

Public Notice

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Glenwood Springs Energy Office is initiating an environmental assessment (EA) of the Helmer Gulch Geographic Area Plan (GAP) for oil and gas development. The GAP, prepared by Petrogulf Corporation ("Petrogulf") and submitted to the BLM, proposes a 4-to 8-year program of oil and gas exploration and development on Federal leases located just south and east of Taughenbaugh Mesa near Rifle, Colorado.

The plan proposes the development of up to 136 wells from up to 14 proposed and one existing pad beginning in the summer of 2007. Associated with these developments would be the construction of up to 6.1 miles of new access roads and up to 5.3 miles of pipelines. Directional drilling technology would be used to drill the majority of the wells. The enclosed map shows the location of the proposed and existing well pads and the planned access roads and pipelines.

The area proposed for development encompasses approximately 1,946 acres, of which 1,157 acres are characterized by Federal surface and mineral ownership, 483 acres are characterized by typical split estate (i.e., private surface and Federal mineral ownership), and 306 acres are characterized by private surface and mineral ownership. These lands are located within Sections 20, 29, 30, 31, and 32, Township 6 South, Range 93 West, Sixth Principal Meridian. Primary access for the development activities would be County Roads 320 and 317.

As part of the development plan, Petrogulf is proposing to enhance sagebrush habitat within the planning area by reducing the numbers of encroaching juniper trees in a series of 12 treatment areas, totaling approximately 160 acres. As proposed, 70 to 100 % percent of juniper trees would be removed within each treatment area. Once removed, the treatment area would be seeded with a mixture of sagebrush, grasses, and forbs. The goal of the treatment is to develop a multi-age sagebrush community and to increase the diversity and abundance of native grasses and forbs. The improvement of existing waters facilities and the installation of a limited number wildlife "guzzlers" are also planned.

The BLM will prepare an EA to disclose the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the development plan and a No Action alternative. As a starting point in the assessment, the BLM would like to solicit input on the issues that will be considered in the preparation of the EA. At this time, you are encouraged to provide any comments, concerns, or issues that you may have with regard to the proposed development plan.

To best facilitate BLM's review and use of comments during the EA process, comments must be received by July 18, 2007. Written comments and questions should be directed to the Glenwood Springs Energy Office at 2425 S. Grand Ave., Suite 101, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601. Electronic comments may be submitted to gsfomail@co.blm.gov.

Copies of the GAP that further detail the proposed oil and gas development are available for review at the BLM Glenwood Springs Energy Office, 2425 S. Grand Ave., Suite 101, Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Digital copies of the GAP proposal and project map are available at <http://www.co.blm.gov/gsra/HelmerGulch.htm>.