

EIS on Previously Issued Oil and Gas
Leases on the
White River National Forest

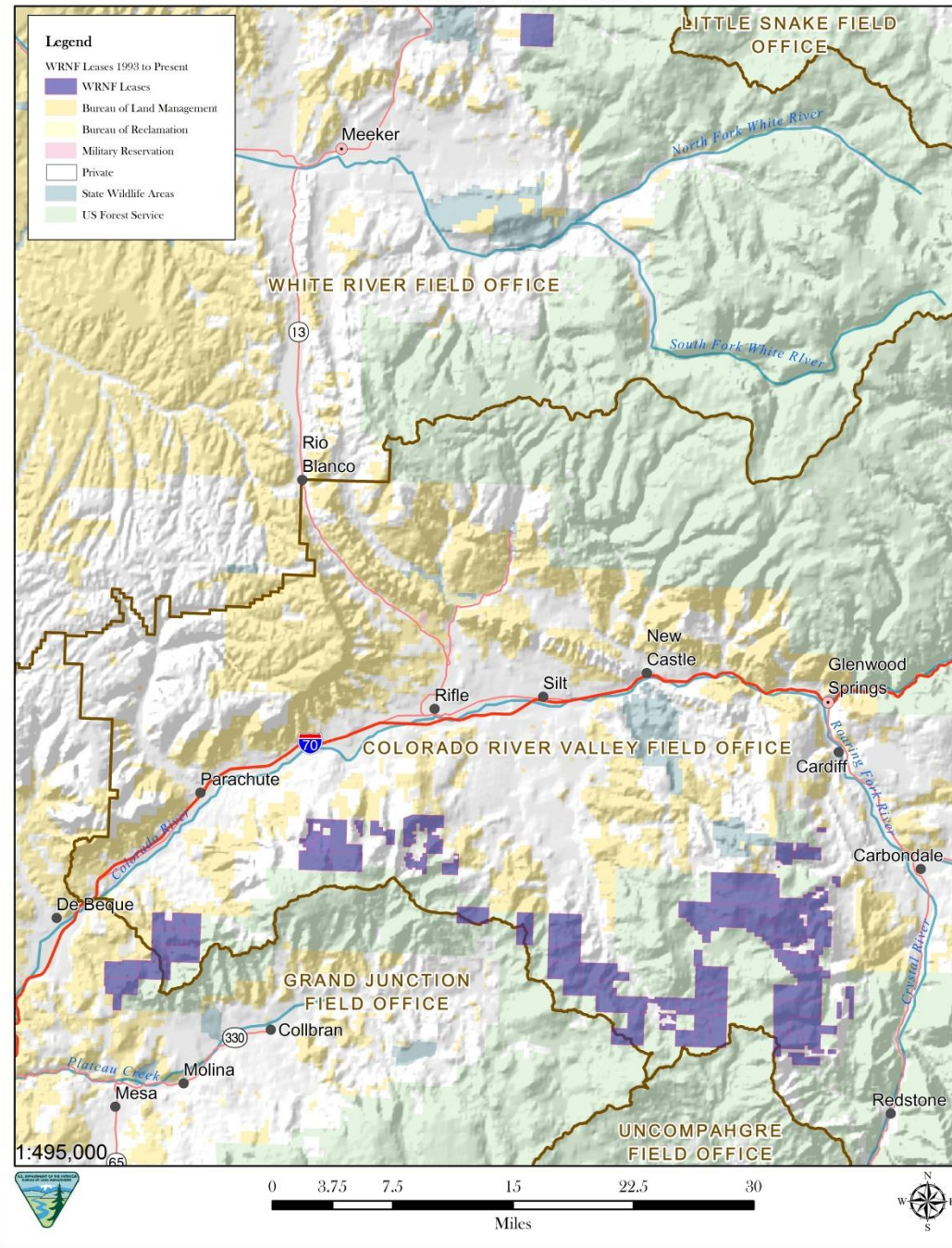
Presentation to RAC

May 29 2014

What we are doing

- EIS analyzing 65 existing leases issued since 1993 on the White River National Forest.
- Final result will be a Record of Decision
 - Keep leases as they currently are
 - Modify existing leases
 - Cancel existing leases

Current Oil and Gas Leases Issued in the White River National Forest from 1993 to the Present



What this EIS does not address

- ***Future leasing.***
 - White River National Forest is currently revising their Oil and Gas EIS. Final expected later in 2014.
- **Drilling/development proposals.**
 - Forest Service would take lead on drilling proposals, including specific routes, locations
 - Forest Service waiting for results of BLM EIS

What EIS does not address

- Policy decisions outside scope of this EIS
- Lease suspensions
- Leases issued before 1993

Why is BLM conducting the EIS?

- Forest Service determines which of its lands are available for oil and gas leasing (BLM manages the leases)
- Forest Service 1993 EIS made lands available
 - Decisions carried forward in 2002 Forest Plan
 - Most leased '95-2004
- 2007 IBLA decision
 - BLM did not formally adopt Forest Service analysis or do our own

Issues already identified

- Changes in oil and gas since 1993
 - More development
 - Different technologies
- New air quality analyses available
- Endangered species updates since 1993
- Roadless Rule new since 1993

Common questions

- How important are public comments?
- How important are local comments?
- Do you have the authority to cancel leases?
- Why not just cancel the leases?

Why were lease suspensions approved?

- Ursa Resources 7 leases
 - Development proposal in 2009
 - Unitization request in 2012
- SG Interests 18 leases
 - Unitization request in 2011
 - Development proposals in 2012

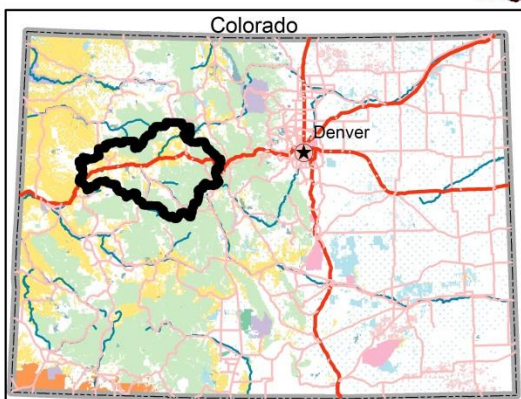
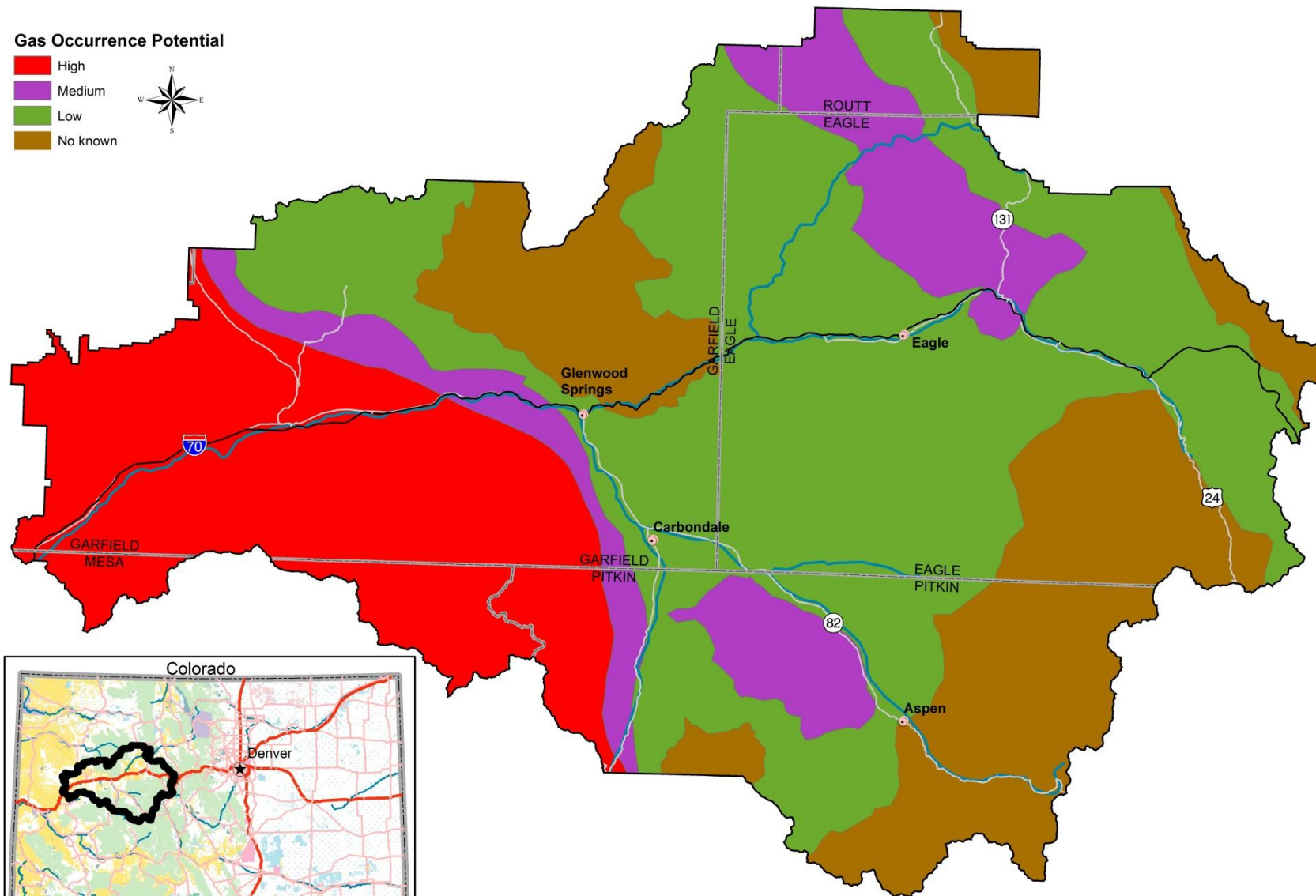
Why was the area leased (particularly Thompson Divide)?

- Forest Service decision made the lands available
- Industry nomination
- Forest Service concurred with offering the lands for lease
- Interest in the area for many decades

Gas Occurrence Potential in the Colorado River Valley Field Office

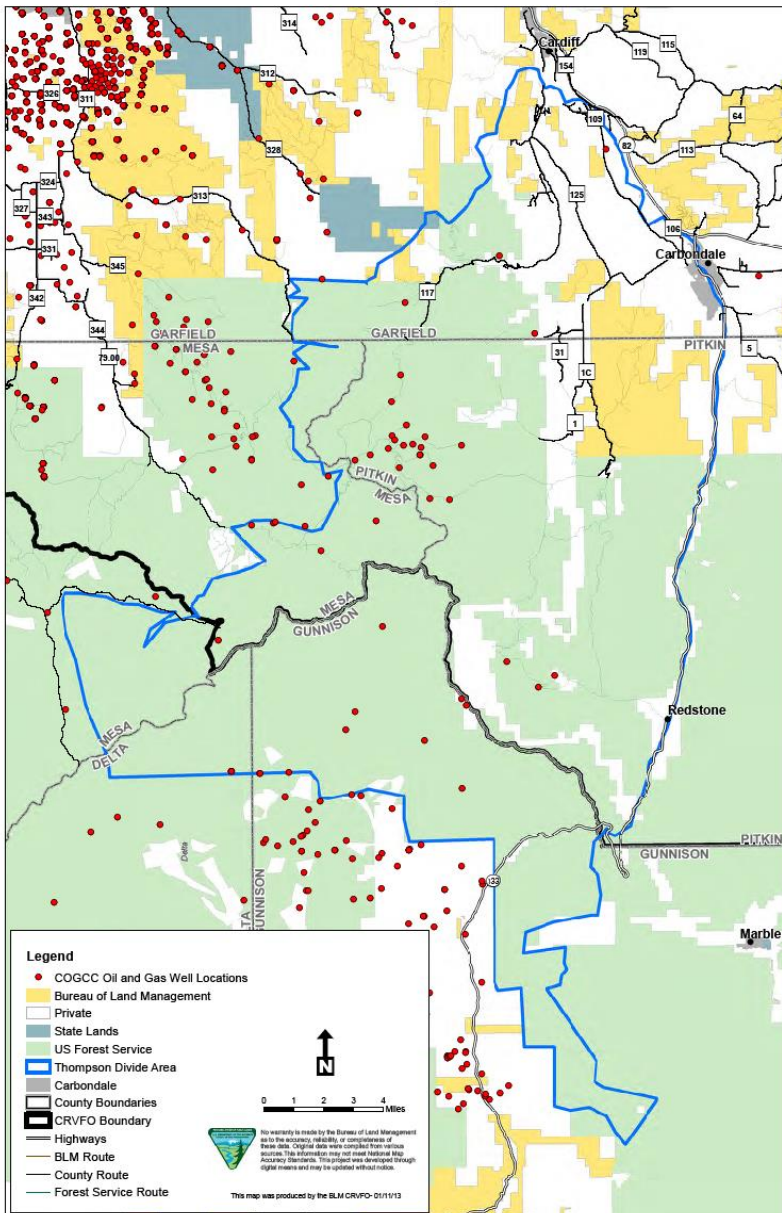
Gas Occurrence Potential

- High
- Medium
- Low
- No known

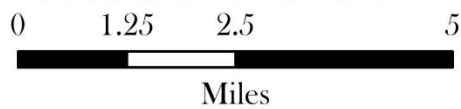
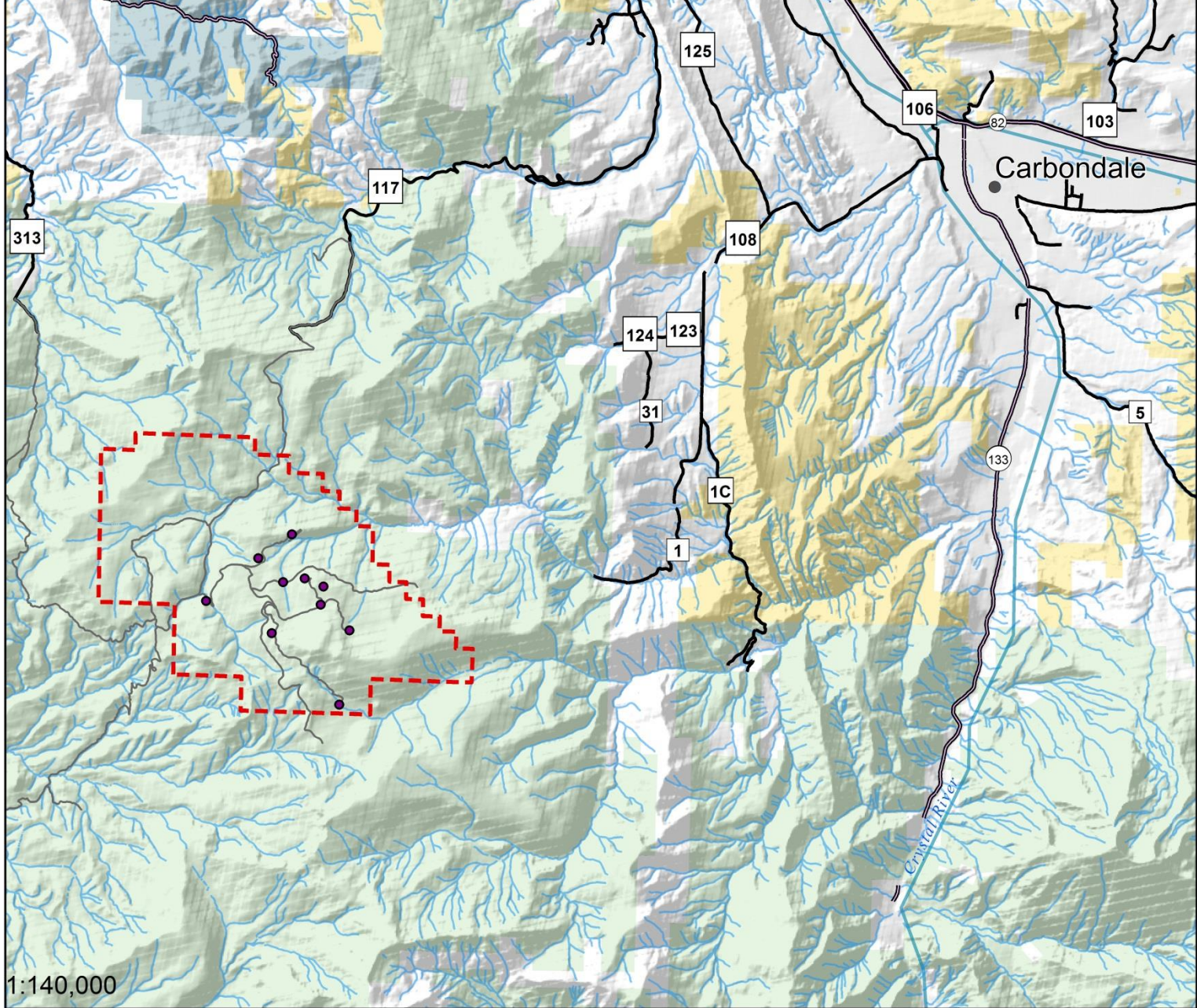


0 5 10 20 Miles

Historic Wells in Thompson Divide



- First well in Thompson Divide 1947
- 34 wells have been drilled since 1947
- 31 found gas, 16 produced gas
- Only 1 currently producing

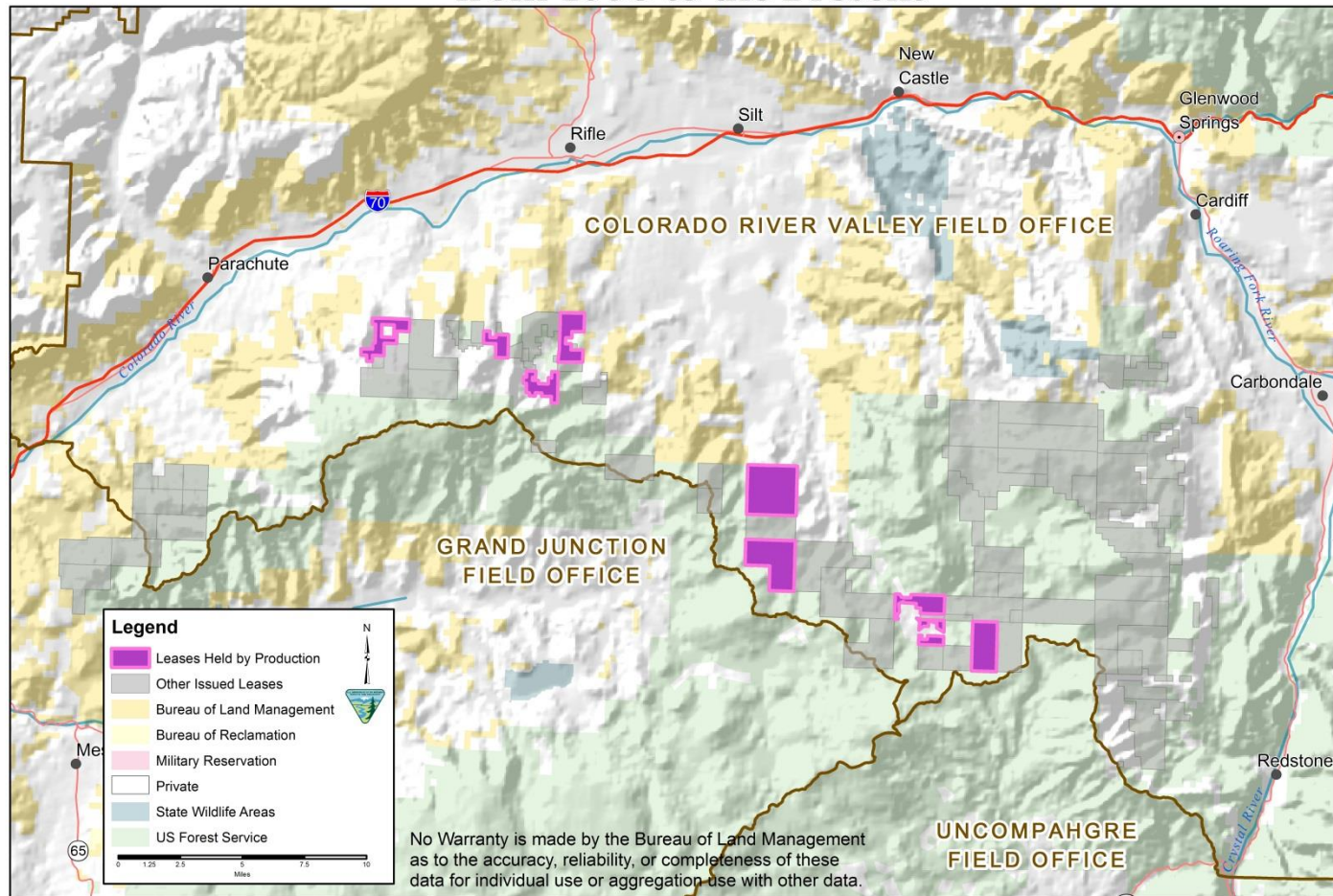


How will BLM incorporate the new Forest Service EIS decisions?

- BLM EIS will use as much of the Forest Service analysis as possible
- BLM could include an alternative for the 65 *current* leases that mirrors the Forest Service decision for *future* leases

Are any of the 65 leases producing?

Current Oil and Gas Leases Issued in the White River National Forest from 1993 to the Present



Scoping period

- Ran from April 2 publication of NOI to May 16
- Public meetings:

<u>location</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>approximate # signed in</u>
Glenwood Springs	4/15/2014	151
Carbondale	4/16/2014	282
Aspen	4/17/2014	95
Debeque	5/1/2014	240
		768

- **Comments:**
 - Approximately 200+ hand-written comment forms or letters
 - Approximately 45+ typed hard copy letters or forms
 - Approximately 32,700+ form emails
 - Approximately 170+ unique emails
 - Approximately 550 minutes of transcribed (to MS Word and .txt files) verbal comments and questions/answers from scoping meetings

Cooperating Agencies

- Building a preliminary list of invitees based on known issues and those heard in scoping
- Preliminarily to include:
 - County governments: e.g. Garfield, Mesa, Rio Blanco, Pitkin
 - Municipalities: e.g. DeBeque, Glenwood Springs, Meeker, New Castle, Parachute, Rangely, Silt, Carbondale, Collbran, Grand Junction
 - State agencies: e.g. DNR, CPW
 - Federal agencies: e.g. EPA, FWS, USFS (WRNF)
 - Tribes: e.g. Ute Indian Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Northern Ute Indian Tribe
- Intend to invite agencies in the next few weeks, will sign MOUs with all. Intend to specify specific expertise sought or area of jurisdiction.

Draft Schedule and Next Steps

Milestone Tasks for EIS	Completion Dates
Secure Contractor	July-14
PHASE 1 -- PROJECT PLANNING, SCOPING, AND ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT	
- Scoping Report	October-14
- Alternatives	November-14
PHASE 2 -- DRAFT EIS	
- Preliminary Draft EIS	April-15
- Notice of Availability	July-15
- Public Meetings	August-15
PHASE 3 –FINAL EIS	
- Public Comment Report	October-15
- Preliminary Final EIS	December-15
- Final EIS Public Availability Period	April-16
PHASE 4: ROD	June-16

Requested RAC Involvement

- Priority issues RAC advises BLM to address in this EIS
- Key information RAC advises BLM to consider
- RAC-suggested alternative(s)
- Advice on any fatal flaws to BLM approach