



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **BLM accepting public comment on wildlife habitat mitigation plan**

SILT, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management is developing a wildlife mitigation plan to streamline the approval process for wildlife habitat improvement projects designed to off-set potential impacts to wildlife from oil and gas development within the Colorado River Valley Field Office boundaries.

As BLM begins developing a programmatic environmental assessment that takes a broad look at possible projects in sagebrush, mountain shrub and pinyon-juniper habitats within the field office boundaries, it wants to hear any issues or concerns from the public.

These treatments typically involve creating a mosaic of openings within these vegetation types that provide a substantial increase in forage for wildlife, particularly big game. This work is done either mechanically, such as mowing or roller-chopping, or manually using hand tools.

“These mechanical or manual treatments in this area are essentially mimicking the same type of disturbance a small, natural wildfire might create,” said BLM Colorado River Valley Wildlife Biologist Sylvia Ringer. “These treatments, which have been very successful in this area, are often the most practical for improving wildlife habitat. We anticipate that the number of these projects in this field office will increase in the coming years.”

As a condition of approval for oil and gas development, the BLM may require oil and gas operators to conduct these kinds of treatments to help mitigate impacts to wildlife. Typically individual projects range from 25 to 200 acres. Last year five projects totaling approximately 300 acres were completed within the field office. This year BLM anticipates more than 800 acres could be treated.

This broad evaluation will provide a comprehensive document for individual projects to reference, which would eliminate the need for a separate, redundant analysis for each project. Site-specific surveys and clearances for special status wildlife, plants, and cultural resources would be required for each project plan area prior to implementing treatments.

Comments will be most helpful if received by Feb. 24, 2012. The proposal and map of the potential project area are available on-line:

[http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/crvfo/GSFO\\_MasterPlansOfDevelopment.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/crvfo/GSFO_MasterPlansOfDevelopment.html). Written

comments and questions should be directed to Colorado River Valley Field Office at 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652. Electronic comments may be submitted to [BLM\\_CO\\_SI\\_CRVFO\\_Webmail@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_CO_SI_CRVFO_Webmail@blm.gov).

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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