APPENDIX C

COMMENTS RECEIVED POST SCOPING COMMENT PERIOD

The Casper Field Office received the comment letters and forms provided in Appendix C after the scoping period closed on November 20, 2003. While these comment letters and forms are not summarized in this scoping report, they will be considered during alternative formulation. To that effect, the BLM is open to accepting comments any time during the RMP revision process and will work to ensure that these comments are incorporated into the next phase of the Casper RMP revision process.

Casper Field Office RMP Revision Scoping Report
Comments Received Post Scoping Comment Period Index – By Author

Last Name	First Name	Organization	Comment Letter Number	Format
Hackney	Bill	Pathfinder Backcountry Horsemen of America	CSL-0048	Comment form
Parsons	Curtis C.	EOG Resources, Inc.	CSL-0046	Letter
Strand	Mary	Strand Ranch	CSL-0047	Comment form
Svoboda	Larry	United States Environmental Protection Agency	CSL-0049	Letter

eog resources

03 NOV 20 PM 2:01

EOG Resources, Inc.
1540 Belco Drive
Big Piney, WY 83113-0250
P.O. Box 250
Big Piney, WY 83113-0250
(307) 276-3331

November 24, 2003

Linda Slone
Bureau of Land Management, Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604

RE: Issues of Concern With Respect to the Casper Resource Management Plan, Scoping Period

Dear Ms. Slone,

EOG Resources, Inc. (EOG) submits the following comments for consideration during the development of the Casper Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These comments identify significant issues that should be incorporated into the RMP/Environmental Impact Analysis (EIS) development in order to ensure document accuracy and adequacy.

Sufficiency of the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) to accurately describe baseline conditions. The MSA is used to provide baseline information for the RMP revision and EIS development. A summary is posted on the Casper BLM web site. EOG is concerned that inaccuracies or incomplete explanations included in the MSA summary could result in an inaccurate or incomplete description of baseline conditions. A summary should contain sufficient text to allow a reader to easily comprehend the information it contains and why that information is relevant to description of the environment. If sufficient information is not included in the text of the MSA summary so that it is clear, such information should be edited from the MSA and included in the EIS with additional explanatory text. Also, the identification of issues and concerns should reflect the content of the overview of the resource area. If they are not consistent, an EIS analysis of that resource area may reflect bias and may lack impartial consideration.

- Section 2.1 Air Quality:
  - The BLM must perform an adequate regional analysis to demonstrate that future impacts resulting from oil and gas development would not significantly impact air quality.
- Section 2.6 Health and Safety:

- The health and safety overview singles out oil and gas activities as a primary health and safety issue in the management area; however, the description of issues and management concerns contains no reference to the oil and gas industry. The BLM must take care not to unfairly characterize the oil and gas industry as an adverse influence on human health and safety when a primary management concern is described as safety hazards associated with mining activities. Oil and gas operators take pride in their safety programs that prevent worker injury where occupational hazards can be great. Moreover, EOG would like the BLM to ensure that any discussion of illegal dumping on BLM lands is not a practice associated with the oil and gas industry.
- Oil and gas operations are conducted under applicable national and state law. Regulations that apply to management of hazardous materials include: *Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline, Annual Reports, Incident Reports, and Safety Related Condition Reports, as amended* (49 C.F.R. 191); *Transportation of Natural and Other Gases by Pipeline: Control pipeline maintenance and operation - Minimum Safety Standards, as amended* (49 C.F.R. 192) regulated by the US Department of Transportation; industrial waste facility permits for solid waste disposal during construction and operations - *Wyoming Environmental Quality Act, Article 5, Solid Waste Management, as amended* (W.S. 35-11-501 through 35-11-520); and the response to releases of hazardous substances that enter or threaten to enter the waters of the state must meet specific state requirements (WDEQ, WQ, Chapter IV, Section 4 (a) and (b)) [Revised July 1997].

- Section 2.8.1.2 Oil and Gas:
  - A baseline in terms of active wells in the management area is not provided.
- Section 2.8.2.2 Oil and Gas:
  - In addition to leasing laws, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water (CWA) and Clean Air Acts noted in the MSA, oil and gas development is regulated by many other laws. Some are administered by the State of Wyoming through the State Engineer's Office, State Historic Preservation Office, State Department of Transportation, and the Department of Environmental Quality - Solid Waste Division. Federal agencies that regulate oil and gas operations include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Transportation. County regulations also apply. The above list is not comprehensive.
  - Although the Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission regulates oil and gas development associated with state and fee minerals and surface, the BLM and the corresponding surface management agency regulate oil and gas development on federal minerals in accordance with the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act. The BLM's responsibility extends to environmental protection, public health, and safety associated with oil and gas operations on public lands.
- Section 2.8.3.2 Oil and Gas
  - Although produced water disposal is not identified as a concern of the BLM, it is incumbent upon the BLM to address its concern and work cooperatively with the State.

- Soliciting opinions as to timing limitations to protect resource values is inappropriate. Timing limitations or development of offset requirements should be determined by appropriate technical expert in the particular field of study.

- Section 2.14 Socioeconomic Conditions
  - The MSA does not make clear that statistics that refer to "mining" also include incomes and revenues associated with oil and gas development. This deficiency should be rectified in the socioeconomic discussion in the EIS.
- Section 2.2.3 Cultural Resources and Section 2.20.3 Visual Resources
  - Access restriction associated with the preservation of significant resource values associated with National Historic Trails should not preclude an operator's right to develop its leases. Mandating an arbitrary offset from designated trails can unreasonably prevent development. Operators are willing to make reasonable efforts to make their production facilities as unobtrusive as possible when located near trails. Recognizing that an identified management opportunity includes securing access to public lands for energy development, the BLM should actively pursue reasonable solutions acceptable to both the public and oil and gas operators.
  - Evaluating the historic setting and landscape for National Historic Trails does not necessarily require a decision that insists upon preservation of visual characteristics identical to those that existed during the times when the trails were actually in use. Inspection of Figure 2 in the MSA summary shows that all of the National Historic Trails cross or parallel major roads or highways and many travel through or adjacent to towns and cities. To insist that oil and gas development remain hidden from viewpoints along these trails is blatantly discriminatory against the industry.

Ability of the Casper Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario (RFDS) to accurately predict oil and gas development during the next 20 years. The RFDS is used as the basis for developing the analysis of impacts to oil and gas leaseable minerals during the timeframe of the RMP/EIS. As such, the development of the RFDS must be as realistic as possible. EOG understands that the RFDS is in the process of development at this time and urges the BLM to consider the following comments for RFDS development in order to ensure the integrity of the EIS.

- Operators should be allowed to cooperatively develop the RFDS with the BLM and should be able to review the RFDS after it is developed in order to ensure document accuracy.
- In consideration of the potentially significant controls/restrictions that may be placed on the oil and gas industry by the decisions reached in the RMP/EIS process, EOG urges that the BLM allow sufficient time be allowed to conduct a thorough review of the data supplied to the BLM by management area operators for incorporation into the document analysis.
- The construction of assumptions upon which the RFDS and EIS are developed must be realistic and should accurately reflect actual conditions under which operators develop their leases to the greatest extent possible. To assume, for

NOV 28 PM 2:01

example, that there would be no restrictions that would preclude hydrocarbon development is an unrealistic assumption. Timing limitations, vehicle access restrictions, and areas of no, or limited, surface occupancy/development make this assumption untenable. One result of such an assumption could be that the RFDS may present a projected number of wells that is much greater than what would actually be allowed to occur. Correspondingly, the amount of surface disturbance projected by the RFDS would also be much greater than what would actually occur. An overestimate of surface disturbance may, in turn, cause greater, unnecessary concerns by the public about the magnitude and resulting impacts of hydrocarbon development.

- The RFDS and EIS must provide documentation of the assumptions that it uses to estimate surface disturbance. The RFDS will utilize assumptions that describe amount of surface disturbance associated with access roads, well pads, pipelines, power lines, and compressors. The citations for these assumptions must be more specific than to reference "BLM sources," for example. The source of the data upon which the guidelines are based should be documented and made available to the public.
- Data obtained from oil and gas operators would provide accurate data for use in developing assumptions used in the RFDS/EIS. At a minimum, the figures used to estimate future surface disturbance should be submitted to the operators for verification and concurrence.
- The information presented in the RFDS and EIS should be easily understandable and not open to misinterpretation. For example, a discussion of short and long term disturbance should make it clear that short term disturbance would occur during a limited time after a well is drilled. Drilling, however, may occur throughout the RMP time frame. Components of surface disturbance associated with well development should be clearly labeled. For example, disturbances associated with wells, pipelines, compressors, etc. should be broken out and clearly identified.
- The RFDS should include specific details of current and projected take-away pipeline capacity from the management area. It is probable that oil and gas development in the management area over the time frame of the RMP would require supplementation of the current take-away capacity. In order to estimate the requirements for take-away capacity that would correspond to the expected level of development, the BLM should enter into discussions with management area operators and pipeline companies to project an appropriate scenario of take-away capacity. The need for an increase in trunk line capacity should be related to economic projections and energy needs for the management area and the nation. The BLM should discuss the surface disturbance associated with trunk line installation with management area pipeline companies. It is likely that additional trunk lines would be located along existing pipeline corridors, thereby minimizing the amount of associated surface disturbance.
- The RFDS must include a discussion of well life in the management area and should attempt to relate the number of wells drilled prior to the implementation of the RMP to the number that would be abandoned during the planning period. An estimate of wells that would be abandoned within the time frame of the planning

03 NOV 28 P1:2

period should be quantified so that the respective percentages of new and existing wells are made clear in the document.

- If there are well pads in the management area that have been reclaimed but have yet to be inspected and released from bonding requirements by the BLM, they should be excluded from the amount of disturbed lands in the management area. It is the BLM's responsibility to inspect reclaimed locations in a timely manner so that these formerly disturbed areas are not designated as currently disturbed lands.
- The RFDS and EIS should include an estimate of the compression needs required for future production. The documents should include a discussion of the amount of existing compression. Estimates of the number and types/horse power of compressors currently in use and projected for future production needs should be determined through discussions with management area operators and pipeline/gas transmission companies.
- As the national demand for energy sources increases toward as the planning period progresses, production increases are expected to come from, in part, CBNG production. CBNG development is extremely sensitive to gas pricing and demand. The BLM should account for a level of CBNG development within the RMP and EIS that may result from fluctuating market influences and increased market demand.
- EOG is convinced that future gas prices will support continued production throughout the time frame of the RMP. The RFDS and EIS should utilize this assumption in its development scenario.
- The RFDS and EIS should consider possible changes in spacing that may occur during the next 20 years and incorporate such possibilities into its projections. Well spacing is determined by the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and is determined on a formation-specific basis. It is possible that production data may trigger a re-examination of spacing rules for the producing formations in the management area.

Alternatives development. EOG supports the development of alternatives that offer the public, including the oil and gas industry and other users of public lands, clear-cut, distinct resource management choices.

- It is absolutely essential that the RFDS be used to develop alternatives for the EIS that implements the new RMP. A carefully considered, cooperatively developed RFDS will allow the BLM to more accurately assess the extent of oil and gas development in the planning area.
- The EIS should describe a rationale for the development of each alternative considered. Alternatives should not be based on speculative determinations that the mineral resource can be developed regardless of the restrictions imposed upon minerals development. Alternatives should not affect an operator's ability to access the minerals that it has leased. Management area operators have the right to access their leases. An operator's inability to extract minerals from its leases could result from its inability to access the surface above the minerals.
- Potential takings should be limited by the careful development of alternatives that recognize that the methodology used by operators to develop the leased mineral

resources cannot be mandated. An operator's inability to extract minerals from its leases is a denial of the rights associated with lease acquisition and could be construed as a taking. BLM Instruction Memorandum 92-67 clarifies 43 CFR 3101.1-2, which provides for a 200 meter general standard within which surface-use restrictions must fall. For any surface-use restriction that exceeds the 200-meter/60-day rule, the BLM bears the burden of establishing that the restriction is justified.

- The use of alternative drilling technologies should not be presumed to be feasible on anything but a well-specific basis. The use of directional drilling or any other non-conventional type of drilling or production technique cannot be presumed to be able to access minerals in those areas where operations are excluded or restricted. In addition, the use of these techniques would incur extra costs to the operator. Economic considerations may preclude their use.
- The EIS alternatives should include an alternative that allows mineral resource extraction by operators in the district to occur with the employment of reasonable and best management practices. This alternative would include all environmental impact mitigation measures and environmental protection initiatives that operators routinely and voluntarily undertake during their operations. Best management practices are those that are based upon the application of the operators' experience with scientifically proven procedures. This alternative should not prevent operators from accessing the surface above their leases and should not assume that the use of alternative technologies is technically and economically feasible.
- The EIS should not include "staged leasing" in its alternatives. Inclusion of a schedule that mandates when oil and gas development could occur through the time-limited release of leases imposes artificial constraints that could be detrimental to the regional economy. Staged leasing eliminates the supply and demand aspects of a free market economy. If a tract has minerals that can be leased, development of these minerals should occur as market conditions allow.
- The BLM should consider a "common sense" approach to the development of alternatives and the implementation of the RMP. Specifically, the validity of the RMP should not be limited to a predetermined number of wells or level of development. The BLM, composed of professional resource managers, should be able to evaluate the viability of the RMP by examination of the results of the policies put in place by the RMP. If, at any time, it becomes apparent to the professional staff of the BLM that the RMP's policies become obsolete or the resources of the management area are inappropriately managed in consideration of the BLM mandate to consider multiple use under the Federal Land Policy And Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), it would be time to revise the RMP. To evaluate the usefulness of the RMP by determining whether a pre-determined number of wells has been exceeded is arbitrary and denies the use of professional evaluation by the BLM field office staff, the persons most qualified to determine plan viability.

Impacts to natural resources by oil and gas development. EOG believes that the only way that impacts can be analyzed in the management area is with the use of as much

detailed area-specific information, including the experience of industry, agency, and consultant experience and understanding as can be assembled.

08 NOV 28 PM 2:01

- The EIS should use data from the most recent studies conducted within the project area or from areas similar to that of the management area. Data from studies in areas not similar to the project area should be avoided. For example, in an analysis of impacts resulting from the release of CBNG produced water on the surface, conveyance loss estimates should be based on studies conducted within the management area where soil types, stream channel morphology, and climate are specific to this area. Guidance provided in the BLM National Environmental Policy Handbook H-1790-1 states that "existing environmental analyses should be used in analyzing impacts associated with a proposed action to the extent possible and appropriate. This approach builds on work that has already been done, avoids redundancy, and provides a coherent and logical record of the analytical and decision-making process."
- The EIS must consider and should include data resulting from studies that demonstrate the beneficial effects of oil and gas development. Some studies that pertain to beneficial effects resulting from oil and gas development are listed below:

  - Easterly, T., A. Wood, and T. Litchfield. Undated. Circa 1992. *Response of pronghorn and mule deer to petroleum development on crucial winter range in the Rattlesnake Hills.* Unpublished Completion Report. Hayden-Wing Associates. 1991.
  - Hayden-Wing Associates. *Review and evaluation of the effects of Triton Oil and Gas Corporation's proposed coalbed methane field development on elk and other big game species.* Unpublished report. Laramie, WY. 1990.
  - Hayden-Wing Associates. *Review and evaluation of the regulation and effects of oil and gas development on mule deer, sage grouse, and raptors on the Big Piney-La Barge winter range.* Unpublished report. Laramie, WY.
  - Johnson, B. K., L. D. Hayden-Wing, and D. C. Lockman. *Responses of elk to development of Exxon's Riley Ridge Gas Field in western Wyoming.* 1990.
  - R. L. Callas, D. B. Koch, and E. R. Loft, Eds. *Proceedings of the 1990 western states and provinces elk workshop, Eureka, CA.* California Department of Fish and Game. Sacramento. 1990.
  - Van Dyke, F. and W. C. Klein. *Response of elk to installation of oil wells.* Journal of Mammalogy. 77(4): 1028-1041. 1996.

- The BLM should avoid singling out oil and gas development as the sole source of surface disturbance and habitat destruction. Mining, for example, is also a significant source of surface disturbance.
- The BLM should consider the importance of oil and gas development to the economy of this nation while developing its management principles. While

developing the RMP, the BLM should remember that it operates in accordance with FLPMA, which mandates that the BLM consider multiple uses for the lands it administers. Under FLPMA, the BLM must consider all of the land's inherent natural resources, including its mineral resources. While the purpose of the RMP is to manage all the district's resources in an environmentally responsible manner, it is under no obligation to manage all resources with equal emphasis.

NOV 28 PM 2:01

Adaptive environmental management is not a viable management strategy. EOG supports the use of a defined management strategy based upon best currently available information.

- The BLM's use of environmental management strategies that may be reconsidered and changed over the RMP planning period presents a moving target of goals and objectives that operators cannot meet while planning their drilling and production programs. It allows the BLM to develop, alter and develop its management strategies in a never-ending planning cycle.
- The endorsement and use of adaptive environmental management provides an opportunity to focus groups to lobby the BLM to include their politically motivated agendas into RMP guidance. Any group would have the opportunity to assemble sufficient data that seemingly gives credence to its objectives for the sole purpose of advancing its aims. The BLM would be burdened with the responsibility of constantly evaluating such proposals for credibility.
- The introduction of new information or data that fundamentally changes the environmental management strategies decided upon in the RMP may effectively supplant strategies based upon data acquired over a long period of time. An altered management direction based upon new data would not have the benefit and background provided by a strategy based on knowledge with a demonstrated historical background.
- EOG recognizes that the RMP must be written in sufficiently broad terms as to provide a direction for resource management and to provide a framework under which resource development can occur. If, over the time frame of the RMP, professionally accepted, but unanticipated, data becomes available that fundamentally alters the basic premises upon which oil and gas operators plan their future operations, the change in management direction should be implemented only after a review of the impacts that such a change may cause. Such an implementation should occur only after the adoption of a revised RMP and the associated NEPA processes.
- EOG acknowledges that a broadly written RMP would be implemented through a series of additional, subsequent NEPA documents that would address impacts that would result from well development, including well-specific EAs. EOG urges the BLM to consider the analysis of impacts resulting from typical field development using environmental assessments rather than environmental impact statements. Requiring the development of EISs to implement field development adds unnecessary delays and hinders timely extraction of the mineral resource. Large scale energy development should be addressed concurrently with the development of the RMP, which is implemented by an EIS.

28 PM 2:01

Impacts to regional socio-economics. EOG supports the choice of a RMP based on an EIS that considers in its analyses the wide-ranging adverse effects (losses) to the regional economy that would result from hindering oil and gas exploration and development in the project area.

- The description of the affected environment should include a historical perspective of land use in the management area and the how the development of oil and gas resources has facilitated economic growth. This description would provide a context for current conditions and how different future development scenarios would affect the stability of the economy in the project area.
- The economic effects analysis should include beneficial impacts to the revenues generated in association with oil and gas operations in Converse, Natrona, Platte, and Goshen counties in addition to benefits to the State of Wyoming. The assessment of the economic health of the counties more directly impacted by the provisions included in the RMP should be differentiated from the impacts to the economic viability of the state.
- The EIS should analyze impacts to public services that depend upon tax revenues generated by oil and gas operations. The analysis should include quantification of incremental income resulting from the oil and gas industry to services such as public school districts.
- Typical or average well costs should not be used as a baseline to assess the economic viability of drilling and producing a well during the time frame of the RMP. Use of current figures based on current operational procedures for a period of 20 years is speculative at best. There are many factors that affect typical well costs. Each of these factors has the ability to alter well costs to the extent that varying a single figure for any one factor would render an analysis using a static cost invalid. If estimates of future pricing are included in the EIS, sensitivity analyses should be included to demonstrate the effects of changes to the projected price to drilling and production activities and to the economy of the project area.
- The designation of Special Management Areas, areas of limited or no surface use, or areas with seasonal restrictions to development, should be quantified in the EIS in terms of economic impacts to the oil and gas industry.
- The EIS should include provisions describing how the potential for lost revenues to oil and gas operators resulting from short and long term lease access restrictions would be recovered.

Air quality analysis.

- The BLM should recognize in the EIS that emissions associated with oil and gas development are regulated by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and that the BLM defers regulation of emissions to its authority.

Special Management Areas (SMAs)

- SMAs should not be allowed to impair existing lease rights.
- Designation of SMAs should be kept to a minimum in unleased areas. If a SMA is designated in an unleased area, the EIS should quantify the loss of production

in terms of the value of the mineral resource and revenues to the local counties and state.

00 NOV 28 PM 2:01

Preparation of Statement of Adverse Energy Impacts. As specified in Executive Order 13212, the BLM should prepare a Statement of Adverse Energy Impacts after the record of decision for the Casper RMP is made if the decision has the potential to adversely impact energy production, development, and transmission. The statement would document the decision in accordance with the order, which was intended to expedite projects that increase production, transmission, or conservation of energy. A Statement of Adverse Energy Impacts should be developed for each alternative and should discuss the following topics:

- The impact of timing restrictions;
- The impact of designated areas excluded from energy development;
- Costs to oil and gas development associated with the mandate of alternative drilling technologies, such as directional drilling; and
- Costs to consumers if energy development is hindered or delayed as supplies fall short of demand.

In summary, the ability to extract natural gas from the leased public lands administered by the Casper BLM Field Office helps to maintain a stable economic platform for the counties directly affected by the RMP, makes an important contribution to the economic health of the State of Wyoming, and helps to satisfy the energy needs of our nation. EOG expects that the RMP will recognize and present analysis highlighting the importance of the role that the oil and gas industry plays in the economy by developing an affected environment description that contains a detailed historic perspective of the role of energy development in the management area and an impacts analysis that fully considers the direct, associated, and cumulative effects of restricting energy development within its purview. EOG believes that the use of assumptions that unrealistically reflect the economics of drilling and production operations would result in a RMP/EIS that is speculative and would not provide a reasonably accurate projection of operator activity during the RFDS's time frame. To develop a RMP that attempts to accurately consider the factors relating to the oil and gas industry, the BLM must actively solicit data from the operators that are active the in the project area.

The hydrocarbon resources that exist beneath public lands are, in fact, owned by the public. Oil and gas operators in the management area provide the means to access and develop these oil and gas reserves, providing much needed energy to meet public demand.

Sincerely,

C C Parsons

Curtis C. Parsons
Division Operations Manater

Attn: Jim Murkin

CSL-0047

Written Comment Form
Casper Field Office Planning Area
Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision Process

Location: _____ **Date:** 11/20/03

Thank you for your input.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

I enjoyed Casper Resource Management Plan meeting. The program was informative and well presented. We ranchers need to work with, not against, the BLM in protecting our lands and the information obtained thru meetings & seminars is beneficial to both sides.

Being a land owner near Casper creates problems because of the number of people accessing the land. I sympathize with the 4 wheeler & motorcycle owners in not having places to enjoy their hobby, however, they need to respect the land and the ranchers.

Hunting season brings a lot of problems to me because of the location of my ranch and ~~p~~ BLM & state lands accessibility. The one parcel that I mentioned to Jim is described and diagramed on the reverse. Hunting on this land creates a realey dangerous situation ~~as well~~ This is true of the state land located across the road from this parcel.

Please contact me if you have questions or need further input.

****** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ******

Public comments submitted for this planning effort, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review in their entirety after the comment period closes at the Casper Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals or officials representing organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

NAME:	Mary Strand
ORGANIZATION:	Strand Ranch
ADDRESS:	8655 Geary Dome Rd
CITY/STATE/ZIP:	Evansville, Wy 82636

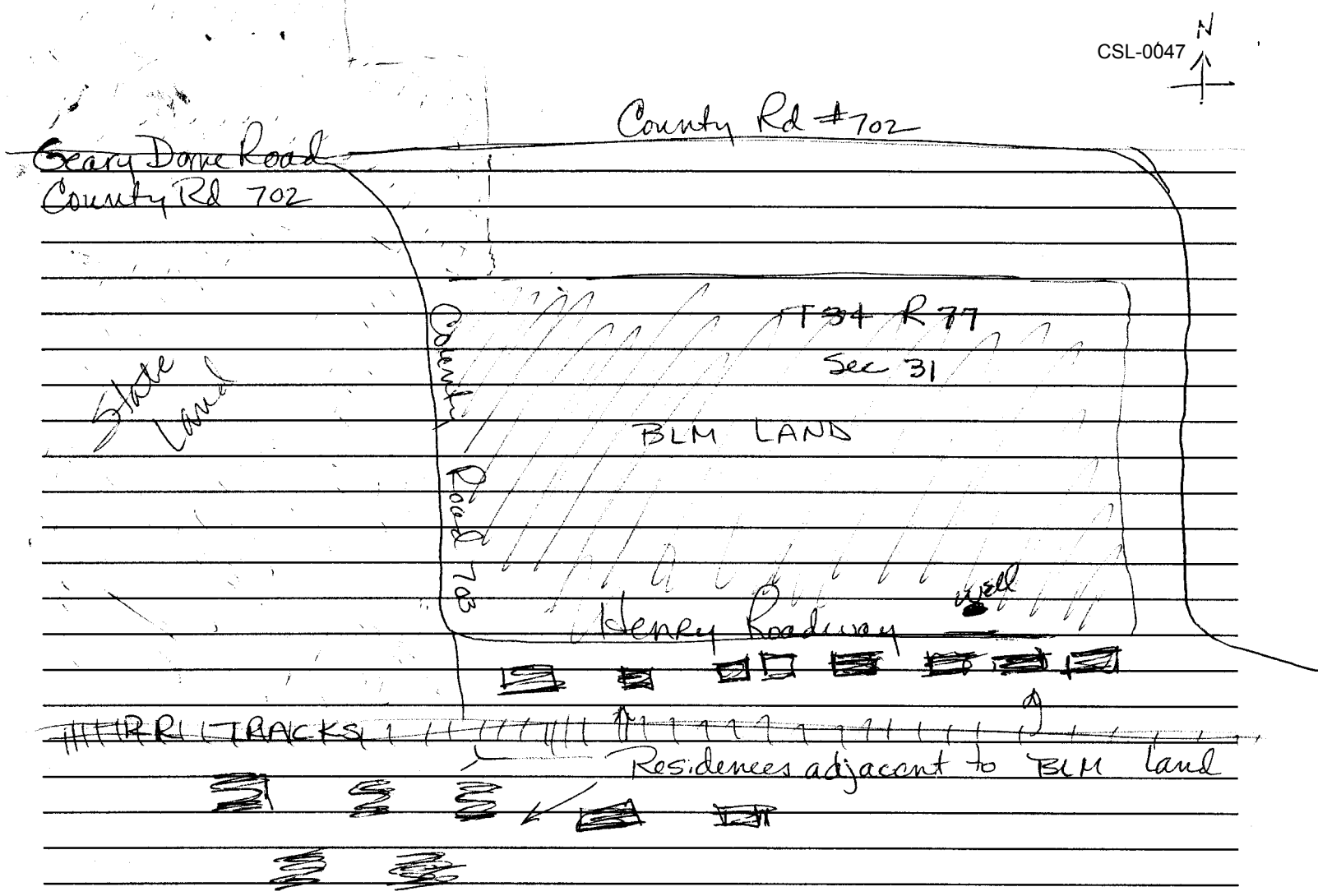
☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the Casper Planning Area RMP Revision.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please hand this form in or MAIL (post-marked by November 20, 2003) to:

BLM Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604-2968
Attn: RMP Revision

03 NOV 25 AM 10:52



The only access to the land is off Count Rd 703 or Henry Roadway (A private Road). Frequently hunters hunt from the north or west (of the BLM) land and the houses lay in the direct line of fire. Also, the only water in that pasture is shown, this means that the wild life must come near the houses to water. During hunting season I remove all Livestock from this pasture because of the danger to them.

I feel that serious thought should be given to closing down this ½ section of land to hunting, And would like to see the same consideration to the State land indicated west of County Rd 703. The hunting on it occurs mainly from North to South Also and the Residences along the River are again in the direct line of fire.

Rec'd 11-24-03

Written Comment Form
Casper Field Office Planning Area
Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision Process

Location:_____ **Date:** Nov 20, 2003

Thank you for your input.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

I WANT TRANSPORTATION ON BLM LAND to specifically INCLUDE EQUESTRIAN as a mode of TRANSportation on BLM LANDS.

I ALSO WANT EQUESTRIAN specifically included as a form of Recreation.

****** CONTINUE ON BACK FOR MORE SPACE ******

Public comments submitted for this planning effort, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review in their entirety after the comment period closes at the Casper Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals or officials representing organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

NAME:	Bill HACKNEY
ORGANIZATION:	PATHfinder Back Country HORSEMEN of America
ADDRESS:	6117 Raderville Rte
CITY/STATE/ZIP:	Casper Wy 82604-9502

☒ **Yes, include my name and address on the mailing list so I can receive information on the Casper Planning Area RMP Revision.**

☐ **No, do not include my name and address on the mailing list.**

Please hand this form in or MAIL (post-marked by November 20, 2003) to:

BLM Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604-2968
Attn: RMP Revision

EVE Bennett
Please call me
at 473-3845

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8
999 18TH STREET - SUITE 300
DENVER, CO 80202-2466
Phone 800-227-8917
http://www.epa.gov/region08

Ref: 8EPR-N

Linda Slone
Bureau of Land Management
Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604

RE: Scoping Comments for Platte River Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Slone:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. Section 4321, et. seq., and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the Region 8 office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is submitting scoping comments for the Platte River Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

From reading the scoping notice, it appears that the Casper Field Office has already identified many good issues on which to focus. The following general comment areas are issues that EPA has an interest in and would like to work with BLM prior to the issuing of a draft EIS for this planning process. More importantly, our experiences with other planning projects and related EIS efforts show that working with BLM prior to issuing a draft EIS allows for more time to work on difficult issues prior to time constraints posed by draft EIS comment periods.

Although we are unable to commit as a formal cooperating agency on this action, we are open to assisting in specific areas of important mutual interest. EPA does want to inform BLM up front that our resources of time and travel budget for the NEPA program are meager and already very limited. By either scheduling meetings as conference calls when appropriate or holding meetings in Cheyenne BLM would reduce EPA's time needed for travel to meetings and eliminate the need for hotel rooms for travel to Cheyenne. This may also improve participation by State of Wyoming environmental programs and other agencies such as Fish and Wildlife Services.

General Comments

EPA has identified in past and current BLM projects and Resource Management Plans (RMPs) the importance of good air and water quality analysis for NEPA documents. We continue to encourage Wyoming BLM to accompany good planning with good NEPA analysis

and the avoidance or mitigation of direct and cumulative impacts.

EPA suggests that the Casper Field Office use the recent air quality modeling that has been completed for the Powder River Basin and the ongoing efforts for the Rawlins RMP to evaluate the impacts of air emissions anticipated in the Casper RPM.

Other than mining projects, EPA is not aware of current projects or future projects that would significantly impact surface water or ground water quality. Since a Reasonable Foreseeable Development scenario has not yet been developed for the planning area, EPA will need additional information before we could make informed comments on this issue.

EPA would also encourage the RFD for the planning area to anticipate the potential for development within the planning area. It is entirely appropriate to project past development for coal, oil and gas, and other mining for the life of the RMP. An RFD that only includes current projects or projects that are currently under NEPA analysis is not a reasonable prediction for a planning document such as an RMP. The planning and NEPA analysis must evaluate actions and impacts for the life of the planning document. Although exact locations of wells or mine boundaries may not be possible in an RMP planning process, Wyoming BLM has completed an oil and gas resource assessment for the entire state and this document should be helpful in locating areas of potential development and possibly projecting general levels of activity for mining and oil and gas development.

Scoping Comments Specific to the Casper Resource Management Plan

Air Quality

This RMP should anticipate additional compression needs (if any) for the planning area. Since the gas wells within the RMP are anticipated by the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) to be mostly infill in existing fields with less than 300 hundred coal bed methane wells, BLM should be able to build on the results of the Powder River Basin air quality analysis.

The anticipated plugging and abandonment of existing wells may be greater than the number of new wells drilled. However, it is essential to look at gas production numbers to fully understand if additional compression will be necessary for future increases in production even though the total well count may be less.

Wildlife

The RMP and EIS should include the Wyoming Greater Sage-Grouse as a sensitive species. The MSA briefly mentioned the sage grouse, but did not identify it as a species of concern. The State of Wyoming has recently published a Final Draft Conservation Plan that the RMP should incorporate into planning and especially consider the goals and recommended management practicies. Impacts to the sage grouse that could stem from BLM activities include: oil and gas development, dispersed recreation, and vegetation management. BLM should also be coordinating and participating with local conservation groups and the State of Wyoming to assist with research needs.

There is significant potential for habitat improvement in areas where oil and gas fields have played out. This improvement could be achieved through the development and implementation of an aggressive road and pad reclamation program. Since there are so many new access roads being planned for the Buffalo Field Office, EPA suggests looking at habitat improvements that would offset habitat losses in adjacent planning areas.

Grazing

The DEIS should disclose how grazing historically has affected soils, water tables, vegetation, erosion, and streams and riparian areas. We understand the goal of the Taylor Grazing Act and numerous Federal statutes that have followed is to rehabilitate rangelands in the United States. Rehabilitation can be accomplished partly through controlling the numbers of livestock, protecting riparian areas (fencing and off-stream stock watering), rotating animal herds, and so forth. After describing historic rangeland condition, please compare current conditions to past baseline conditions (pre-settlement condition and/or earlier, more degraded conditions) to evaluate how rangeland management practices have affected resources and to prescribe future management options and evaluations.

Oil and Gas

Although it is anticipated that oil production may continue to diminish in the planning area, are there new tertiary recovery projects that may cause additional impacts. Will CO_2 injection require additional compression needs? BLM should also aggressively proceed with exchanging valid existing mineral rights for the Cedar Ridge Traditional Cultrual Property (TCP). Leases that have lapsed should not be reissued for Cedar Ridge (TCP).

Wetlands

Executive Order 11990 requires Federal agencies to protect jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional wetlands. The DEIS should describe existing wetlands; their acreage, type, and ecological role; and how both acreage and function will be protected. Road construction and vegetation clearing, livestock grazing, and other disturbances may result in hydrologic impacts. These activities can promote changes to surface and subsurface drainage patterns that can ultimately lead to changes in wetland integrity and function. To comply with the CWA 404(b)(1) Guidelines, a thorough analysis of all possible alternatives to avoid and minimize wetland and aquatic resource habitat impacts should be addressed through the NEPA process.

The goals for establishing proper functioning condition (PFC) for wetlands should be identified in the the RMP and EIS. Currently 50% of the wetlands within the planning area meet the PFC description and 15% are non functional. As stated in the MSA, wetlands in the planning area are not large in quantity but are critical to habitat for many species. Wetlands also provide other amenities such as water quality improvement and flood control. Therefore, EPA encourages BLM to provide alternatives that will avoid impacts to wetland areas and significantly improve the condition of the wetlands in the planning area.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this planning process. Gregory Oberley is

the NEPA program contact and can be reached at (303)-312-7043. Joe Delwiche is the Air Program contact for NEPA documents and he can be reached at (303)-312-6448.

Sincerely,

Larry Svoboda, Director
NEPA Program
Office of Ecosystems Protection and Remediation

cc: Bill Daniels BLM Cheyenne