

Energy development in the North Fork Valley

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OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Oil and gas drilling in the North Fork Valley dates back to the early 1900s. Most of the development has, or is, occurring on private, split-estate and U.S. Forest Service land. According to Colorado State historic records, 116 gas wells have been drilled in the North Fork area on federally-managed oil and gas leases, including split estate lands. Of these 116 wells, 15 are presently producing natural gas, 29 are shut-in but capable of production, and 72 have been drilled, abandoned and plugged.

Area	O&G leased Federal mineral acres	Producing acres for Federal minerals
Uncompahgre Field Office	337,825	42,575
Delta County	101,494	10,932
Gunnison County	99,251	27,982

COAL DEVELOPMENT

Coal development has also existed in the area since the early 1900s, and is set in the local economic base. Total direct economic benefits associated with the coal mines within the North Fork Valley exceed \$60 million annually.

Active coal development in the area includes:

- The West Elk Mine is a longwall operation located south and east of Somerset and is operated by Mountain Coal Company. (Produced 6 million tons in 2011, and employs 378 people)
- The Bowie No. 2 coal mine opened in 1997 as a room-and-pillar mine, but converted to a longwall system in late 1999. The Bowie No. 2 hauls its coal to the Bowie No. 2 loadout northeast of Paonia. (Produced 2.5 million tons in 2011, and employs roughly 297 people)
- The Elk Creek Mine is a longwall operation north of Somerset, operated by Oxbow, with a load out immediately north of Somerset. (Produced 6 million tons in 2011, and employs between 250 – 335 people)

