

WHITE RIVER FIELD OFFICE OIL AND GAS RMPA/EIS

PLANNING BULLETIN 1 · SEPTEMBER 2006



PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

We Want to Hear from You!

The BLM White River Field Office is holding public scoping meetings on the Resource Management Plan Amendment for Oil and Gas Leasing and Environmental Impact Statement.

Tuesday, Sept 12,
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Fairfield Center
200 Main Street
Meeker, CO

Wednesday, Sept 13
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Rangely High School
234 South Jones Avenue
Rangely, CO

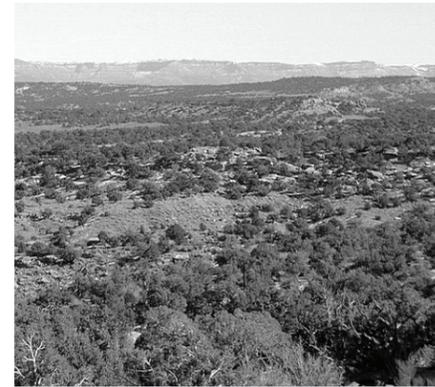
Thursday, Sept 14
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Garfield County Fairgrounds,
Event Hall
1001 Railroad Avenue
Rifle, CO

Ms. Jane Peterson, Project Manager
BLM White River Field Office
73554 Highway 64
Meeker, CO 81641

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WHITE RIVER FIELD OFFICE OIL AND GAS RMPA/EIS

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The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) White River Field Office in Meeker, Colorado, is in the initial stages of preparing a Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will address potential oil and gas exploration and development activities within the 1.5 million acres it manages. The White River Field Office is located primarily in Rio Blanco County, with additional small tracts located in Garfield and Moffat counties. The Planning Area is approximately 2,675,360 acres including privately owned lands and lands administered by the BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service, and State of Colorado. Of this, the BLM administers approximately 1,455,900 surface acres, and 365,000 acres of federal mineral estate underlying state and privately owned lands (see map to the right).



Why amend the Resource Management Plan?

The White River RMP, completed by BLM in 1997, established the direction to manage multiple uses of public land, manage and protect natural resources, and establish systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of management practices. BLM has evaluated existing oil and gas leasing decisions and determined the 1997 RMP does not analyze the projected potential increase in oil and gas development in the Planning Area.

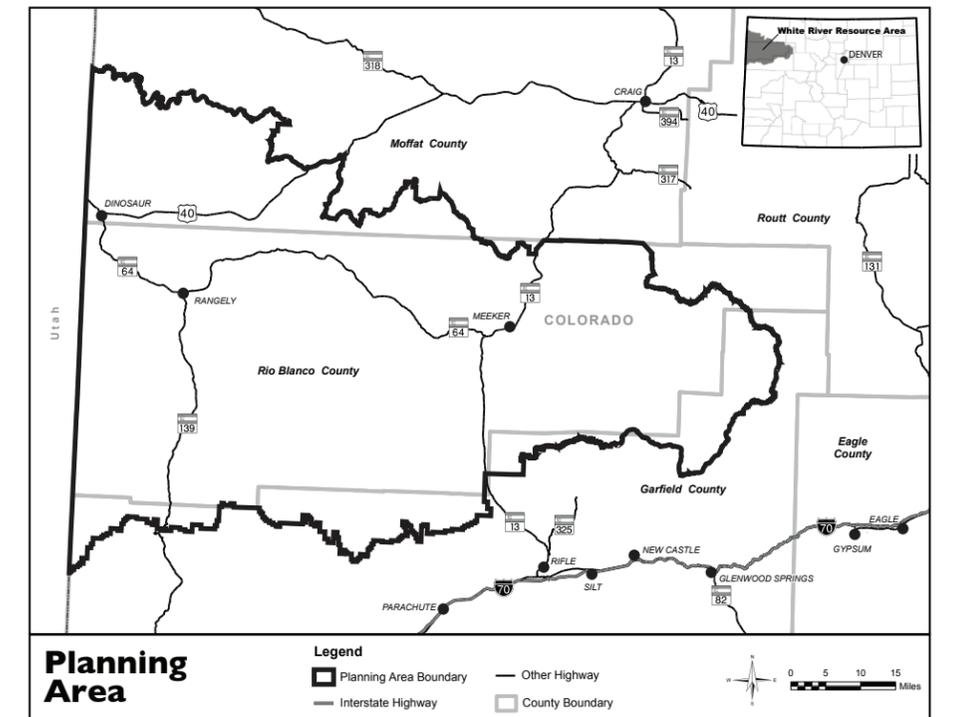
Through the BLM resource management planning process, the existing condition of the environmental resources and resource uses will be analyzed and the management strategies for the oil and gas program, as established in the 1997 RMP, will be evaluated. Through

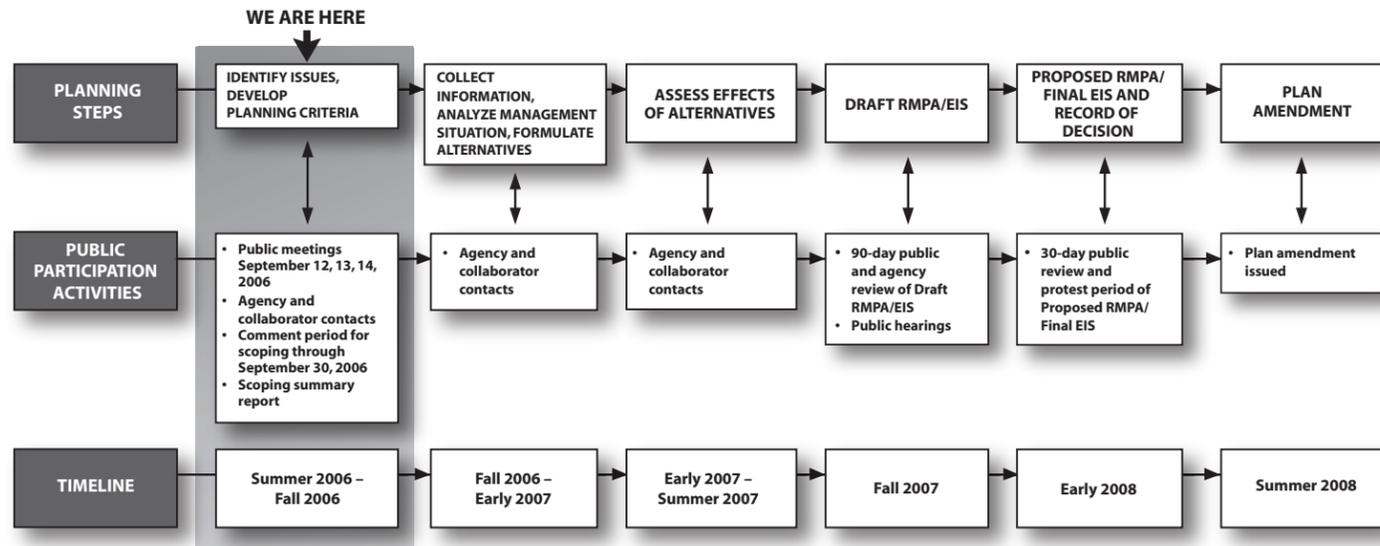


the EIS, the impacts of increased oil and gas development will be analyzed and discussed.

What are the steps in the planning process?

The steps of the RMPA/EIS process, which provide opportunities for the public to be involved throughout the process, are shown in the flow chart on page 2. The planning process includes





nine steps including (1) identification of issues, (2) development of planning criteria, (3) inventory and collection of data and information, (4) analysis of the current management situation, (5) development of alternative management strategies, (6) estimation of the effects of the alternatives, (7) selection of a preferred alternative, (8) selection of the RMP Amendment, and (9) monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

What are the preliminary planning criteria?

The BLM has identified preliminary planning criteria to guide the development of the RMPA/EIS, avoid unnecessary data collection and analyses, and

ensure the plan is tailored to the issues. Other criteria may be identified during the public scoping process. Proposed planning criteria include the following:

- The plan will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and current policies.
- Broad-based public participation will be an integral part of the planning and EIS process.
- The plan will recognize valid existing rights.
- Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices, and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities.

What resources will be evaluated and addressed?

Studies for the EIS will identify the existing condition of the environment that could be affected by oil and gas development; identify the potential impacts that oil and gas development and associated activities could have on the environment; and identify appropriate

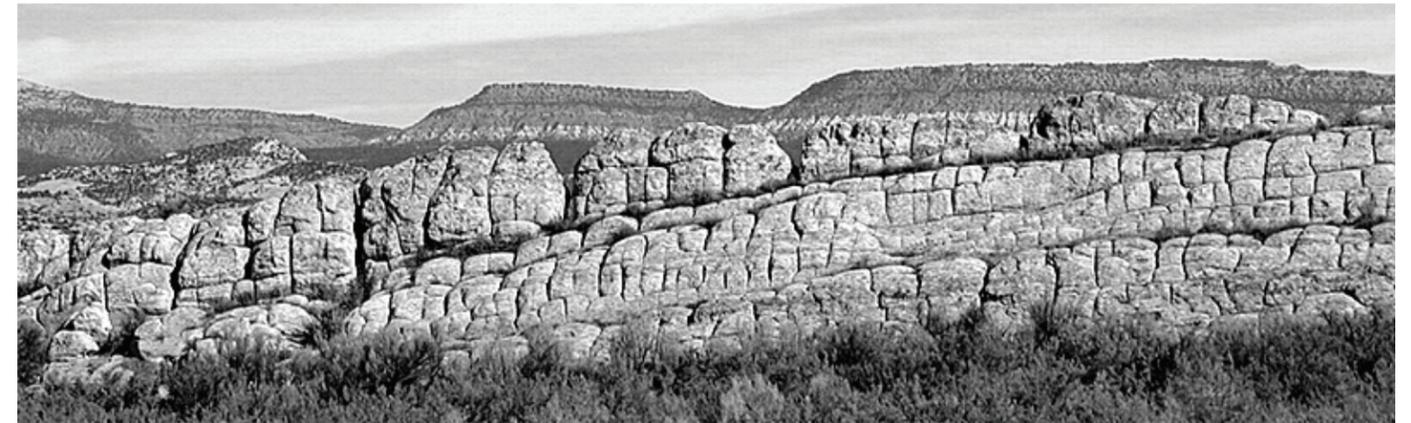
measures to mitigate those impacts. Examples of the resources or resource uses to be addressed in the EIS include those pertaining to the following:

- Human environment (i.e., lands and realty, visual resources, social and economic conditions, livestock grazing, recreation)
- Natural environment (i.e., air, geology, soils, water, biological resources)
- Cultural environment (i.e., prehistory, history and archaeology)

What is scoping and how can you participate?

Public input is critical in the first step of the RMPA/EIS process, known as scoping. During this phase, the range, or scope, of issues and concerns will be identified through public and agency comments. Your comments, suggestions, and ideas will help guide development of the RMPA.

We invite you to return the comment form included with this newsletter and



to attend one or more of the public scoping meetings scheduled for September 12, 13, and 14 (see page 4 of this newsletter). Use the comment form to submit written comments at any time during the scoping period, which ends on September 30, 2006. We encourage you to attend a scoping meeting, where you can discuss the project with BLM staff and provide your comments.

What decisions will result from this RMPA/EIS?

Federal lands are made available for oil and gas leasing through the Minerals Leasing Act of 1920. All public land is open to leasing and development unless a specific order has been issued to withdraw an area from leasing. Oil and gas leases provide the opportunity to explore for and produce domestic sources of oil and gas to meet the national demand for energy and to reduce dependence on foreign sources.

Decisions to be made for this RMPA/EIS will follow guidelines in BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (2005).

It is important to note that the oil and gas decisions made in this RMPA will be

broad planning decisions. These decisions will not address specific proposals for leasing or development, which will be subject to further site-specific environmental analysis in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before any ground-disturbing activities could occur. These site-specific analysis and approvals will be streamlined and facilitated by the planning and evaluation of impacts accomplished in this RMPA/EIS.

How can the public participate in the project beyond scoping?

The RMPA/EIS process is scheduled for completion in about 24 months. During this time, there will be opportunities for the public to stay informed and to participate. Information we learn from

you during scoping will help us develop a meaningful public outreach program for this project while the RMPA/EIS is being prepared.

Once the Draft RMPA/EIS is completed, the document will be released to the public for a 90-day review and comment period. During the review period, the BLM also will conduct public hearings to accept comments on the draft document.

The BLM will keep a mailing list throughout the planning process. Informational materials, such as this newsletter, will be sent to those on the mailing list. Anyone who would like to request more information or to be added to the mailing list should contact Jane Peterson, BLM Project Manager, at 970-244-3027 or send an email to Colorado_WROGEIS@blm.gov.

