Meade Co. Commission  
1300 Sherman Street, Suite 212  
Sturgis, SD 57785

Commissioners:

Based on our conversation of June 10, 2015, I would like to detail the BLM position on Horse Soldier Road, also known as the Fort Meade Backcountry Byway. The Byway bisects the Fort Meade Recreation Area which was identified as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) due to the numerous historical and archeological sites associated with one of the last frontier posts to be built in the Dakotas.

Following the intent of Public Land Order No. 2112, which reserved the area for conservation of natural resources, a management plan was prepared in 1996 which describes how the resources should best be managed and provided guidelines for activities within the ACEC. The area is further managed under the Cultural Resource Management Plan of 1987. These two plans dictate the management strategies for the area and reserve it for non-motorized recreational use and cultural interpretation. Specifically, the Management Plan states that “recreational use is limited to a level which will not produce unacceptable or irreversible changes in the natural character of the area” and “asphalt or pavement will not be used on the Fort Meade Backcountry Byway.”

In order to maintain the historic and natural integrity of the ACEC, the BLM will not permit enhancement of the Fort Meade Backcountry Byway to allow for increased traffic or speeds. The Byway will not be developed into an intentional through fare for local traffic, as this is in direct conflict with the purposes for which the area is preserved. The Byway and the surrounding BLM lands will be maintained for the protection of cultural and historical values, wildlife habitat, scenic values and permitted recreational activities.

With this letter, is it my intent to inform all interested parties of the purpose of the Backcountry Byway and the Fort Meade Recreational Area/ACEC and to reiterate the BLM’s position on any development of the area for other purposes. Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 605-892-7001.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Chip Kimball  
Field Manager