By the Numbers

Green River Basin, Southwest Wyoming

- Number of acres in the basin: **15 million** (The size of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire combined)
- Number of homes that could be heated annually by natural gas production: **4 million**
- Estimated volume of recoverable natural gas in cubic feet: **83 trillion:**
- World-class wildlife: Estimated 100,000 deer and 100,000 pronghorn antelope; 40,000 elk; 8,000 moose; 1,400 big horn sheep; and 151 non-game species of greatest conservation need

Wyoming encompasses some of the highest-quality wildlife habitat in the Intermountain West. Sagebrush, mountain shrub, aspen, and riparian communities offer crucial habitat for deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, greater sage-grouse, and a variety of non-game species. Lands and waters in Southwest Wyoming also offer some of the country's most sought-after recreational opportunities, providing an important asset that attracts anglers, hunters, and other visitors seeking open spaces, majestic scenery, and outdoor recreation in pristine settings. For many small rural communities, money spent by anglers and hunters is essential for long-term economic stability.

At the same time, this region is an active source of natural gas. Encompassing 15 million acres—roughly the size of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire combined—the Green River Basin of Southwest Wyoming produces enough natural gas annually to heat 4 million homes. With approximately 23 trillion cubic feet of natural gas used annually in the U.S., the estimated 83 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas in Southwest Wyoming will continue to account for one of the largest sources of natural gas in the U.S.

To ensure Southwest Wyoming's wildlife and habitat remain viable in areas facing development pressure, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department have proposed the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI).

Landscape Approach

The greatest wildlife conservation value is achieved when wildlife enhancement is conducted at a landscape scale. Landscapes are land areas composed of diverse habitat types that include winter range and migration corridors.

Meeting both our energy and land health goals requires integrated, landscape-scale habitat protections and resource management. Our initiative combines investments in habitat protection with policy improvements that will protect 800 species, including the sage-grouse.

Secretary Dirk Kempthorne
February 5, 2007

What is the Healthy Lands Initiative?

The Healthy Lands Initiative represents a new concept for meeting emerging challenges in managing natural resources for continued multiple use with flexible, landscape-level approaches.

The President's Fiscal Year 2008 Department of the Interior budget includes $22 million for the Initiatave. $15 million will be spent through the BLM budget on a variety of landscape enhancement activities in 7 western states. An increase of $5 million will enable the U.S. Geological Survey to provide the BLM with the science support needed for adaptive management of energy projects to ensure that we achieve habitat conservation and restoration goals. A $2 million increase will enable the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to increase assistance to private landowners to improve habitat and protect species on private lands and to enhance planning and consultation to ensure energy development impacts to wildlife and habitat are effectively mitigated and listing of species is avoided.

USGS
science for a changing world

Access to a variety of habitat types and seasonal ranges within a landscape is essential for wildlife to find food, shelter, and raise their young.

What We Know

The high demand for energy resources has caused an **unprecedented surge in the intensity of natural gas development.**

The combination of energy development and industrial and residential expansion, with associated road building, drilling, pipelines, utility lines, and other human-generated activities, is **occurring in wildlife habitat areas.**

Although impact mitigation is required in energy development areas, **a landscape-scale conservation action will better address** natural resources issues in this vast area.

Initiative partners will...

- **Conduct efficient, science-based species monitoring and habitat enhancement.**
- **Facilitate best reclamation and mitigation practices** for areas affected by current natural gas development.
- **Integrate existing data with new knowledge and technologies** to forecast future development of energy resources and assist in habitat conservation planning.
- **Conduct habitat enhancement** in all habitat types with a special focus on sagebrush, mountain shrub, aspen, and riparian communities.

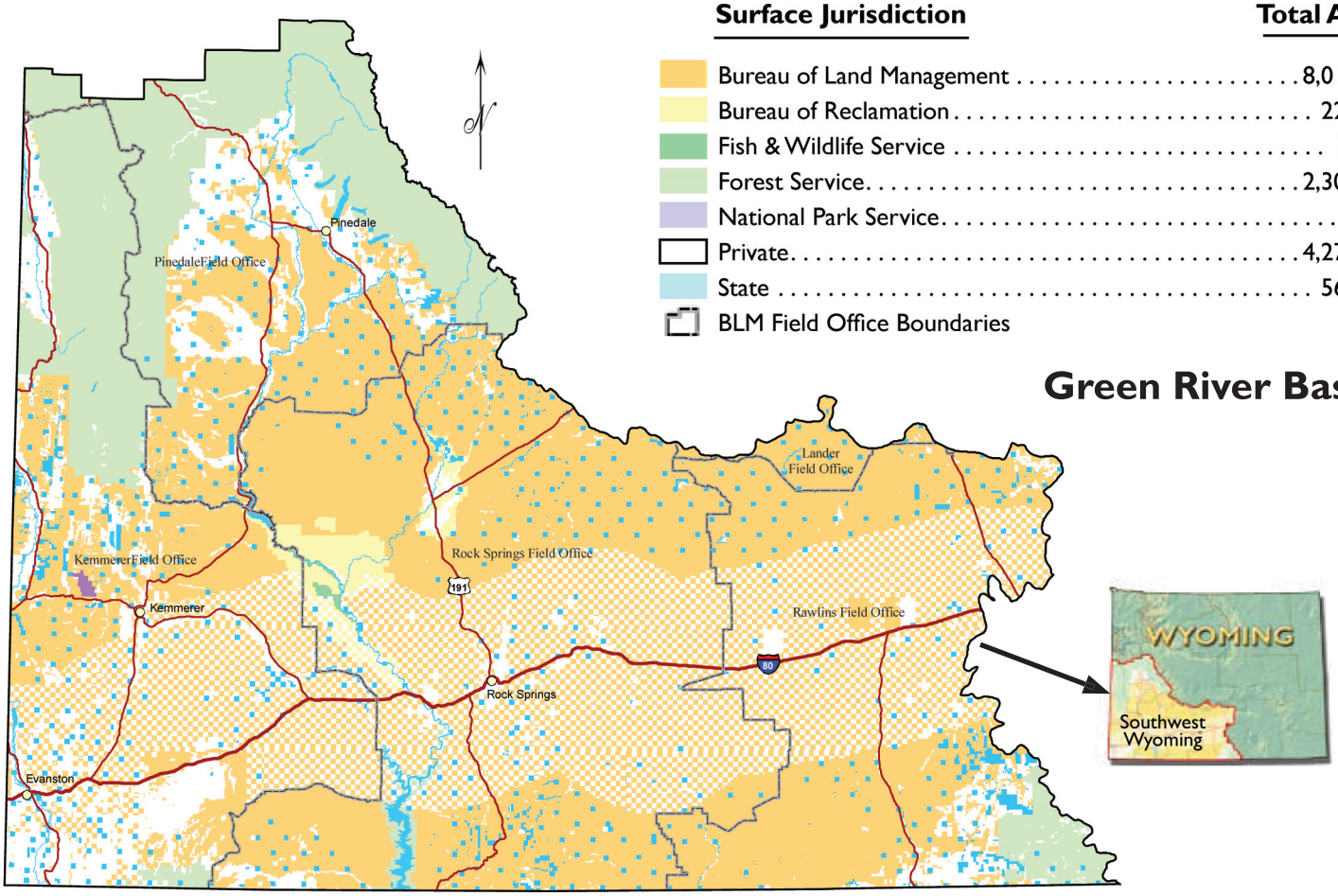
The WLCI will...

- Exchange information, data, and research findings among partners, industry, and stakeholders to improve habitat conditions and long-term viability of species at a landscape scale.
- Complement existing habitat reclamation and mitigation efforts.
- Broaden the understanding of the valuable Green River Basin ecosystem.

Funding Plans

In Wyoming, funding would be used for projects including vegetation treatments (sagebrush, aspen trees), water projects such as building or restoring water sources for wildlife, and improving riparian areas. Additional funding for the WLCI needs to be long-term and may include state and Federal appropriations, special mitigation accounts, trust funds, non-governmental organization and industry contributions, other independent donations, and an endowment

For additional information contact:
Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
Steven Hall 307-775-6015
Steven_Hall@blm.gov



Revised 11-07-06