

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
August 2012 Oil and Gas Lease Sale
DOI-BLM-CO-130-2012-0011-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the proposed lease sale of parcel 6204 will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

BACKGROUND

It is the policy of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as derived from various laws, including the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to make mineral resources available for disposal and to encourage development of mineral resources to meet national, regional, and local needs.

The BLM's Colorado State Office conducts quarterly competitive lease sales to sell available oil and gas lease parcels. This EA was prepared to analyze the impacts of leasing a parcel nominated for the Grand Junction Field Office in the August 2012 lease sale.

The EA considered a range of alternatives from leasing the nominated parcel to not leasing the parcel. The proposed action was to lease one parcel in the Plateau Valley area. Public Scoping took place from December 5, 2011 through January 4, 2012. Six responses were received, including multiple comments. The EA was also made available for a 30-day public review on March 1, 2012 through March 30, 2012. Three comments were received. All comments and BLM's responses can be found in EA attachment E.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the August Lease sale relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. With regard to each:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

Leasing and future development are expected to result in beneficial economic impacts. Future development of this parcel may have minor short term negative impacts to soils, vegetation, and wildlife; however these impacts are not expected to be significant and will be further analyzed in site specific NEPA documents at the development stage.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.

The proposed action is not expected to significantly impact public health and safety. Oil and gas leasing and development are common in the area and no significant impacts to health and safety are known.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There are no prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas within or near the affected area. No significant impacts to riparian vegetation, parklands, wetlands, or municipal water supplies are expected from future development of the parcel, and impacts will be further analyzed in site specific NEPA documents at the development stage, and minimized through the application of stipulations and conditions of approval.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Oil and gas leasing and development are common in the area and the effects are generally well understood. NEPA documents at the development stage will incorporate all new information to analyze impacts.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

Oil and gas leasing and development are common in the area and the effects are generally well understood. NEPA documents at the development stage will incorporate all new information to analyze impacts.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This decision is like many that have previously been made and likely will continue to be made by the BLM responsible officials regarding leasing on public lands. The decision is within the scope of the Resource Management Plan and is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions.

The decision will allow for development of the lease, however that development will be analyzed in future site-specific NEPA documents and is not expected to have significant impacts.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

There are no significant cumulative effects on the environment, either when combined with the effects created by past and concurrent projects, or when combined with the effects from natural changes taking place in the environment or from reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Additional analysis will take place at the development stage to ensure cumulative impacts are further considered and disclosed.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

There would be no adverse impacts to the above resources from leasing. Site specific surveys and consultation with SHPO will take place at the development stage and we expect to minimize impacts to these resources through that process and the application of stipulations and conditions of approval.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The BLM completed informal consultation with USFWS on May 9, 2012 regarding impacts of the proposed action on Canada lynx. The impacts to Canada lynx are expected to be insignificant or discountable, and the proposed action therefore is not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx. Adverse effects to the four Endangered Colorado River fishes could occur as a result of water depletions at the development stage. These impacts have been previously analyzed in a programmatic consultation and will not result in a jeopardy determination.

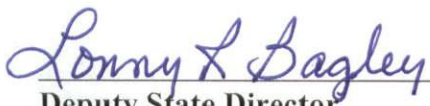
10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

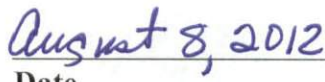
This leasing action complies with other Federal, State, and local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the proposed leasing action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (January 1987) (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA.


Deputy State Director
Division of Energy, Lands, and Minerals


Date

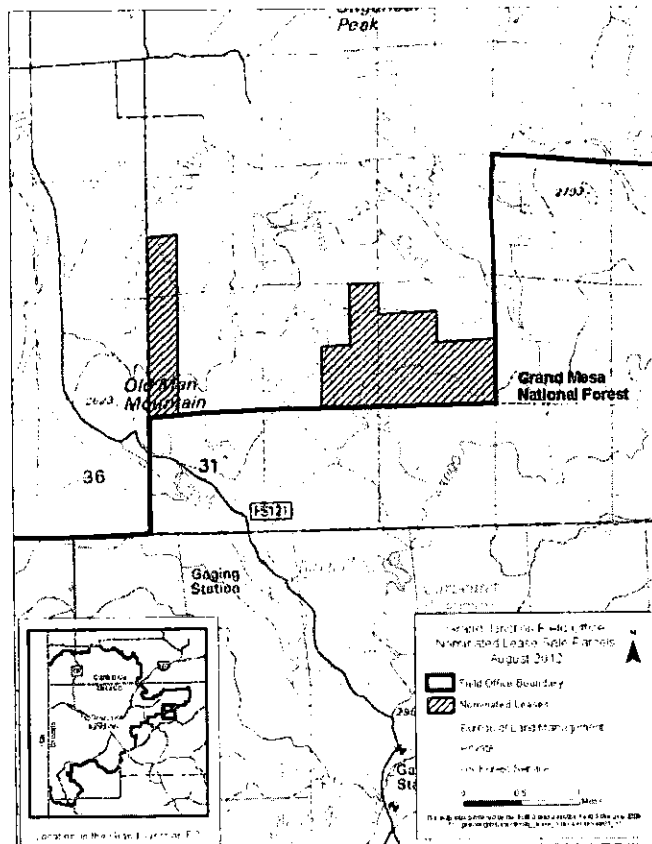
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE

DECISION RECORD
August 2012 Oil and Gas Lease Sale
DOI-BLM-CO-130-2012-0011-EA

DECISION:

I have decided to offer one parcel (6204) comprising approximately 921 acres of split-estate land for sale in the August 2012 Colorado Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale (see EA Attachment C for complete legal description). This parcel will be offered at public auction. Following the auction, if unsold, the parcel could be sold non-competitively. The lease will be issued subject to stipulations identified in the 1987 Grand Junction Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP). These stipulations are specified in the parcel listing (EA Attachment C and D). Additional site specific analyses will take place upon submission of individual Applications for Permits to Drill (APD).

Parcel 6204 approved for lease sale



AUTHORITIES:

The authority for this decision is contained in 43 CFR 3100.

PLAN CONFORMANCE:

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the approved Grand Junction Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP 1987).

Terms / Conditions / Stipulations:

For all parcels, standard terms and conditions, as well as the lease notices and stipulations identified by parcel in Appendix D of the EA, would apply to the lease parcels.

COMPLIANCE WITH MAJOR LAWS:

The proposed decision and proposed oil and gas leases with stipulations are in compliance with all applicable law, regulations, and policies, including without limitation the following:

- Endangered Species Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Clean Water Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Clean Air Act

MONITORING:

No monitoring would be required in the sale and issuance of the lease parcels. Should the parcels be developed, monitoring may be required and would be analyzed in future NEPA documentation.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Action – The parcel nominated for lease is a total of approximately 921 acres of federal mineral estate underlying privately owned surface (split estate) south of the Town of Collbran, in Mesa County, Colorado. The lease would be issued subject to stipulations (as required by Title 43 Code of Federal Registration 3131.3) identified in the 1987 Grand Junction Resource Management Plan.

No Action -- The No Action Alternative would withdraw the lease parcel from the August 2012 lease sale. The parcel would remain available for inclusion in future lease sales. Surface management would remain the same and oil and gas development likely would continue on surrounding private, State, and Federal leases.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION:

The decision to approve the proposed action is based upon the following: 1) consistency with the approved resource management plan; 2) national policy; 3) agency statutory and regulatory requirements; 4) relevant resource and economic issues; 5) application of measures (stipulations) to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

1. This decision is in conformance with the Grand Junction RMP, 1987.
2. It is the policy of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as derived from various laws, including the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended [30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*] and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to make mineral resources available for disposal and to encourage development of mineral resources to meet national, regional, and local needs.
3. The decision is consistent with all federal, state, and county laws and regulations relating to the authorizations necessary to implement the proposed action
4. Economic benefits derived from implementation of the proposed action are considered important and have been analyzed in the EA.
5. Standard terms and conditions as well as special stipulations would apply. Lease stipulations (as required by Title 43 Code of Federal Registration 3131.3) were added to each parcel as identified by the Grand Junction Field Office to address site specific concerns or new information not identified in the land use planning process.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the referenced environmental assessment (EA), and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was made. The selected alternative will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not necessary. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the alternatives as detailed in the FONSI.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Public Scoping took place from December 5, 2011 through January 4, 2012. Six responses were received, including multiple comments. The EA was also made available for a 30-day public review on March 1, 2012 through March 30, 2012. Three comments were received. All comments and BLM's responses can be found in EA attachment E.

APPEALS:

The decision of the State Director may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and Form 1842-1 (copy attached). If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (at the above address) within 30 days from your receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the Decision appealed from is in error. If you wish to file a petition (pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21) for a stay of the effectiveness of this Decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. A copy of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLSA) and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.21 and 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for obtaining a stay

Standards for Obtaining a Stay except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits;
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and;
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Approved by:

Date:

Lanny L Bagley _____

Deputy State Director
Division of Energy, Lands, and Minerals

August 8, 2012