

**Northwest Resource Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2005**

Battlement Mesa Activity Center, 0398 Arroyo Dr.
Parachute, Colorado

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

David Bailey, Category 2	Jon Hill, Category 1
Dave Cesark, Category 1	Pat Kennedy, Category 2
Jeff Comstock, Category 3	Charles Kerr, Category 2
Ken Currey, Category 1	John Martin, Category 3
T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1	Larry McCown, Category 3
Wade Haerle, Category 2	Forrest Nelson, Category 3
Kathy Hall, Category 3	Charlie Yates, Category 1

Not present: Geoff Blakeslee, Category 2

BLM Staff

Steve Bennett	Greg Goodenow
Renee Brousseau	Steven Hall
Jamie Connell	Mel Lloyd

Approximately 185 people, traveling from various locations across Colorado, attended the meeting scheduled specifically for the Northwest Resource Advisory Council (RAC) to hear public comment on the Draft Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS).

Opening Remarks

Chairman Jeff Comstock called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. Northwest RAC members introduced themselves to the crowd. Today's attendance constitutes a quorum. Comstock explained how the meeting would be conducted. The RAC will develop their response to the BLM, at a later date, after evaluating today's public comment. Each of the seven registered groups wishing to speak will have equally divided time to offer the RAC comment, and individuals will be allotted 3 minutes each to comment.

Overview of Draft Roan Plateau RMP/EIS

Glenwood Springs Field Manager Jamie Connell explained BLM's planning process and provided a summary of the Draft Roan Plateau RMP/EIS, focusing on its five proposed alternatives. Connell introduced BLM cooperators on this project: Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Department of Natural Resources/Division of Wildlife, Colorado State Parks, Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, and the towns of Parachute and Rifle. Connell fielded several questions from RAC members. Public comment on the draft RMP must be submitted in writing to BLM Glenwood Springs and postmarked or submitted electronically via www.roanplateau.ene.com by Mar. 4, 2005. [Editor's Note—The deadline was extended to Apr. 11, 2005 on Feb. 18, 2005.]

Group Presentations

Clare Bastable, Colorado Mountain Club: Bastable is from the Carbondale area. This group would like to see a Community Alternative chosen by the BLM as its preferred alternative. This alternative would focus on conserving resources, recreation and the community vision of no drilling on top of the plateau. This group would also like to see Hubbard Mesa protected, as well as a special recreation management area established on top. The group supports gas development in Garfield County, but public resources need to be protected. They support development at the base and preserving the top.

Chad Currie, Brad's Electrical: Currie works for a New Castle company that was forced to downsize because of the area's past economic hardships. The company has worked its way back to 23 employees and owes this success to oil and gas activities in the area. The company's future depends a great deal on this activity and supports drilling on the Roan Plateau.

Steve Smith, The Wilderness Society: Smith lives near Glenwood Springs. He asked the RAC to look at the projected gas production numbers for drilling on top. More gas could be produced but the group questions whether the amount is worth the cost and damage to resources. They want to keep drilling at the base of the plateau and re-evaluate at the end of the plan's life whether drilling should be pursued on top.

Scott Donato, Colorado Oil and Gas Association (COGA) Eastern Slope: This group supports a common sense plan. Deferred or no leasing is not a legal alternative and leasing is a significant, long-term benefit to the area's communities. Directional drilling from the base to reach the top will not work with today's technology, nor is it foreseen in the near future. Drilling of private land, consisting of 40 percent of the acreage on top, will proceed regardless of BLM's chosen direction. Recreation tourism would continue if directional drilling is allowed on top because the method has minimal impact on resources. Obtaining the gas resources from the top would also lessen dependence on foreign energy. Leasing parcels now makes more fiscal sense for the industry in developing gas in the future.

Pete Kolbensschlag, Colorado Environmental Coalition: Kolbensschlag, who lives in Grand Junction, feels that Silt, New Castle and Carbondale's resolutions supporting the Community Alternative is evidence that communities don't want drilling on top of the plateau. This alternative would protect resources, recreation opportunities and honor local community wishes. Two special recreation management areas are needed: Hubbard Mesa with no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations and another on top. Best management practices should also be required in the RMP. The volume of gas that could be obtained on top is not worth the damage that resources will sustain. This group wants leasing, but especially drilling, deferred on top for the life of the plan, or until technology would allow drilling with no damage to resources. They also feel that leasing requirements of the Transfer Act have been met. The group asks for balance—economics are important but so is the quality of life.

Steve Soychak, Western Slope COGA: Soychak is District Manager of Williams Production and here today representing Williams employees. Williams said that wildlife can successfully coexist with oil and gas production and showed the RAC several local wildlife photos. Williams uses directional drilling on the valley floor and does not feel it's feasible to capture gas resources on top without some drilling. Energy development provides heat for homes, good paying jobs and a cleaner source of energy. Renewable energy may be important but even hydrogen energy

requires natural gas. Domestic energy development lessens dependency on foreign energy. Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) would protect sensitive areas on top. This group feels a balance in developing energy and protecting natural resources can be achieved on top.

Bob Millette, Trout Unlimited: Millette represents 440 chapter members in the Roaring Fork and Eagle River Valleys, as well as TU as a whole. Areas of concern for this group include the creeks on top containing pure populations of native trout species. The group also feels that grazing is detrimental to fish habitat. The draft RMP has little information on the plateau's fish habitat and watersheds. These fragile environments need to be protected and TU does not support drilling on top. This group supports the Community Alternative.

Public Comment Period

Public comment opened at 4:55 p.m. Three minutes were allotted to each speaker.

Diana Laurence, representing several Parachute businesses, wants to show support today for the oil and gas industry. These people want increased development of domestic energy and support drilling on top. Several people signed the letter she read to the RAC. (Copy of letter signed by businesses sent to all RAC members.)

Doug Weaver, Grand Junction, is a concerned citizen who has witnessed prudent energy development and supports natural gas drilling on the Roan Plateau.

Joe Weaver, Fruita, has worked in the gas industry for several years. Weaver feels that impacts to the plateau from drilling are exaggerated by some and the public must be realistic. There are significant resources on top, the private land will be developed, and public lands should be developed as well.

Mike Brady, Fruita, said that he is a father, citizen, rancher, businessman and taxpayer and wants his voice heard. The legislated allocation was made many years ago and everyone must consider the goal. Brady encourages utilizing the 13-point plan and pursuing the right to extract minerals from the earth.

Joan Qwest, Parachute, was born and raised in Mesa County and owns property in Garfield and Delta Counties. Wildlife may be impacted more so from increased hunting and development. Qwest feels there can be a common sense approach and solution to this issue.

Dani Christensen, Parachute, stated that oil and gas activity has allowed the community to construct a new school. As a homeowner, she appreciates this and supports drilling on the plateau.

Susan Hoover, Battlement Mesa, supports drilling on the plateau. The location where drilling will take place is mainly barren, and Alternative 3 makes sense. It's our responsibility to extract those natural resources in the area.

Brad Moss, Rifle, owns property adjacent to the planning area and supports concurrent drilling on the top and at the base. The country needs the gas and he disagrees with sacrificing the

bottom in trying to save the top. He appreciates the new school that industry funds helped build. Industry has also provided jobs that help the local communities.

Dan Hoover, Battlement Mesa, supports drilling on the plateau 100 percent. There are other areas in Colorado offering hunting, fishing and recreational opportunities. He feels that energy development has not impacted wildlife in the area, but residential development has. Sensible drilling can occur through regulation and policy.

Sandy Hotard, Grand Junction, feels that the draft RMP represents a great opportunity for all groups to work together, and it could act as a model for others to follow in the country.

Blake Rough, Grand Junction, stressed that advances in the industry have come a long way. Today's drilling technology is fairly non-intrusive, and he's proud to work in the industry. He supports drilling because it supports his livelihood.

Ken Leis, Grand Junction, supports responsible drilling on the plateau.

Tim Acocha, Battlement Mesa, was recently laid off at American Soda. Williams has been great to have hired many of the displaced employees, and he supports the industry's presence in the community. The new school wouldn't be here without industry dollars. Acocha supports drilling on the plateau and using the resources.

Larry Kent, Western Slope Franchise Leader for Halliburton, has been a western Colorado resident for 20 years. His company supports responsible energy development. He feels that the environmental community's fears are unfounded given his company's history in responsibly developing energy. He asked the RAC to support responsible energy development.

Larry Warnke, Fruita, favors sensible multiple use of public lands. He supports energy development both at the base and on top of the plateau, and feels that wildlife and recreation will not be impacted.

Kent Edwards believes that industry is not here to destroy anything, and it has learned from its past mistakes. The industry has been good to his family and he supports drilling on top. Every plan needs tweaking, and he doesn't like the preferred alternative because it encourages escalating drilling at the base just to drill on top.

Kevin McDermott, Glenwood Springs, supports responsible drilling on top.

J.T. Larson, Fruita, supports developing energy on top.

Kevin Moore, Parachute, is a fourth-generation family in the valley. The industry provides them jobs, and he resents being labeled as a non-environmentalist just because he works in the industry. Wildlife is abundant, and energy development can coexist with it.

Al Tanner, Parachute, is a retiree who recently returned after leaving in the early 80s. He supports drilling on the plateau and feels it is BLM's responsibility to develop the resource now to relieve our nation's dependency on foreign oil.

Drew Clark works in the industry and disagrees that wildlife will be driven out and impacted. His work frequently takes him to drilling rigs, and he always sees wildlife. Drilling companies have done an outstanding job of protecting the environment. He is proud to be an American and doesn't want our resources given to other countries.

Frankie Rasberry, Parachute, supports drilling on the plateau. The area's economy needs the industry and the jobs it provides. She has wildlife at her backdoor everyday and doesn't believe it's being impacted.

Fred Pierce, Grand Junction, has lived here since 1978 and owns a business in the industry. The current industry activity allows him to hire people, enabling them to live good lives, as well as to support the mining industry. He supports BLM's Alternative 3.

Tim Leonard, Rifle, works in the industry and feels that energy development has been done responsibly. He also doesn't want escalated development just to gain access to the top. Impacts to drilling sites have been mitigated, and he supports drilling on the Roan.

Ted Ragsdale, Parachute, is a native of the area. He supports drilling on the Roan Plateau. There's a need for the energy, and the country can't wait.

Ivo Lindauer, Parachute, is a native of the area; his family ranch has been here for over 100 years. He feels that industry has impacted wildlife. This genetic shift has reduced the quality of deer herds in the area. He supports Alternative 1 with no leasing. BLM's mission cannot be met using Alternative 3.

Gail Kuhns, Silt, is an organic farmer in Peach Valley and supports the Community Alternative. She hopes that everyone can work together to reach a resolution.

Eric Rechel, Grand Junction, supports the citizens' alternative. The upswing in Mesa County's economy is because of increased recreation activities, and this shouldn't be overlooked. He encourages the industry to consider directional drilling. Times are changing—citizens are saying no to energy development and yes to preservation. Please preserve the Roan Plateau.

Bill Grant, Grand Junction, supports the Community Alternative. Booms will come and go—what's important is what is left after the boom is gone. Public lands offer many opportunities, so please don't hurry to get the gas out of the Roan Plateau.

Shirley Adams, Parachute, supports the Community Alternative. Increased traffic in wilderness areas will impact people's outdoor experiences. She asks the industry to use electric drills, rather than noisy mechanical drills.

Alan Maitland, Battlement Mesa, supports the Community Alternative. He feels that what's happening in the valley would happen on the plateau if best management practices are not closely followed. He believes that industry is not being regulated in a responsible manner, and BLM budget cuts will worsen the situation.

Douglas Deno, Battlement Mesa, has hiked the Roan Plateau extensively and frequently visits drilling locations in the valley. He supports delaying leasing on top and has several concerns with the draft RMP/EIS.

Mark Rinehart, Glenwood Springs, wanted to provide some balance to today's meeting. He feels that the small area on top should be saved from drilling; keep drilling at the base of the plateau. If feasible technology becomes available, consider drilling on top at that time. He supports the Community Alternative.

Michael Monroe, Rifle, supports drilling on the Roan Plateau. Industry has provided for his family's livelihood, and the area has good ambulances thanks to industry as well. Public lands need to remain open to all uses.

Jim Evans, Rifle, representing Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado, asked the RAC to consider three criteria in their decision-making process. Multiple use, including natural gas development; protect areas of environmental concern, keeping DOW as a cooperator; and encourage the use of the latest technology. The industry contributes significant economic benefits to the region. AGNC encourages releasing funds for oil shale clean up projects. School districts receive tax-exempt funding in counties where federal mineral leasing occurs. Rifle has benefited significantly from this funding.

Craig Meis, Grand Junction, is a Mesa County commissioner. Healthcare and energy are the largest growing economic contributors in the county. Energy development provides good paying jobs for the area. Mesa County commissioners support Alternative 3, not only for the economic benefits derived from the industry, but because they believe in the capable BLM staff managing drilling activity.

Scott Brady, Parachute, works in the energy. He asked RAC members to pay special attention to industry comments heard today. Those same people are long-time residents of the area and face challenges everyday in the industry. They've learned from their mistakes and will develop energy responsibly.

Toby Leborn has his own company and owes his success to the oil and gas industry. Please support drilling on the Roan Plateau.

Gary Miller, Rifle, is a mountain biker and frequently uses Roan Cliffs and Hubbard Mesa. He would like to see designated routes emphasized more in these areas, which are easy rides from town. He has concerns that some routes will be excluded from the final RMP.

T. Wright Dickinson encouraged the mountain biking community to work with the BLM in reviewing travel management for Hubbard Mesa. Charlie Yates commended tonight's speakers. RAC member John Martin urged the public to submit their comments to BLM by the March 4 deadline. [Editor's Note—The deadline was extended to Apr. 11, 2005 on Feb. 18, 2005.]

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.