

WHEREAS, Interior Secretary Gale Norton is required to designate critical habitat "only after taking into consideration the economic impact and any other relevant impact"; and

WHEREAS, once these impacts are determined, the Act gives the Secretary great latitude to modify the plan and exclude any area from critical habitat if she determines that the benefits of such exclusion outweigh the benefits of specifying such area as critical habitat will result in the extinction of the species concerned; and

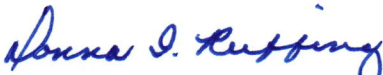
WHEREAS, the Interior Department will issue a Final Rule on the PMJM Critical Habitat on June 4, 2003.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Niobrara County Commissioners do hereby support the Wyoming Counties for Responsible Energy Development (WCFRED) in its position to strongly support the efforts of Platte, Albany, Laramie, Converse and Goshen Counties to obtain funding to quantify the economic and other effects that the ESA is having on the region and to shape the decision making on the PMJM in a way that it accurately reflects the concerns and the entire range of effects the listing will have on the State, its counties and our residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Niobrara County Commissioners supports the Wyoming Counties for Responsible Energy Development (WCFRED) in formally urging our Congressional delegation, Governor, Governor-elect and other Wyoming leaders to make funding available to support this effort.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 19th day of November, 2002.


NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

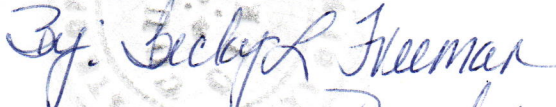

Donna I. Ruffing, Chairman


Richard L. James


Richard A. Ladwig

ATTEST:


Suzanne R. Sturman, Clerk


Becky Freeman
Deputy