



# Welcome

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

### Public Scoping Meeting

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

#### Scoping Meeting Agenda

4:00-4:30 Sign in & Open House  
4:30-4:40 Overview Presentation  
4:40-5:00 Question and Answer  
5:00-5:45 Oral Comment Period  
5:45-6:15 Continue Open House  
6:15-7:00 Oral Comment Period





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4:45-5:15 Continue Open House  
5:15-6:00 Oral Comment Period



## Submit Your Comments

### What is Scoping?

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EIS.

**“Most important, NEPA documents must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail.” (40 CFR 1500.1(b))**

### What Comments are most Useful to BLM?

Comments that raise “significant issues” are the most helpful to BLM. An “issue” is a point of disagreement, debate, or dispute with a proposed action based on some anticipated environmental effect. An issue is more than just a position statement. An issue:

- has a cause and effect relationship with the proposed action or alternatives;
- is within the scope of the analysis;
- has not be decided by law, regulation, or previous decision; and
- is amenable to scientific analysis rather than conjecture.

“Significant issues” are those issues that are related to significant or potentially significant effects.

#### Ways to Provide Comments (or join the mailing list)

##### **At this meeting:**

Fill out a comment card

##### **Email:**

WRNFleases@blm.gov

##### **Mail:**

Previously Issued Oil and Gas  
Leases in the White River National Forest  
EIS  
Bureau of Land Management  
Colorado River Valley Field Office  
Silt, CO 81652

##### **For Project Updates:**

<http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/crvfo.html>

**\*\*Comments must be received by May 16\*\***

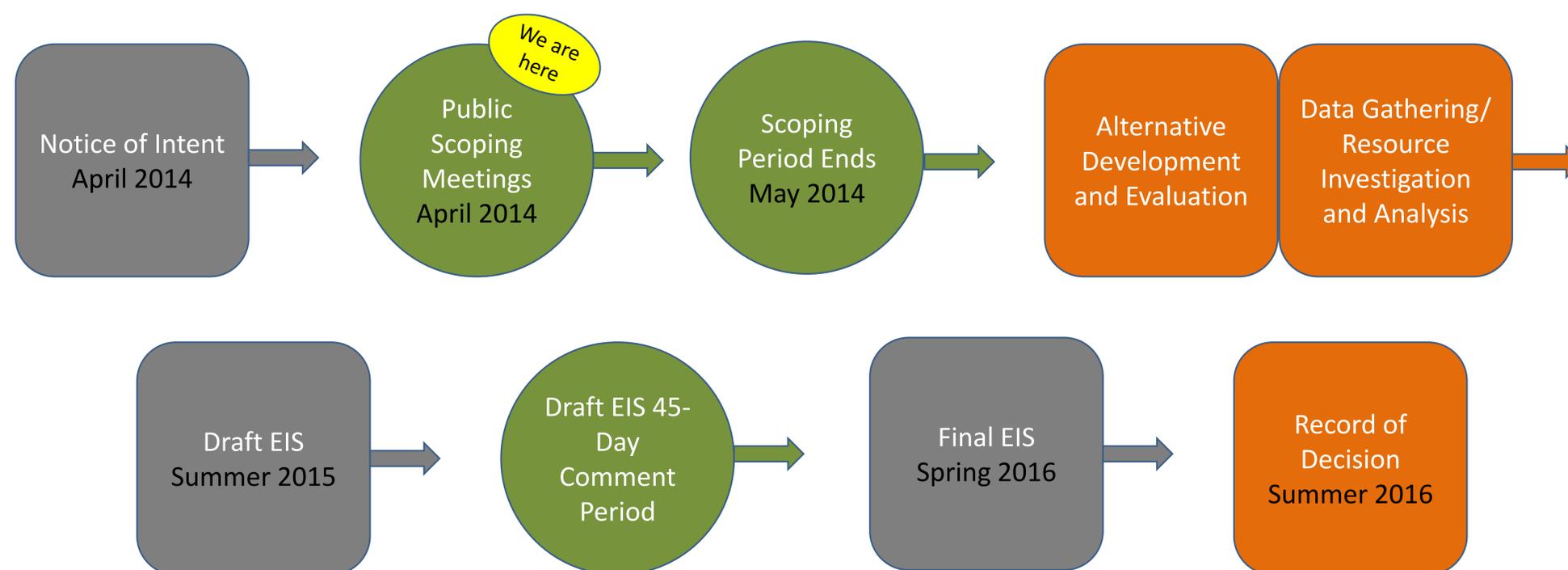


## NEPA Process

### What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

An EIS is a document prepared to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EIS is prepared to analyze and disclose the effects of proposed activities on the environment.

### Environmental Impact Statement Process:



## Preliminary Purpose and Need

### BLM's preliminary purpose for this federal leasing action is to:

- Revisit and/or reaffirm previous BLM decisions to issue 65 leases underlying White River National Forest (WRNF) lands. These leases were issued from 1995 to 2012 in conformance with the USFS's 1993 WRNF Oil and Gas Leasing EIS and ROD;
- Assess conformance with the decisions making these lands available for oil and gas leasing in the 1993 WRNF Oil and Gas Leasing EIS, as reaffirmed in the 2002 White River National Forest Plan;
- Support consistency with the USFS in managing oil and gas resources, as required by law and memorandums of understanding between the agencies; and
- Fulfill the federal government's policy to "foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of economically sound and stable industries, and in the orderly and economic development of domestic resources to help assure satisfaction of industrial, security, and environmental needs" (Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970) while continuing to sustain the land's productivity for other uses and capability to support biodiversity goals (Forest Service Minerals Program Policy).

### BLM's preliminary need for this federal leasing action is to:

- Address the NEPA deficiency identified by the 2007 Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) ruling in Board of Commissioners of Pitkin County, 173 IBLA 173 (2007), that BLM must formally adopt NEPA analysis completed by WRNF or conduct a NEPA analysis of its own for issuance of oil and gas leases underlying WRNF lands;
- Support USFS mineral policy that puts responsibility on field units, with the known presence or potential presence of a mineral or energy resource, to foster and encourage the exploration, development, and production of the mineral or energy resource;
- Meet BLM's collaborative responsibility under the Reform Act to issue and manage oil and gas leases where the USFS has issued a land availability decision; and
- Meet domestic energy needs under the requirements of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, and the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 ("Reform Act"). BLM's responsibility under the MLA, as amended, is to promote the development of oil and gas on the public domain, and to ensure that deposits of oil and gas owned by the United States shall be subject to disposition through the land use planning process.

### BLM's Decision to be Made

- The BLM will determine whether these 65 leases should be voided, reaffirmed, modified with additional or different terms, or subject to additional mitigation measures for site-specific development proposals. The determination whether to modify leases would include identification of what lease stipulations should be attached to the leases for the purpose of protecting other resources.
- The decision of whether forest system lands are available or unavailable for oil and gas leasing remains with the USFS, although the BLM retains the ultimate discretion whether to issue a lease (43 CFR 3101.7-2). In light of this, the BLM will only consider the currently leased parcels issued without BLM NEPA analysis (presently 65 parcels) and not future leasing availability.
- In addition, the BLM's EIS would not be directly tied to any pending or proposed Applications for Permit to Drill because of the USFS's authority to address the NEPA on the Surface Use Plan of Operations.





## Preliminary Alternatives

### Preliminary BLM Alternatives:

- 1) Reaffirm the leases (No Action)
- 2) Void the leases
- 3) Modify the leases with additional or different terms, or subject to additional mitigation measures for site-specific development proposals. Lease stipulations generally fall into 1 of the 3 following categories:
  - No Surface Occupancy Stipulation
  - Controlled Surface Use Stipulation
  - Timing Limitation Stipulation

### Scoping and Alternatives:

Scoping comments may help identify alternatives to the BLM's preliminary alternatives, as well as refine the preliminary alternatives. ***BLM welcomes your comments and suggestions about additional alternatives to consider or specific details of the alternatives above.***





## Preliminary Environmental Considerations

### The BLM has identified the following preliminary issues:

- 1) The level of oil and gas leasing, drilling and production activity within the WRNF has increased dramatically since the 1993 Oil and Gas leasing Final EIS decision. The number of acres leased has nearly tripled since 1993. The increased level of oil and gas leasing, drilling and production activity indicates a need to **update the Reasonable Foreseeable Development scenario for oil and gas activities** on the WRNF lands.
- 2) **Oil and gas exploration and production technology have improved** since 1993. The BLM will consider and analyze these advancements in the impact analysis.
- 3) An increased level of oil and gas activity has created an **increased level of public interest in oil and gas related activities** on public lands.
- 4) Since 1993, the BLM has new information related to **air resources management**, including air quality modeling.
- 5) The BLM will address **lands in WRNF inventoried as Roadless areas** in the updated EIS.
- 6) The EIS will address changes since 1993 to BLM **sensitive species and to species listed as threatened or endangered** under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

### Scoping and Alternatives:

Scoping comments may help identify additional issues, as well as refine these preliminary issues. **BLM welcomes your comments and suggestions.**

