

Gov celebrates Wyo Range protection

By Staff

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CHEYENNE — This weekend, Gov. Dave Freudenthal was at a remote hunting camp to celebrate the Wyoming Range Legacy Act, a landmark bill that withdraws 1.2 million acres of public land in the Wyoming Range from future mineral leasing. At the event, the Bureau of Land Management announced it will not accept pending bids on 23 oil and gas lease parcels on 23,757 acres in the Wyoming Range Withdrawal Area on the Bridger Teton National Forest managed by the U.S. Forest Service. "In 2004, when 170,000 acres were up for lease in the Wyoming Range, we knew that the steep slopes, the streams and the crucial wildlife habitat there was no place for drill rigs," Freudenthal recalled, "So we set to work and got the offering scaled back from 170,000 to less than 45,000 acres. Today, five years later, the 45,000 acres has been cut to 21,000 and we're still hoping to get to zero. It took lease protests, letters, phone calls and plane trips - but we're getting there. Had we not acted then - hunters, fishermen, hikers, governors and senators - I dare say that the Wyoming Range might look a little different today and a lot different tomorrow. "This is a great day for the Wyoming Range and for the hunters, anglers, hikers and many others who came together in their commitment to set this special place aside so our kids and grandkids can enjoy it long after we are all gone."