

February 28, 2018

Bighorn National Forest Supervisor Andrew Johnson

2013 Eastside 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Sheridan, WY 82801

Dear Bighorn National Forest Supervisor Andrew Johnson,

I hope the need to have a District Ranger on the Powder River Ranger District is met in a timely fashion. This along with maintaining the Powder River Ranger District staff in Buffalo is important. It is imperative to provide convenient service to the visiting public by keeping employees in close proximity to the National Forest System lands which they manage. The town of Buffalo is only ten minutes from the Bighorn National Forest and its closeness to the Bighorn NF allows these employees to be near the resources and the visiting public they work for. Employees in the Buffalo office will spend more time in the Bighorn NF not driving to and from it as employees stationed in Sheridan or Greybull do. Both Greybull and Sheridan are nearly an hour from the Bighorn National Forest. As a long time, 30+ year Bighorn National Forest employee, I strongly believe there needs to be a District Ranger in Buffalo. By many measures the majority of the visitation occurs on the south end of the Bighorn National Forest. Over 75% of the total Cloud Peak Wilderness visits accessed the south end of Cloud Peak Wilderness. The developed campground receipts show that half of the usage is on the south end of the Bighorn National Forest. The cabin rental program on the Bighorn NF has all three current rentals located along US 16. Dispersed recreation usage, although difficult to tally directly, can be indirectly measured by traffic counts on the US highways over the Bighorn Mountains. Average daily traffic (ADT) count of over 1200 vehicles per day on US 16 versus just slightly over 800 ADT on US 14. A nearly 50% greater ADT on US 16 than US 14. The rock climbing in Tensleep Canyon is known nationally and internationally. These all indicate the need to have District Ranger close to the ground to lead and manage these issues. Today recreation and the need to be proactive in managing the entire gamut of recreation must be addressed. Again, I urge you to fill the Powder River Ranger District position as quickly as possible. Selecting an individual with recreation background and experience would be most beneficial to addressing the recreation issues on the Powder River Ranger District.

Sincerely,

Craig Cope  
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Buffalo, WY 82834