

*Rawlins Daily Times  
Feb. 16, 2003*

# Protect lands, church group says

Dear editor,

As most people who care about Wyoming's outdoor heritage and scenic beauty are aware, the BLM is re-doing its long-term plan for the Great Divide area of the state. This part of southwest Wyoming contains some of the last pristine wild areas and is threatened by unprecedented energy development. While Wyoming may be the empire that generates America's energy demand, it is still important not to despoil our valuable lands forever.

The Wyoming Association of Churches is in support of the proposed "Western Heritage Alternative," which we feel provides additional protection to the

Red Desert area while at the same time allowing energy development to proceed. Our interest in this matter is not for the usual economic reasons but more for the spiritual health of our people.

One of the things that makes Wyoming great is that it's truly "the last best place." It is this way because we can still gain our spiritual energy from the outdoors at a time that many of our communities are becoming urbanized. Wyoming's great outdoors is a place for spiritual discernment and we feel it should remain that way. The Western Heritage Alternative is a way for the BLM to preserve this unique option for our future and the future of those

who follow.  
We urge others to support this alternative by sending comments to John Spehar at [comments@rawlinsrmp.com](mailto:comments@rawlinsrmp.com).

Sincerely,  
The Rev. Warren Murphy,  
Director  
The Wyoming Association of Churches

The WAC has membership from the following denominations:  
American Baptist Churches, USA  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran in America  
Presbyterian Church, USA  
Religious Society of Friends  
Roman Catholic Church  
United Church of Christ  
United Methodist Church  
Observers - Unitarian Universalist