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BLM extends public scoping comment period for White River Plan Amendment

Meeker, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management’s White River Field Office has extended the public “scoping” comment period through Sept. 30 on its proposed plan amendment covering potential impacts of significant increases in oil and gas development.

“We want to ensure the public has ample opportunity to share their issues and concerns with us,” said Kent Walter, Field Manager for the White River Field Office in Meeker.

The 1.5 million-acre Field Office in northwestern Colorado is amending its 1997 Resource Management Plan (RMP) to address an anticipated increase oil and gas development. Improved technology, increased demand and added capacity to move natural gas from the Piceance Basin has created the potential for additional oil and gas development from the 1,100 wells anticipated over 20 years in the existing plan. Current estimates indicate the possibility of between 10,000 and 15,000 new oil and gas wells over the next 20 years.

In this first opportunity for public comment, called “scoping,” BLM asks the public to help identify issues or concerns and to provide general input on the proposed amendment. The information will be used to prepare the draft RMP Amendment and associated Environmental Impact Statement.

“Public involvement is critical to this planning effort,” Walter said. “During this public scoping phase, we would like to hear general issues and concerns from the public.”

Public scoping meetings will be held in Meeker, Rangely and Rifle later in late August or September. They will be well-advertised through the media and the White River Field Office website.

BLM will accept public scoping comments through Sept. 30, 2006. For more information, to submit comments or to have your name added to a mailing list, log on to the White River Field Office website at <http://www.co.blm.gov/wrra/index.htm>. Additional information is available through Jane Peterson, WRFO Oil and Gas EIS Project Manager, at (970) 244-3027.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement should be completed by late fall 2007, which will be followed by a 90-day public comment period.

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