



UPDATE ON THE WHITE RIVER FIELD OFFICE OIL AND GAS RMPA/EIS

Progress to Date

April 2009

The Bureau of Land Management's White River Field Office in Meeker is amending its Resource Management Plan to address an anticipated increase in oil and gas activity on the Piceance Basin. The Field Office will be actively seeking public comments when it releases a draft of this amendment, which is currently scheduled for spring of 2010.

The Field Office is currently working on the impact analysis for each of the four management alternatives. This is a very important phase of writing the Draft. It requires complex modeling, detailed mapping and an intensive interdisciplinary review from the BLM staff. Just like developing the alternatives, this phase can take quite a bit of time to complete.

Working with Cooperating Agencies, federal partners and a subcommittee of the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council, the Field Office has developed a wide-range of possible alternatives to be analyzed. The Field Office will continue to involve these groups as it selects a preferred alternative for the draft based on the impact analysis. The alternatives and their projected impacts will be explained in detail and be available for public review in the Draft.

Brief Description of the Four Draft Alternatives

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) – This alternative would retain the current management goals, objectives, and direction specified in the 1997 White River Resource Management Plan. However, it updates the 20-year development projection from the 1997 RMP to reflect the current rate of about 220 new drilling permits per year. Resources and resource programs would be analyzed at a level of development of up to 550 multi-well pads with an associated long-term disturbance of 6,725 acres. (Multi-well pads in all four alternatives are assumed to average eight wells per pad.)

Alternative B – This alternative analyzes limiting the duration and overall extent of development activities to maintain existing resource conditions throughout all phases of oil and gas development and production. It emphasizes conservation and protection of other resources and resource uses concurrently with oil and gas production. Implementation of Alternative B would result in up to 1,100 multi-well pads. Associated surface disturbance resulting from this level of development would total 13,200 acres.

Alternative C – This alternative analyzes the impacts of short-term use of the environment while maintaining and enhancing long-term community function and ecological integrity. Disturbance thresholds would be higher and more exceptions and modifications to lease stipulations could be granted than in Alternative B. The extent of short-term impacts to resources and resource uses could be greater in some cases than in Alternative B. This alternative projects development of up to 1,800 multi-well pads with an associated surface disturbance totaling 21,600 acres.

Alternative D – This alternative analyzes the impacts of emphasizing the production of oil and gas resources. Development would still occur under the environmental protections afforded by applicable laws, regulations, and BLM policy. Implementation of Alternative D is assumed to result in up to 2,550 new multi-well pads with an associated surface disturbance of 30,672 acres.