

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

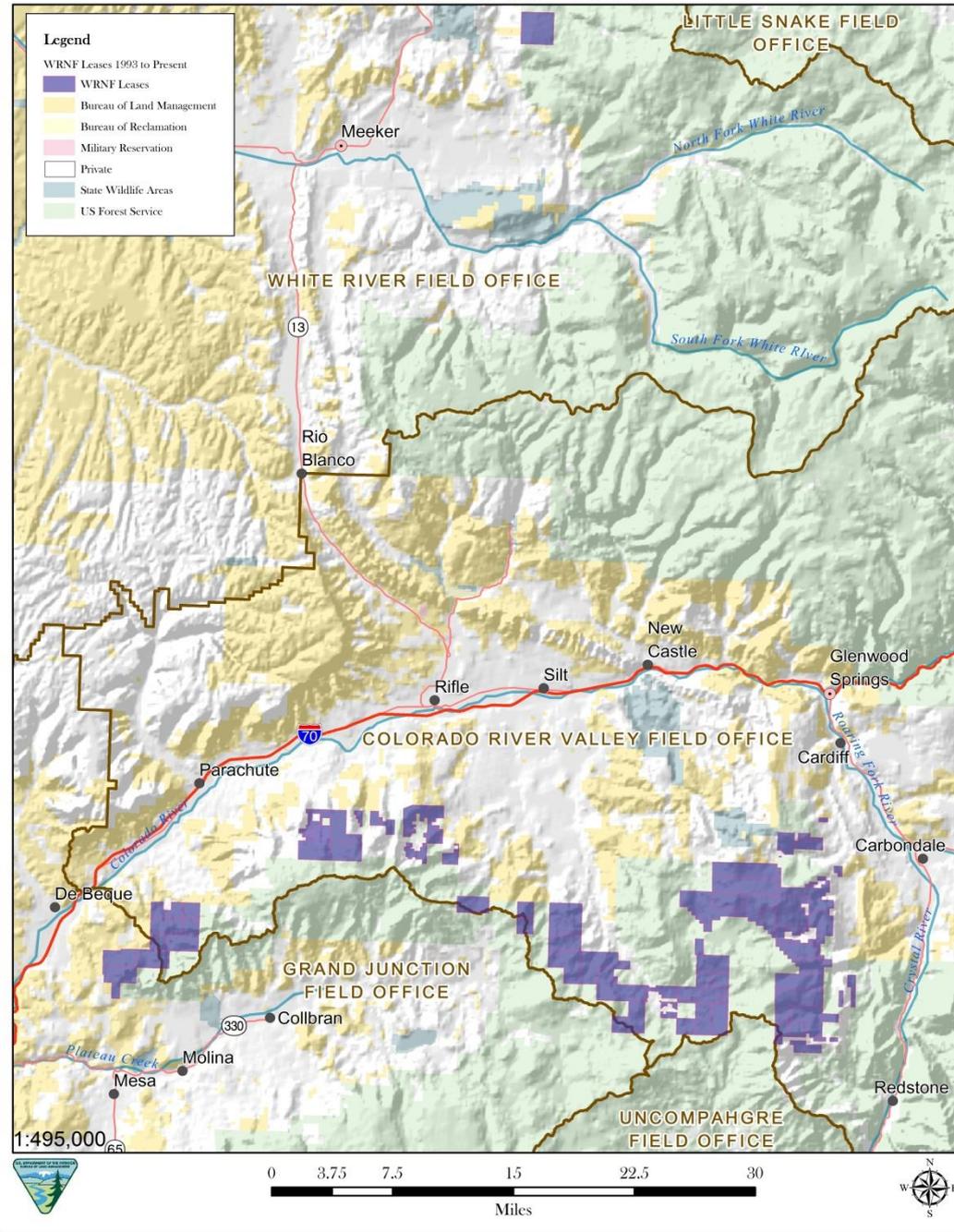
Presentation to RAC

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

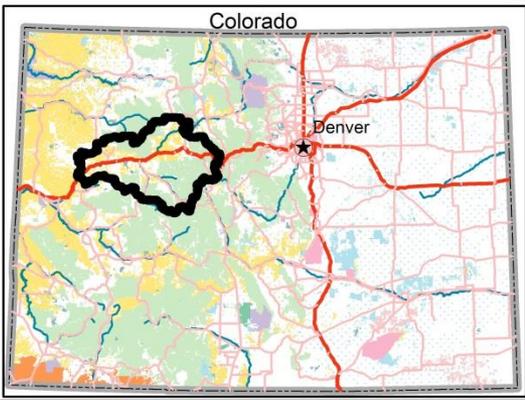
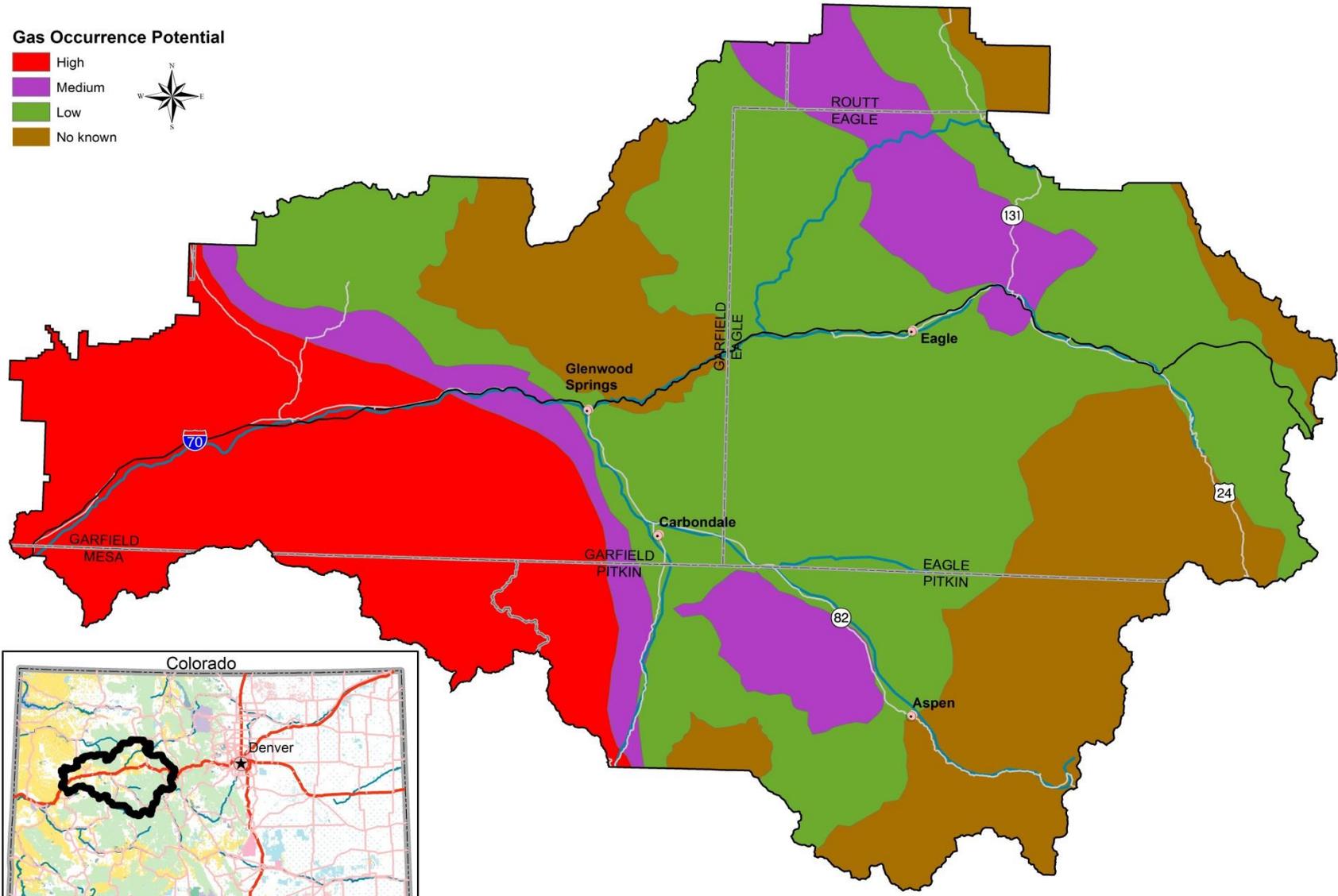
# Why was the area leased (particularly Thompson Divide)?

- 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

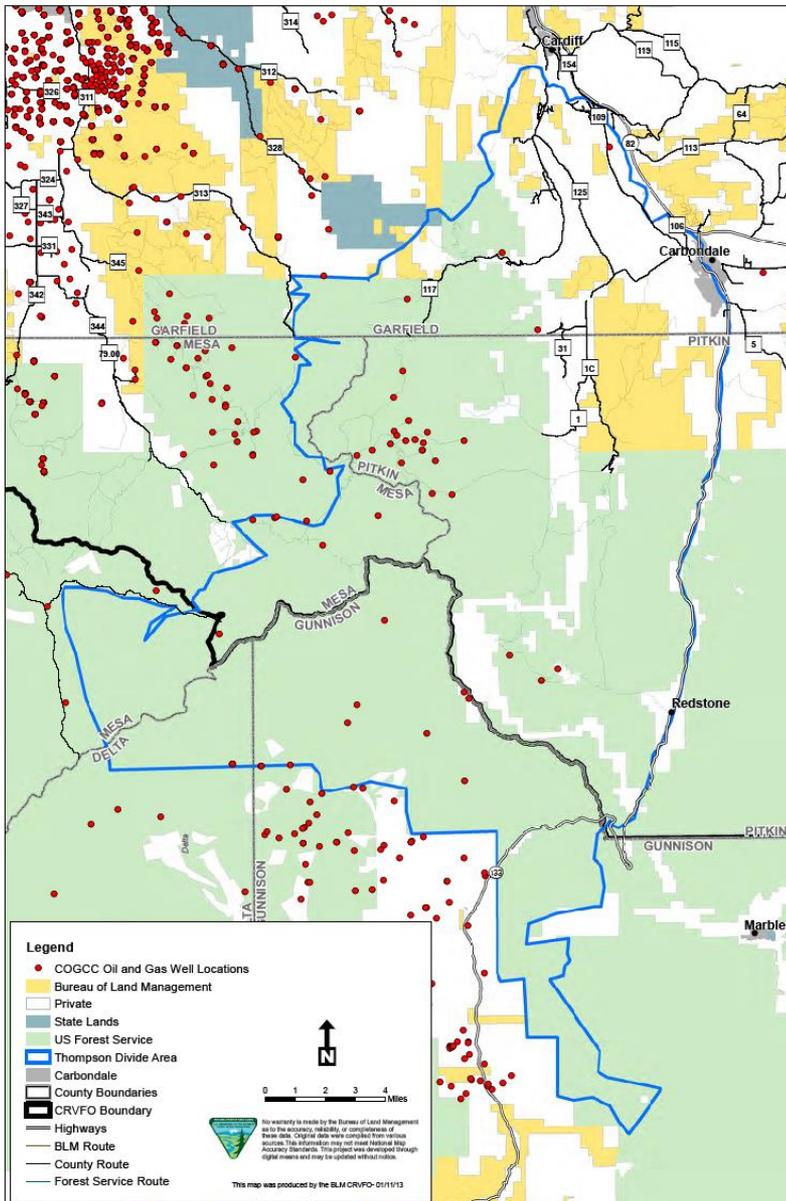
# Gas Occurrence Potential in the Colorado River Valley Field Office

## Gas Occurrence Potential

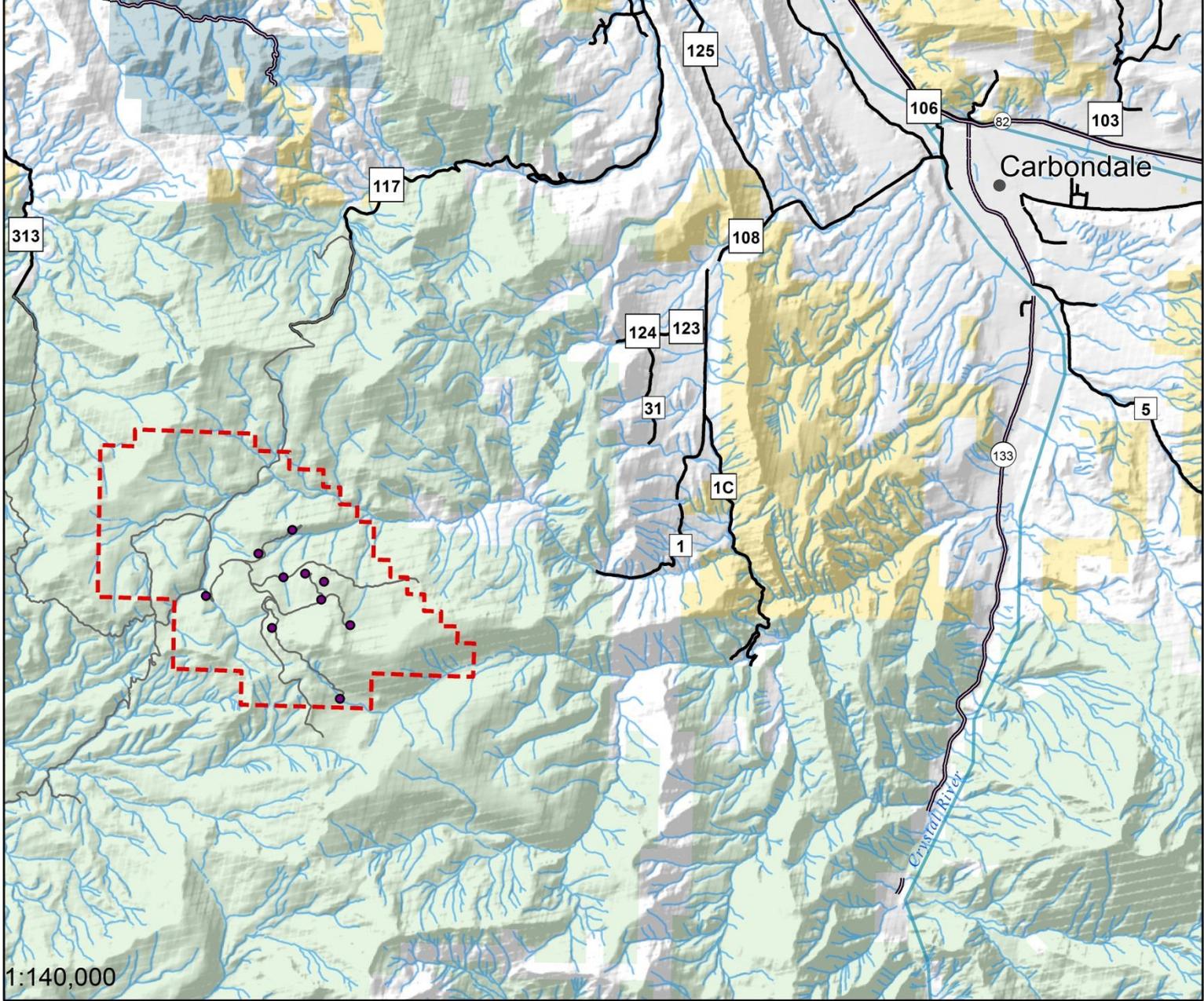
- High
- Medium
- Low
- No known



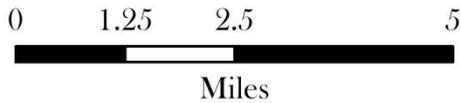
### Historic Wells in Thompson Divide



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



1:140,000

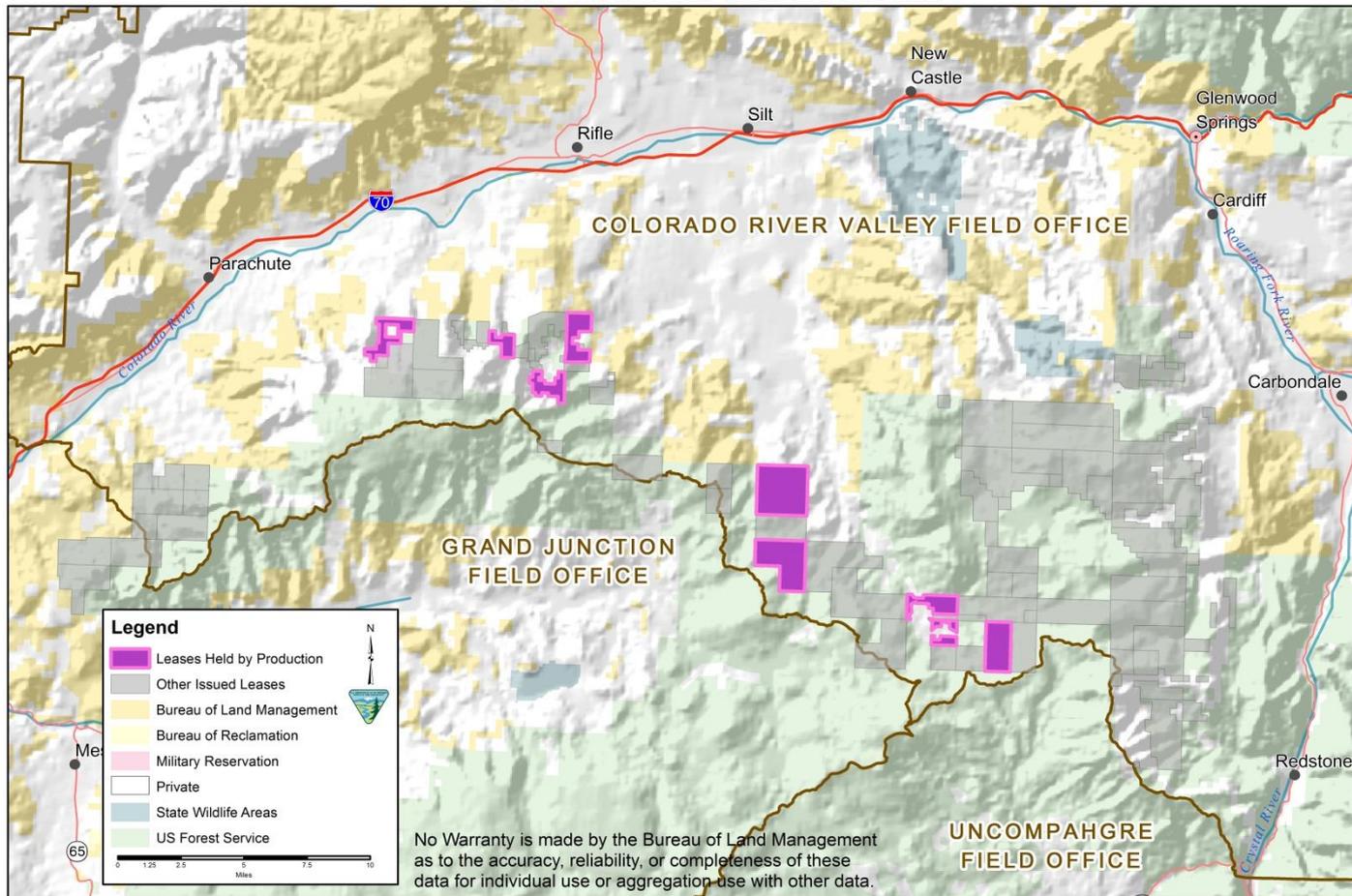


# How will BLM incorporate the new Forest Service EIS decisions?

- 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
		<b>768</b>

- **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
<b>PHASE 1 -- PROJECT PLANNING, SCOPING, AND ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT</b>	
- Scoping Report	October-14
- Alternatives	November-14
<b>PHASE 2 -- DRAFT EIS</b>	
- Preliminary Draft EIS	April-15
- Notice of Availability	July-15
- Public Meetings	August-15
<b>PHASE 3 –FINAL EIS</b>	
- Public Comment Report	October-15
- Preliminary Final EIS	December-15
- Final EIS Public Availability Period	April-16
<b>PHASE 4: ROD</b>	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