

“Land Exchange is about Conservation”

Recent articles in statewide and local newspapers have given front page coverage to the Notch Peak Ranch – Devil’s Canyon land exchange. The characterization of this coverage has emphasized the conflict between parties and the concern of the public. Little has been presented about the real reason that I proposed the concept of this exchange: **conservation**. My intention has been, and will continue to be, a commitment to conservation of natural resources, such as woodlands, forage, wildlife and water.

Notch Peak Ranch is located in the Laramie mountain range, west of Wheatland. While my principle residence is Denver, I am proud to call Notch Peak Ranch my Wyoming home. The ranch is characterized by rugged country, especially vulnerable to fire, caused by the numerous lightening strikes of summer thunderstorms. Fire prevention and forest rehabilitation has become our center of attention. We have developed an aggressive, focused and dedicated approach to managing risk and restoration. Quentin Skinner and Michael Smith, Professors in the Renewable Resources Department at University of Wyoming, recently visited the ranch on a Cooperative Extension Service tour. In their report from that tour, they observed our efforts and remarked, *“To our knowledge we know of no other ranch program that has so strongly committed itself to managing burnt and existing forest resources....they have put their reputation and economic resources behind what they really believe and we are impressed.”* It cannot be said better.

During the last few weeks we have heard from concerned citizens, state agencies and local elected officials. My team and I are now working diligently with many of these same folks to understand all of the issues and explore opportunities to address many matters. The exchange details are evolving, as I move to incorporate good ideas and suggestions into an improved proposal. However, the concept of the exchange remains the same: conservation of natural resources through dedicated and effective management.

While the first chapters of the Notch Peak – Devil’s Canyon land exchange may have highlighted conflict and concern, it is my commitment to ensure that the next chapters are about communication, cooperation and especially, conservation.

Pat Broe