

Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas Sub-group Minutes

Nov. 19, 2015 @ Dolores, CO

Welcome and Introductions-Kathleen Bond, meeting facilitator, opened the session at 10:10 a.m. The agenda was distributed at the sign-in table. Kathleen provided the following ground rules:

1. Be respectful
2. One person speaks at a time
3. Limit side conversations
4. Don't get personal
5. Silence cell phones

Southwest Colorado RAC oil and gas sub-committee members present: Ernie Williams (SW RAC member), Eric Sanford (SW RAC member), John Reams (SW RAC Chairperson), James Dietrich (SW RAC member), Carla Hoehn (Triad Western Constructors), Pete Eschallier (Kokopelli Bike and Board), Christi Zeller (La Plata Energy Council), Jimbo Buickerood (San Juan Citizens Alliance), Dale Davidson (Southwest Canyons Alliance), George San Miguel (Mesa Verde National Park), Matt Thorpe (Colorado Parks and Wildlife), Rod Oliver (landowner), James Lambert (Montezuma County Commission), Brad White (landowner).

Members absent: Gregg Dubit (user group), Travis Ward (user group), Gwen Lachelt (La Plata County Commission), Dan Huntington (landowner).

BLM staff & SW RAC members present: Connie Clementson (Tres Rios Field Office Manager), Justin Abernathy (Tres Rios Assistant Field Manager), Ryan Joyner (BLM physical scientist), Barb Sharrow (Acting Southwest District Manager), Shannon Borders (Southwest District public affairs specialist), Tyler Fouss (BLM ranger), Deborah Gangloff (SW RAC member).

SW RAC Chairman John Reams explained this is a RAC sub-group meeting and the members are not here to make decisions, but rather to gather information regarding the need for a Master Leasing Plan (MLP). The sub-group is responsible for carrying the ideas to the 15-member Southwest RAC, which can make recommendations to the BLM and Department of the Interior. He encouraged everyone to read the MLP Area of Interest handout provided by the BLM staff. He said the next four meetings will include input from the public. Today, public comments begin at 11 a.m.

Oil and gas sub-group chair Ernie Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained he's looking forward to hearing ideas so the BLM can move forward. He hopes the sub-group can pinpoint a commonsense approach using public input. He also acknowledged both the need for oil and gas development and that there are places drilling shouldn't take place.

Eric Sanford clarified that the sub-group was nominated by the SW RAC to use public input to provide recommendations to the SW RAC. The full RAC may provide a resolution to the BLM based on the sub-group's recommendations. The BLM can choose how they will utilize this advice; the SW RAC is an advisory council and does not have authority over BLM decisions. He encouraged the group to look at

the Tres Rios Resource Management Plan (RMP) and how it influences the process. He wants to look at the other tools available, such as Controlled Surface Use and No Surface Occupancy stipulations, etc. He also wants the group to look at the cost benefit analysis.

Dale Davidson asked for numbers on the oil and gas activity. He said he knows there's leasing in the Hesperus area, but would like further insight. Kristi Zeller (La Plata County energy council) said there's one federal well in this area.

James Dietrich explained the group is also responsible for public education, and this is a great opportunity to provide the public with information. He represents dispersed recreation on the RAC and knows this is important to the public. He said numbers matter, so oil and gas potential in the area is key to the analysis. Kristi Zeller said Montezuma County contains about 53 wells, mostly federal and tribal; and La Plata County contains about 3,338 wells, mostly tribal.

Connie Clementson provided a brief history of how the MLP process evolved:

The issue first came to the BLM's attention when it issued the Supplement to Draft San Juan Resource Management Plan in 2011, which updated the oil and gas portion of the plan. This was just after the BLM had implemented a leasing reform policy in 2010, providing direction on Master Leasing Plans and when to do them.

The BLM received public comments recommending completing an MLP for the planning area (specific to the area that encompassed the Gothic Shale supplemental analysis). As a result, the BLM included a master leasing analysis in the Final EIS in 2013. The analysis looked at MLP criteria for the three geologic basins that were being considered for leasing within the RMP.

Concurrent with this process, Tres Rios Field Office updated its leasing process (also per the 2010 leasing reform direction) in 2012. The parcels proposed for leasing in 2012 included approximately 11,000 acres in the Hesperus area, which the BLM analyzed in its RMP MLP analysis. This triggered renewed interest from the public in a MLP. The BLM deferred the lease parcels in 2012 and 2013, anticipating the issuance of the new RMP. However, a decision was not issued until the February 2015 approval of the RMP. Public interest continued and expanded to the Mesa Verde area (in Montezuma County) after the decision was issued.

Based on continued interest in the area, the State Director is looking at what additional issues the BLM may need to consider that were not addressed in the RMP or that cannot be addressed through the lease sale process.

Justin Abernathy said the BLM is collecting information to get a better sense of public needs and interests as well as key issues. Then, the BLM will look at the tools available within the RMP, policies, regulations and laws to determine whether a MLP is needed.

Ryan Joyner gave an overview of the maps of the area of interest boundary. To download maps, go to http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Resources/racs/swrac.html.

Ernie Williams asked if the BLM could depict the areas open to recommendations and indicated that the BLM does not have jurisdiction on private land/private minerals. Ryan Joyner said the Surface Ownership by Agency map shows this, and it does not include Forest Service lands. Eric Sanford mentioned this is not an allocation process, and stipulations and conditions of approvals could be used to inform the MLP process.

Jimbo Buickerood suggested asking the public to identify their interests and concerns on maps. He's heard concerns about water, recreation and critical winter habitat. Christi Zeller asked the BLM not to use acronyms in documents and on maps and suggested providing the group with the MLP criteria and pages 112-113 to help explain what No Surface Occupancy means. Additionally, James Dietrich would like a recreation map that shows public interaction and recreation resources.

Public Comments

Marianne Mate

Marianne Mate lives in Dolores and thanks the BLM for being open to this process. She's concerned by how close the area of interest is to Dolores and about potential contamination to the Dolores River. She said the existing leases could go on for another 30 years and is also concerned about the amount of water required for drilling. She also said democracy is a messy process and we're not going to agree, but we need to get facts on the air problems in the area.

Ashley Korenblat (written comment – see attachment)

MB McAfee (written comment – see attachment)

Ellen Foster (written comment – see attachment)

Fiona King (written comment – see attachment)

Vanessa Mazal

Vanessa Mazal encourages the sub-group to review the public comments and distill those for details that can give the sub-group guidance. She mentioned other agencies in the area have been through similar processes, and those agencies should be involved too. She also encouraged the BLM to swiftly consider the MLP.

Stan Mattingly

Stan Mattingly lives in the Cedar Mesa subdivision. He wants to know if his property, adjacent to BLM, is available for lease. He also wants to know if the sub-group will consider impacts to private property, and he said this needs to be addressed in the MLP. He would also like timing limitation information.

Matthew Sheldon (written comment – see attachment)

Jane Anderson (written comment – see attachment)

Pat Kantor

Pat Kantor is a resident of the county and very concerned about the future of the county and the

people. In making decisions, she said the sub-group needs to consider the current mining technology and county economics. She said 27,000 people depend on the quality of water in the Dolores River, and we have to be cautious in the case of any mining activities.

Willson Bloch (written comment – ee attachment)

Anne Greenburg

Anne Greenburg said she has been involved in the leasing of 12,000 acres. She brought her daughter to show how decisions affect her generation and future generations' health. She said that when considering the MLP, the group needs to account for increased semi traffic, effects to hydrology and issues causing cancer in children.

Diane Wren (written comment – see attachment)

Micha Rosenoer

Micha Rosenoer said public lands are for everyone, and we have a special opportunity to protect these areas. She encouraged the sub-group to leave time for questions and answers during the agenda and suggests increasing the time allowed for public comments. She urged the BLM to reach out to the media to get the word out about the meetings and suggested hosting meetings in the evenings.

Eric Sanford noted that several members of working group representing La Plata County were not present. He asked that the BLM contact La Plata County to recommend people for the unfilled positions.

Suggestions for upcoming meetings:

- Clearly define expectations of the sub-group
- Define scope of the working group
- Review the guidance in the RMP
- Question and answer forum
- Create a survey that links the public's concerns to specific areas
- Utilize county GIS data
- Provide public comment section on the BLM website
- Provide resource list on website
- Provide FAQ on website
- Draw from the Moab MLP process to gain insight

A Doodle Poll will be distributed to the sub-group to determine schedules for the 2016 meetings in Mancos, Hesperus, Durango and Cortez.

Meeting adjourned.

Asley Korenblat



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

Ms. Connie Clementson
Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management
Tres Rios Field Office
29211 Highway 184
Dolores, Colorado 81323

Dear Ms. Clementson,

We are writing today to thank you for considering a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) in the Tres Rios area. We appreciate the time and professional energy that both the BLM, and many volunteers involved, have invested in this process.

In Moab, Utah, the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and our local chapter, the Moab Mountain Bicycling Association, have been involved in the Moab MLP that is nearing completion. This MLP has allowed us to work directly with local stakeholders in the area, including the major lease holder, to determine where recreation is appropriate and where oil and gas development is needed. This acre by acre conversation was extremely productive, and we believe the MLP process can bring tangible benefits to communities that depend on multiple use landscapes.

IMBA members and staff work with many gateway communities around the country to create and maintain trails of all types and for this reason we are looking forward to working with the Southwest Colorado Cycling Association to participate in a Tres Rios MLP. The Phil's World Cycling Trails are an important recreation asset in the region, and we believe we can maintain the quality of the outdoor recreational experience at Phil's World and develop oil and gas in the area through the coordinated locally-driven approach that the MLP process provides.

The Tres Rios region is a growing area whose economy depends on many components that include both oil and gas and recreation. The recreation economy brings both visitors and quality of life recruits who are looking to settle in communities like Cortez, Mancos, and Dolores. These types of businesses can provide additional jobs in the region, making it possible for the youth of the area to access a variety of employment opportunities over the long term.

The MLP process allows the area to have the best of both the recreation economy and resource extraction by facilitating a detailed planning process that truly does optimize the public land in the region.

We urge you to begin the MLP process as soon as possible and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to meet the diverse needs of the local communities.

Best Regards,

Bruce C. Alt
Vice President, Government Relations
International Mountain Bicycling Association

Board of Directors
Southwest Colorado Cycling Association

Date: November 19, 2015

From: M. B. McAfee

Re: Public Comment – Master Leasing Plan for the Tres Rios Field Office of the BLM

Thank you for taking comments from local community members today. I will be brief. I understand that the first step towards the development of an MLP for parts of western La Plata County and a central portion of Montezuma County is to determine if the new Resource Management Plan offers necessary and sufficient guidelines for development of federal minerals in the area of the Gothic Shale Play. One of your first tasks will be to figure out the MLP boundary. I urge you to examine the available maps showing where the Gothic Shale Play is predicted, compared to the BLM's suggested map for this MLP. There is a larger area of concern than BLM has currently mapped.

I want to draw your attention to the words: Resource Management Plan. These words denote a general plan that serves as a guide for management of all the resources in the broad geographic area overseen by the Tres Rios Field Office of the BLM. An RMP is the high level response about how to meet BLM's formal mission: "To manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under the mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield." The RMP speaks to all uses and all resources. It contains broad and detailed language. It is noteworthy to point out that language in the RMP is largely permissive such as "may," rather than mandatory language such as "shall."

Let's look at the words, Master Leasing Plan. The word "master" suggests "optimum," "best," or "proficient." The word "leasing," in this context, is specifically about agreements and contracts regarding federal minerals, expressly oil and gas, which underlie our public lands. Their extraction is governed by BLM and the state of Colorado and is heavily influenced by the various industries that derive profit from their development. An MLP can yield a plan that speaks specifically and proficiently and details specifics of gas and oil development: where roads, well pads, pipelines shall be constructed to protect sensitive landscapes that hold important wildlife, cultural resources, and watersheds.

I'm going to share a small metaphor here. When my husband, Chuck, and I built our home, we started with high-level concepts – front door to the east, master bedroom to the south, curved walls on south and west. These became the detailed drawings for the builder to follow in the construction process. I think these plans were rather akin to an RMP. However, we needed something more like an MLP for the exact planning of the tenon and mortise joints of the curved walls.

In addition, the RMP process was extremely prescriptive regarding public input. There were only a few times during the 11 years it took for the plan to become final when public comment was invited. And, in the Record of Decision, many public comments had not been adequately addressed, including suggesting that an MLP be part of the RMP. The MLP process can include robust, helpful, and fruitful participation of local folks, in addition to those of you who sit on the Working Group. This is about our landscape – the places we see every day; it's about a landscape beyond compare. The MLP discussion is about reliability of what the landscape will be like for those who live here and others who may want to move here. It's about creating a plan that the oil and gas industry will be completely aware of before the mineral exploration and extraction begins. It can be a win-win for all of us.

Thank you.

M. B. McAfee

PO Box 7, 22277 Road 20, Lewis CO 81327

mbmcafee@fone.net 970-562-4477

TRES RIOS FIELD OFFICE, MASTER LEASING PLAN, November 19, 2015

Public Comments by Ellen Foster, 25314 County Road T, Dolores, CO 81323 (970-261-3524)

I'd like to thank the BLM for reconsidering the need for a Master Leasing Plan. I hope your final conclusion will be that it is absolutely necessary.

BOUNDARY OF THE MLP

One of the charges of the Working Group is to recommend where the Boundary of the MLP should be.

My first inclination is to say that all of Montezuma County should be included in the MLP. I understand that the BLM's jurisdiction is only land where the minerals are federally owned. Between the Forest Service, Mesa Verde National Park, Canyons of the Ancients, Weber and Menefee Wilderness Study Areas, and private land with a split estate, that appears to be roughly 2/3 of the county.

As we've seen on the Canyons of the Ancients, when the rules became more strict, exploration and production moved to private land with split estate minerals along the edge of the Monument. And Pleasant View has become an industrial zone. I expect the same thing will happen all along the edge of the National Forest. The 1/3 of the county occupied by farms and ranches and residential areas will be vulnerable to the same industrial fate as Pleasant View.

The BLM map of the Gothic Shale Play identifies a wide area from Dove Creek to Dolores, to Cortez and Mancos. There was a time when shale oil and gas weren't profitable to produce. When directional drilling was perfected, things erupted in a frenzy of exploration and production that no one was ready for. Who knows when shale will be profitable again or what future technology might bring? Individual private land owners are looking for ways to protect themselves from the next wave of development. And they need help understanding what their rights are.

The same stipulations that apply to BLM surface should also apply to private surface split estates. The private surface owner would have the option to waive whichever provisions he chooses.

I know that legally, this is not a concern of the BLM. But it's a driving force behind opposition to oil and gas that's reaching a dangerous tipping point all across the country -- and here in Montezuma County, where our County Commission seems to be in favor of oil and gas on every single parcel of land, public and private. Quality of life for the people who live here must be given equal status with all of the other multiple uses recognized by the BLM. You can't look at BLM land in isolation. Especially in Montezuma County, where it's scattered among so much private land. Each parcel is impacted by its neighbor.

There's a major pipeline corridor that runs through private land, along the east side of Highway 491. It passes between Narraguinnep and McPhee Reservoirs, then it crosses Highway 184 at Road 25, and follows Highway 184 to Mancos. This corridor contains pipelines operated by Kinder Morgan CO2, Northwest, Rocky Mountain, Williams, and Mid-America. Do these pipelines have the capacity to move the increased production of Reasonable, Foreseeable Development? Or will an additional right-of-way across private land be required for an additional pipeline?

There's a significant amount of split estate land just west of McPhee with a high potential for drilling. BLM Parcel 7379 is being offered for lease in February 2016. It's less than a half mile from the Dam – that's less than 2600 feet.

The Bureau of Reclamation designed McPhee Reservoir and the Dam. They should be required to certify a safe distance – a buffer zone – where drilling, seismic activities and waste water disposal wells are prohibited.

As important as McPhee is to the economy of this county -- for agricultural water and drinking water, for camping, boating and recreation -- it should be protected in every way possible. Our obligations under the Colorado River Compact should also be considered. And the buffer zone along the Dolores River should be increased.

There should be absolutely no exceptions, modifications, or waivers allowed. Narraguinnep and all other reservoirs in the county should be given the same protections.

Water quality baselines must be established NOW. The interaction between drainages and watersheds should be examined and monitored to determine long-term cumulative impacts.

Stipulations in Exhibit H refer to "minimizing potential deterioration of water quality." The BLM should be acting to "prevent" the deterioration of water quality. Toxic chemicals should be identified and prohibited.

And this Working Group should include a member chosen to represent Water.

AIR

Air quality baselines must be established NOW.

Benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes are volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found as a result of oil and gas exploration and production. They have harmful effects on the central nervous system. These chemicals cannot be allowed to escape into the air we all breathe. Controlling methane and CO2 emissions is important because of their effects as greenhouse gases.

Monitors for all of these substances should be placed in multiple locations on the BLM, the San Juan National Forest, surrounding McPhee and Narraguinnep Reservoirs, and around Montezuma County to get an accurate picture of concentrations during different wind patterns.

The BLM must determine the cumulative health effects of people's exposure to the cocktail of chemicals in the air that are emitted by Kinder Morgan's CO2 unit, the Helium plant and Argon production in Dove Creek, the San Juan Power Plant, and the Four Corners Methane Hot Spot detected from space by NASA. A Health Impact Assessment is required.

The Federal Government receives a 12.5% mineral royalty from oil and gas leases. This money should be used in the area it was collected from to hire necessary staff and to buy monitoring equipment.

The BLM must also analyze the economic cost to the public and Montezuma County of dealing with adverse health effects, polluted air and water, and decreased property values.

Thank you.

November 19, 2015

My name is Fiona King and I'm a land owner and concerned citizen of Montezuma County. I would like to thank the BLM for initiating this Master Leasing Plan process and request that the scope and reach of the appointed working group be expanded to include multiple opportunities for public/community input into the MLP process.

One of my major concerns is that although the MLP seeks to address more thoroughly the environmental protections that the Resource Management Plan failed to address adequately; unless more funding becomes available to the BLM to actually inspect, enforce and monitor the extraction industry, it's usefulness will be castrated. How can the BLM permit oil and gas drilling on our public lands when it doesn't have the human resources to monitor it? Also the fact that all the regulations currently governing the Oil and Gas industry were written by the industry itself so as not to hamper or impede their activities is a systemic flaw in the democratic process that local communities must address. The MLP is a step toward a more inclusive community voice that I believe is paramount.

Fiona King
Cortez, Colorado



Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

comments of concern about the proposed MLP

1 message

matthew sheldon <mbsheldon@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 18, 2015 at 4:11 PM

To: sborders@blm.gov

Hi,

My name is Matthew and I am a citizen of the State of Colorado first and Montezuma County second. My deep concern has to do with all forms of mineral extraction, more specifically, what comes out of the ground during the process. What is done with "dirty water" is a county-wide issue, a state-wide issue and for that matter a national issue. I'm most concerned with the waste water that comes to the surface, is then, in many instances, pumped into tanker trucks, trucked to a dumping site-this could be a played out oil or gas drill site (as I understand) and then pumped back into the ground. I repeat, the contaminated water containing toxic matter is pumped back into the ground.

I do know that some more conscientious gas and oil companies are attempting to reuse/filter the polluted water, however, they appear to be in the minority of those in the extraction industry. As one Colorado BLM senior official put it, "Out of site, out of mind."

This way of thinking is just plain unacceptable to me. Perhaps underground polluting is part of the way the extraction industry does their work, but it is just plain wrong for obvious reasons. And if you have to wonder for very long what those obvious reason are then I would have to conclude that you are out of touch with you environment and perhaps reality.

*Sincerely,
matthew b. sheldon
Montezuma County resident*

Next month, the world's nations will meet in Paris for "the climate talks". However, even this initiative, resisted by many who hope to attain immediate pleasure from realized profits, at the expense of virtual eternal global hardship for all planetary citizens, will seemingly prove of little ultimate value. With an estimated 9.7 billion population projected for the year 2050, along with an expanding middle class within the developing world, what we can reasonably expect is an increase in global energy demand by 50%. The New York times columnist, Steven Koonin, has observed that "Even a 'heroic' 20 percent reduction in emissions, instead of the 3 percent now proposed, would delay the projected doubling of carbon dioxide concentration by just 10 years".

So, what to do? One strategy is to begin at the root of the problem; that is to say, to initiate a "radical" intervention. To do so, one must inquire as to the source of the problem. In seeking the findings of accurate and adequate research, we encounter the following report:

In August a report by EcoShift consulting, commissioned by the Center for Biological Diversity and Friends of the Earth, found that the remaining federal oil, gas, coal, oil shale and tar sands that have not yet been leased to industry contain up to 450 billion tons of potential greenhouse gas pollution.

In inquiring as to what has indeed, to date, been thrown open for national fossil fuel exploitation, as explicated by the above research group, the level of expansiveness of the problem starkly stands as follows:

As of earlier this year, 67 million acres (of) federal fossil fuel were already leased to industry, an area more than 55 times larger than Grand Canyon National Park containing up to 43 billion tons of potential greenhouse gas pollution.

And yet, the sobering conclusion of this research lays out a catastrophic scenario, foreboding devastation for all humans, rich and poor, alike:

The U.S. government has already leased decades' worth of federal fossil fuels — more than ever can safely be burned," said Spivak. (Public lands director at the Center for Biological Diversity) "Each new lease walks us closer to climate catastrophe.

The problem is that there exists a steady stream of fossil fuel emissions into the air, a peril determining that which we and our children breathe, and which will contribute to further greenhouse climate changing

conditions. Indeed, the question arises in the mind of sanity and integrity: "How can this steam be intercepted in the service of all forms of life on the planet?" The suggestion is offered within the Center for Biological Diversity's assessment of the Landmark Climate Bill - announced earlier this month within the United States Senate - as follows:

By ending new federal fossil fuel leases, the "Keep It in the Ground Act of 2015" would remove up to **450 billion tons** from the global pool of potential greenhouse gas pollution — an amount vastly greater than any reasonable U.S. share of the global carbon budget to avoid 2 degrees Celsius degrees of warming.

This group therefore stands before you, to advise as to policy regarding the master leasing plan, exclaiming in the name of the earth and all that reside upon it, imploring in the name of all life: "Fossil fuels: Keep it in the ground!" As Spivak has astutely exclaimed: "This legislation would end that dangerous policy while protecting our natural heritage of public lands, oceans and biodiversity."

It is our spiritual, moral, social, and political responsibility to terminate the lethal behavior of fossil fuel extraction, portending species wide suicide at its root, NOW!

James A. Mischke, M S W,

Professor Emeritus, Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work, Dine' College

Former Senior Academic Social Scientist, Navajo Nation

Information sources:

- **The New York Times**
- **Center for Biological Diversity**
- **Keep it in the Ground Act of 2015**

November 16, 2015

Bureau of Land Management
Southwest Colorado RAC, Oil and Gas Sub-Committee
C/o Shannon Borders, Public Affairs Specialist
2465 S. Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401

Submitted electronically: sborders@blm.gov

Dear Members of the BLM Southwest Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Oil & Gas Subcommittee,

I'm writing to voice my support for moving ahead with a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) in the Tres Rios Field Office that includes lands in eastern Montezuma and western La Plata counties. Having recently returned to permanently reside in Montezuma County after retiring from the National Park Service with 34 years of service, 8 of those at Mesa Verde National Park, I feel personally invested in the outcomes of the MLP process. While at Mesa Verde I managed the rehabilitation of park resources damaged due to the Chapin 5 Fire of 1996 and served as the park's Public Information Officer. I was also chosen to represent the NPS as a member of Leadership Montezuma, which gave insight and understanding of the economic, social and cultural aspects of Montezuma County.

Drawing on sound science and meaningful stakeholder input, MLPs create detailed frameworks for protecting sensitive resources that could otherwise be at risk from the unintentional impacts of industrial energy development, while guiding carefully planned future development. Some of the defining assets of our region that could benefit from an MLP include:

- * Views, air quality, and quality of experience within Mesa Verde -- a UNESCO World Heritage Site and national park that attracts 500,000 visitors per year,
- * The physical integrity of fragile, ancient artifacts and structures at Mesa Verde, as well as three historically-associated national monuments and thousands of Native American cultural sites;
- * A deeply-rooted farming and ranching industry and heritage;
- * Extensive natural resources that attract a growing outdoor recreation industry.

As both a community member and a former land manager, I believe that an MLP could help ensure that those characteristics are permanently protected, while providing guidance and assurance for future energy sector development.

As you are likely aware, the first MLP to address national park values was recently finalized in northwest Colorado, around Dinosaur National Monument. Another plan near Moab is underway. Both processes have provided opportunities for local communities to weigh in on where and how development should occur, vis à vis the recreational opportunities and landscape features that make these places unique and attractive. In doing so, they lay the groundwork for more diverse economic futures.

I encourage the RAC to accelerate its decision on pursuing an MLP, and to see a plan centered on Mesa Verde come to fruition. I look forward to remaining involved in this process.

Sincerely,

Jane Anderson
11822 Road 28.3
Dolores, CO 81321
720 810-7612

CC: Connie Clementson, Tres Rios Field Office Manager, cclementson@blm.gov

First, I must say that I am appalled that this county is willing to take “30 pieces of silver” for any of this land; yet, I see around me many of those who will be doing just that. The tax coffers bulge for a few short years, the politicians claim economic success, and the area gets fatter. Suddenly, the bottom falls out of the market, and then there’s the lean years. The nomadic well drillers and their entourage flee the area, and the mess remains behind. Are these the jobs that we want for our community or would it make more sense to have an economy based on people who want to settle here and raise families? Allowing one industry to dictate to the residents what will be their course of mineral extraction and just what is acceptable in pollution and sanity sacrifices is not what I would call a democracy.

Are we willing to give our water to the fracking companies when the development of the average well uses more than 500 Million gallons of fresh water? And what happens seismically when the contaminated fluid is then injected back deep into the ground? What is the seismic limit of safety on the McPhee dam? If it fails, who will pay for the damage and repairs and the possible loss of life?

These and many other questions need to be answered before any leasing should be considered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Willson C. Bloch".

Willson C. Bloch
40880 Road H
Mancos, CO. 81328
(970) 533-0722



November 18, 2015

Ms. Connie Clementson

Field Manager

Bureau of Land Management

Tres Rios Field Office

29211 Highway 184

Dolores, Colorado 81323

Dear Ms. Clementson,

We here in Montezuma County live in a truly amazing place. From the crown jewels of our region, Mesa Verde National Park and Canyon of the Ancients National Monument, to the world-class trail system at Phil's World, our community is truly fortunate to have so many great opportunities for outdoor recreation on our local public lands.

It is precisely because of these opportunities and the wild and natural beauty of our area that Osprey chose to locate our headquarters here. We value our public lands and everything they have to offer and take seriously the responsibility to steward these lands with a balanced approach for future generations.

The economies in the West have long been defined by the boom and bust cycle of oil and gas. Entire regions have been prisoner to the rise and fall energy prices. Thankfully, times have changed as our economy has diversified. Tourism and outdoor recreation have brought income, jobs, and more stability to our community. In Colorado alone, outdoor recreation generates \$13.2 billion in consumer spending and \$4.2 billion in wages and salaries. Here in Montezuma County, Osprey provides over 75 jobs that wouldn't exist without public access to our public lands. Mesa Verde National Park, as another example, generates \$50 million in direct spending for our region. These numbers are not only a significant boon to our towns, but are relatively immune to the insane rollercoaster ride of the oil and gas boom and bust cycle.

OSPREY

Osprey Packs, Inc. 115 Progress Circle Cortez, CO 81321 T 970.564.5900 F 970.565.2120 ospreypacks.com



That is why we at Osprey support the creation of a Master Leasing Plan for America's public lands in Montezuma and La Plata counties. This approach will allow citizens and businesses like mine a voice in developing a road map to decide where and how oil and gas development will take place. Most importantly, diverse stakeholders will be able to work together to create a win-win plan for all parts of our local economy. The Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan will provide a bottom-up approach that involves meaningful community input in how our shared public lands are managed in our backyard.

We've already seen great stakeholder collaboration in places such as the South Park Basin near Colorado Springs and in Moab, where local government, water providers, sportsmen, conservation districts, and industry have all sat around the table to talk through places of agreement and disagreement. It's time we do the same here to plan for our future of long-term economic growth for our region.

Through the Tres Rios BLM office's current plan, over 90 percent of our regional BLM lands are open to oil and gas development. In fact, the current plan does not address controversial leasing proposals on lands within view of Mesa Verde National Park, or that could disrupt the experience at Phil's World. Without a Master Leasing Plan, these places could be irreparably damaged.

The MLP is a real way for all local stakeholders to have a voice for our future providing smart-from-the-start planning and a balanced approach so that our public lands can support recreation and tourism, as well as responsible energy development. The MLP process should leverage the wealth of knowledge in our community by creating opportunities for citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders to learn and act together, that way we can create a win-win plan that accounts for all parts of our local economy. Tourism and outdoor recreation are a huge driver of income, jobs, and taxes within Montezuma County. Risks to our public lands and environment are threats to our business community and to companies like Osprey that depend on local public lands to not only attract and retain top talent, but to maintain a market for the outdoor retail products we design and manufacture.

As one of the most prominent employers in Montezuma County, Osprey cares about the community we live in and we would welcome the opportunity to share and discuss our values and concerns. Now that we have a venue for collaboration, let's come together and work on balanced solutions for Southwest Colorado.

Best Regards,


Diane Wren

Owner

Osprey Packs Inc.

OSPREY

Osprey Packs, Inc. 115 Progress Circle Cortez, CO 81321 T 970.564.5900 F 970.565.2120 ospreypacks.com



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
November 19, 2015
Dolores, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Lisa Allee

Address: 14493 Rd 31 Mancos

Phone: 970 570 7936

Email: lisalleecon@hotmail.com

Comments: Big Picture!

It's very simple - we (as the human species) need to stop oil & gas extraction - really just stop. Instead we need to invest our brilliance, money, resources in developing solar and wind energy - BLM needs to take the lead in this and stop oil & gas extraction.

Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas Sub-group Minutes

Feb. 11 (Morning Session), 2016 @ Durango, CO

Southwest Colorado RAC oil and gas sub-committee members present: Ernie Williams (SW RAC member), Eric Sanford (SW RAC member), John Reams (SW RAC Chairperson), James Dietrich (SW RAC member), Christi Zeller, Bruce Baizel, Jimbo Buickerood, Dale Davidson, Pete Eschallier, Dan Huntington, Gwen Lachelt, Chris Lopez, Rod Oliver, Travis Ward, George San Miguel, Matt Thorp.

BLM staff & SW RAC members present: Connie Clementson (Tres Rios Field Office Manager), Justin Abernathy (Tres Rios Assistant Field Manager), Ryan Joyner (BLM Physical Scientist), Barb Sharrow (Acting Southwest District Manager), Shannon Borders (Southwest District public affairs specialist), Matt Azhocar (Southwest Associate District Manager), Mary Monroe Brown (Southwest Resource Advisory Council Member).

John Reams called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. He set the ground rules and explained the Oil and Gas Sub-group is working to determine the need for a [Master Leasing Plan](#) within the Tres Rios Field Office. The sub-group members introduced themselves, and the Southwest RAC members gave a brief update on the issues that were discussed at the [November 2015](#) meeting.

BLM Presentation

During the presentation, the sub-group members requested further information and examples of [Waivers, Exceptions and Modifications](#).

George San Miguel asked if access to private land can be permitted if there are [No Surface Occupancy](#) stipulations on BLM lands. Justin Abernathy explained that [No Surface Occupancy](#) stipulations are applied to oil and gas development proposals on federal lands. On private lands, a landowner can choose to prohibit surface disturbances on their land and the BLM does not have jurisdiction on private land. Most likely a situation where access to private land is needed and access can only be established by traversing through public land would require a right-of-way action.

Chris Lopez asked if the BLM could provide the number of federal surface lands that do not have [No Surface Occupancy or Controlled Surface Use stipulations](#) within the area of interest. Ryan Joyner said he could provide the number following the meeting.

Discussion

John Pecor, BLM Petroleum Engineer, was asked to explain why a recent article in the Durango Herald indicated that 3,000 wells would be drilled within the Tres Rios Field Office. Pecor said the article referenced the [Reasonable Foreseeable Development scenario](#) (RFD). In [2006 an RFD](#) was done in which the analysis indicated about 1,200 conventional oil and gas wells could be developed based on the amount of activity that was occurring at that time. In [2009](#), the Gothic Shale play was added and analyzed, and it indicated an additional 1,800 wells could be developed over the next 20 years for the entire San Juan National Forest and BLM Tres Rios Field areas. Due to current activity and the lack of

Applications for Permit to Drill, these wells are not likely to become active. Additionally, the MLP Area of Interest that the Sub-group is discussing only encompasses 20-30% of the lands within the initial Reasonable Foreseeable Development analysis.

James Dietrich indicated that under split estate a private land owner can request the same protections that were analyzed on federal surface. So he asked the group to think about what would be gained by a MLP if those protections exist.

Eric Sanford wants the sub-group to focus on MLP stipulations, and what additional restrictions need to be added via an MLP. He said from a resource perspective, the fee lands will be developed first because it is a private property right. He also reminded the sub-group that the lands allocated for oil and gas development were identified in the Resource Management Plan.

Gwen Lachelt, in her review of the [Resource Management Plan](#), said she didn't see specific information on [split estate](#) land owners. She is working with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conversation Commission to get better agreements with land owners. She said there are a number of instances where they can mitigate conflicts between operators and land owners for example putting a well on the corner of a field versus in the middle of farm ground. She is hoping these types of things will benefit everyone.

Christi Zeller said the [Gold Book](#) explains resource protections. Additionally, in [Appendix H](#), page H-7 the definitions of Waivers, Modifications and Exemptions are described. She said these actions require line officer approval and often times public involvement.

Jimbo Buickerood asked BLM to clarify how the public was involved in the process. Connie Clementson explained the agency follows the [National Environmental Policy Act](#), and it determines how the public can participate. She said a line officer will not grant something if it will harm something. Then Jimbo asked for clarification on the NEPA process. Connie said when an [Application for Permit to Drill](#) is submitted, it triggers NEPA analysis. Public involvement occurs through the NEPA process.

Chris Lopez said he has made a request on wildlife exception, and it went through the NEPA process with public comment.

Ernie Williams asked if the sub-group thought a MLP was needed. Bruce Baizel said he's in a split estate situation and has seen two potential lease sales. He said the parcels are nominated by the operator and the process is not transparent. The public never knows when development is going to come and it creates uncertainty, and there's no way to address this in the RMP. For example, he said the BLM could determine which areas are leased first and in what time frame. He understands that market conditions affect these decisions. He asked if the MLP could address these issues. He was also looking for more water and traffic stipulations within the MLP. He asked for further clarification on the 1,000 foot setback on water wells. Justin Abernathy indicated the buffer is in all directions.

Christi Zeller said further information on water is in the Resource Management Plan in [Appendix H](#) page 8, 10 and 36 as well as monitoring section in the [RMP](#) on page 11-175. She said baseline water data was

collected on 7,000-8,000 wells in La Plata County, and there's no known contamination due to oil and gas development.

Jimbo Buickerood said none of the stipulations address agriculture in terms of economics. He'd like to add a couple of stipulations within the MLP to protect farms and ranches and to consider water and ground disturbance. He said the west side of La Plata County was the greatest concern during the lease sale. Furthermore, Conservation Easements are plentiful and local non-profits have worked on protections and those aren't addressed in the RMP. For example, the RMP language protects resources, but it isn't carried forward on split estate lands. He said there are lands that the state holds an easement, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife is concerned about protecting those areas. He suggested looking at MLP processes that have been done in the past, and then decide whether allocation should be on the table. He also said La Plata County and the City of Durango have worked to withdraw minerals for recreational use including Lake Nighthorse Area, and looking west there are several areas that do not have adequate protections including the Anasazi Cultural Resource Area. This area is open for leasing although it has No Surface Occupancy. He said it's a special area that should be removed from acres to be leased. Mesa Verde Escarpment is also another area where the Park staff and others have expressed great concern about this area being protected. He continued by saying some of that territory is culturally very rich would be another prime candidate to be removed from leasing.

Matt Thorpe said Colorado Parks and Wildlife provided formal written comments. He said the benefits they see are places where the [Resource Management Plan](#) could be more robust. He indicated the MLP could put limitations on roads and the associated infrastructure, phased development, mandatory mitigation and site specific stipulations within conservation easements that would ensure mineral extraction could continue, but would provide further protections for conservation easements in perpetuity.

Eric Sanford suggested the sub-group read [IM 2010-117](#) (Oil and Gas Leasing Reform) to become familiar with the criteria for a MLP. To his knowledge, this is the first MLP done on based on the discretionary criteria, and he indicated this area does not meet the first four criteria for a MLP.

Christi Zeller said [Appendix R](#) reiterates the requirements for an MLP and shows the MLP is not warranted. Jimbo Buickerood said the boundary can be drawn to meets the four criteria. He also said La Plata County's RMP protests were specifically directed toward the MLP analysis.

Dale Davidson doesn't think we're at the point where we can make a recommendation with many people who want to make comments. He's very interested in how we carry this forward with the public comments. He asked if only the RAC members will create the resolution. Eric Sanford explained the Southwest RAC created the sub-group and the RAC provides advice to the BLM. The sub-group will present their findings to the Southwest RAC, and then the Southwest RAC can decide what advice to provide to the BLM.

Public Comments

Sarah Tescher (see attached comments)

Lisa Allee (see attached comments)

Justin Head (see attached comments)

Dennis Stiles (Western Ranchers Alliance) (see attached comments)

Charles Creekmore (see attached comments)

Sue Spielman (see attached comments)

Mary Monroe Brown is a Southwest RAC member and the Director of Trails 2000. She said there is an opportunity that balances agriculture, recreation and development in a way that is beneficial to the landscape.

John Holst said he is available to address questions pertaining to comments submitted by the Colorado Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lionel DiGiacoma (see attached comments)

Nick Gould (see attached comments)

Ken Francis said the RMP for the public is much too general, but BLM has the authority to move forward with exceptions, modification and waivers. He said it's difficult for the public to be involved and that is why we need a MLP. The public also needs to know special areas are protected without being involved in a complicated process.

Richard Robinson would like to thank the sub-group for representing them. He said this is a complicated issue, and he's here to support the MLP and encouraged the sub-group to ensure view sheds and cultural sites are protected because Montezuma County is a leading area for these resources.

Dan Randolph is a landowner who said he supports a MLP and encouraged the sub-group to look beyond stipulations and consider phased timing of drilling. He also said NEPA doesn't always uses an Environmental Assessment and documents such as Categorical Exclusion without public input could be used on split estate decisions.

Joe Teomey (see attached comments)

Deanna Verosa said she's here to show her support for the MLP and suggested considering addressing air and water quality issues related to oil and gas development.

Cody Reinheimer (see attached comments)

Garrett Alexandar (see attached comments)

Mark Franklin (see attached comments)

Micca Rosener suggests expanding the comment period for more than 30 minutes. She said it takes a lot of courage for people to speak publically. She also wanted all leasing to be deferred.

Erica Brown (see attached comments)

Chad Gilbert is a split landowner and wants more comment time, and doesn't believe that this is what the commenters should be cut short.

Paula Sprenger (see attached comments)

Meeting adjourned.

**Comments submitted during
public comment period on
2-11-16 in Durango, CO**

On a local level there are numerous economic and environmental reasons to stop oil, gas and other extractions on BLM land in Montezuma and La Plata counties—preserving the beauty of the land we love, not adding to the air pollution that already exists in our area, not interfering with recreational and agricultural use of BLM and surrounding land, etc.

But when we jump to a big-picture perspective, there we find the biggest, most crucial, motivator of all—climate change. We—all of us, every living being on this planet, our only planet—are on track for a 4 degree increase in global temperature, double what all models say we need to prevent. Therefore, all of us as global citizens need to consider this necessary prevention in virtually every decision we make.

Thus, BLM as a governmental agency representing many, many global citizens and having great influence over the land use of BLM lands and surrounding areas needs to do its part in keeping carbon in the ground. Please change BLM's focus, policy, and work to the truly sustainable management of the lands BLM stewards—no further extractions and instead support communities and individuals to build solar arrays, wind farms, public transportation, keep water sources clean, preserve open space and beauty, etc., etc.

Think and act in the big-picture reality—you can do it!

Lisa Allee, RN, CNM
14493 Rd 31
Mancos, CO 81328
lisaalleecnm@hotmail.com
970-570-7936

yes need an MLP & need to greatly enlarge the
area covered by an MLP

DENNIS E. STILES/DURANGO RESIDENT

IN FAVOR OF M.L.P.
PROVIDING:

- 1ST WITH THE ADDED CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC ON DIRT ROADS & R.O.W.'S, AND WITH ALL DIRT EXCAVATIONS, WE FEEL THAT A DUST MITIGATION PLAN NEEDS TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND STRICTLY ENFORCED.
- 2ND STORM DRAINAGE ALSO NEEDS TO BE A PRIORITY TO REDUCE EROSION ISSUES.
- 3RD ALL PIPELINES FROM THE WELLS INTO THE GATHERING SYSTEM NEED TO BE BURIED.
- 4TH ALL WELDS SHOULD BE 100% X-RAYED FOR SAFETY.
- 5TH CONSTRUCTION OF THESE LINES MUST FOLLOW INDUSTRY STANDARDS WITH-IN THE API-1104 CODE
- 6TH ALL INSPECTORS SHOULD BE QUALIFIED C.W.I. ON THE PROJECT.
- 7TH WE EXPECT QUALITY CONTRACTORS WITH PROVEN TRACK RECORDS BE USED THAT FOLLOW THE NECESSARY GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE & ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY SYSTEM. WE DON'T WANT CORNERS CUT SUCH AS PAYING LOW WAGES IN OUR COUNTY THAT PRODUCE UNSKILLED LABOR RESULTING IN POOR CRAFTSMANSHIP WHICH IN TURN AFFECTS THE QUALITY OF THE END PRODUCT.
(OVER)

8th

WE ALSO FEEL THAT "QUALIFIED"
LOCAL PEOPLE IN OUR STATE WHO PAY
THE HIGH TAXES HERE SHOULD HAVE
PREFERENCE WITH REGARDS TO
EMPLOYMENT.

To the Southwest Resource Advisory Council and the BLM,

My name is Lionel Di Giacomo, I am a La Plata County resident.

Thanks for hearing our comments today, I admire the BLM's commitment to local input in this MLP process, a process which I unreservedly support. Also thanks the the SW RAC for their role and time spent getting these meetings together.

I don't live directly in the MLP area, but I visit often – hiking and camping, farm-sitting near Hesperus, or visiting Mancos and Mesa Verde with friends and family. Our corner of Colorado has many treasures, and this region holds many of them.

It is common sense to be responsible about oil and gas development so that it doesn't tarnish what's great about where we live, but the current Tres Rios Resource Management Plan is for a huge area and just can't be specific enough to guide oil and gas in a way compatible with our diverse communities.

I've looked at the RMP. The plan has one sentence on what is not available for oil and gas leasing: "Wilderness Study Areas; wild segments of suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Anasazi National Registered District, and the Snaggletooth unit to be managed as lands with wilderness characteristics." That isn't a very long sentence.

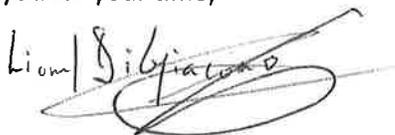
- I'm concerned about light and noise pollution at Mesa Verde and Canyons of the Ancients. Where do we address these, specifically?
- What about lands that, when leased, turn quiet communities into industrial zones, complete with the perpetual parade of trucks?
- Where are the wildlife corridors on non-WSA lands, where if roads were built it would bottleneck or remove important access?
- What about streams, riparian corridors and wetlands in sensitive but non-WSA-eligible lands?
- How about the concerns of recreation, like the hikers looking forward to the new Paths to Mesa Verde Trail?
- Where are specific exclusions or binding stipulations to protect farms dependent upon water quality and quantity?

The MLP gives us a chance to be heard right now, before conflicts happen. Having this conversation now also helps developers of oil and gas focus their resources, not waste time and energy because they are stepping on rows of toes every time a project is proposed.

This MLP is not just a good idea, but a necessary one. I support it totally, and think we should hurry up and get to the important part – actually drafting our plan for responsible oil and gas development with the whole community at the table.

Thank you for your time,

Lionel Di Giacomo



Lived here 20 yrs
Pro mountain biker
PLC mtb coach



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Nick Gould

Address: 1 E 6 Ave Durango, CO 81301

Phone: (970) 759-2778

Email: nick.djinfo@gmail.com

Comments: * supportive of MLP!

trucks are ←
loud + obvious,
erode trails/roads,
produce dust/fumes
dangerous to bikers

1) Recreation - maintain biking trails - eroded, wildlife affected, public trail use minimized, oil + gas trucks driving through phils world to gas pads (takes away from solitude of mtb'ing)

2) Tourism - brings \$ to town (\$50 million) and jobs (750) - Durango + southern CO tourism need to continue to grow the sport of mountain biking and phils world is a great place to ride that connects Durango to Cortez/Mancos/Dolores area.

* great place to ride in winter/spring when trails are snowy/muddy in Durango
* helps distribute traffic (bike) on surrounding trails which helps to lower trail usage in Durango.

* new trails help bring people to Southwest CO → students → ↑ FLC attendance

* IZHMV - brings mtbers from all over 4 corners to ride phils

~~oil + gas is natural resource - our trails and environment~~

* our trails + environment ^{value} should be treated = or greater value to oil + gas



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Richard Robinson

Address: 615 Hogan Circle - Durango, CO 81301

Phone: _____

Email: Robinson7150@gmail.com

Comments:

Support the MLP approach

- am concerned about protection of visual
- concerned about surface impact
- concerned about the activity levels over the
- concerned archeology resources



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Cody Reinheimer
Address: 485 Florida Rd. #C2 Durango
Phone: (970) 247-2377
Email: codestar.durango@gmail.com
Manager of DURANGO FARMERS MARKET
Comments:

The area affected by this decision contains a diverse range of economic interests. Oil & Gas is no more important than any other economic interest. For that reason it is imperative for the BLM to adopt the Market Leasing Plan in order to protect the existing tax-base of this region.

Date: 2/11/16 La Plata Fairgrounds/ BLM Oil & Gas Sub-group meeting

Who I am-

Sarah Tescher/ 177 Riverview Drive, Durango, Co 81301

I have lived in Durango for 16 years raising my two boys and working as a teacher and coach.

Founder of Durango Devo *— serves over 850 families*

Race and Event Organizer *— small business owner*

My Main Request: Resource Management Plan should specifically protect the area surrounding Phil's World and I ask for No gas wells in Phil's World Trail System (which will soon extend to Mesa Verde with the new funding and designation) *not by the govern* only today but in 20 years from now. If that is a Master Leasing Plan, then so be it.

Why? I do not believe that Natural Resources *oil & gas a* ~~have~~ *has* a higher value than recreation resources or wildlife resources as both these *later* create healthy human beings that in turn lesson costs on health care system, need for fossil fuels as riding is an alternative mode of transportation, creates healthy and happy kids. While the gas industry may generate \$34 million in Colorado, the value of healthy kids in Colorado is equally as important.

Why is Phil's World so special to recreation and kids?

- Phil's World is rated as one of the Top Mtn Bike trails systems in Colorado as well as the Nation where thousands of cyclist come to recreate year round
- Devo (one of the country's top Junior Cycling programs and one of the only programs in the US to offer practices to elementary kids as well as our Explorer/ Bike Pakcing group which is first of its kinds Nationally) riders in Phil's World often
- Colorado High School League which represents 800 Colorado High School Students and over 60 Colorado high schools would like to do a race on Phil's World */ big economic impact to the Area*
- One of the most successful 12 Hour races in the country take place Mother's Day weekend on Phil's World
- One of the most user friendly trail systems in the State where all level of riders can enjoy the outdoors and therefore create healthy people during a time when obesity and mental illness is becoming more and more of a financial drain on the State of Colorado.

Why should BLM institute a Master Leasing Plan in Phil's World?

It is on your website...ie: you have already stated why:

"The BLM continues to improve the way it manages oil and gas development on the public lands. BLM issued a Best Management Practice (BMP) policy on June 22, 2004. The policy instructs field offices to incorporate appropriate BMPs into Applications for Permit to Drill and associated on- and off-lease rights-of-way approvals. By reducing the area of disturbance, adjusting the location of facilities, and using numerous other techniques to minimize environmental effects, BLM is significantly reducing impacts associated with new energy development to wildlife habitat, scenic quality, water quality, recreation opportunities, and other resources.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages many outstanding resources, including important wildlife habitat, scenic western landscapes, flowing streams and rivers, recreational opportunities, and oil and natural gas production. As oil and gas development and production continues across much of the rural West, it is important the BLM take precautions to ensure development on the public lands is conducted in a manner that prevents or lessens its impact on Public Lands resources."

Is Phil's World a resource worth BLM's time to save as a public land for recreation versus Oil and Gas Development?

The answer is a resounding yes, it is a resource that BLM should protect as a recreation area.

Goodmorning everyone..... My name is Justin head .Ive lived here in la plata county my entire life and worked here , as well as used the public lands we have available to us to enjoy.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to make it possible for everyone to have a say in such an important topic concerning Four corners residents .

I myself am supportive of the master leasing plan . I believe it is important to use the resources we have available to us while protecting the the resources that make this area a great place to live. Also I believe we need oil and gas in this area to help sustain our local economy . With that being said we have to make sure we are selective when choosing who does the work and that it is done in a manner consistent with the highest regard to our public land . Myself being a union pipeline welder for the last 14 years I am well aware of the dangers of using the cheapest bid in relation to pipeline and pipeline related facility construction , which is all to common. It is no secret that once the drilling is complete , the product has to be moved and pipelines are the most common mode of transportation . When the cheapest bid is accepted you cannot convince anyone that corners are not being cut somewhere.

In conjunction with that every contractor and drilling company needs to be assessed by their safety , environmental compliance and repair rates . I also believe they need to be paying fair wages and benefits so that the people that live and work here can thrive as well. The easiest way to make sure that happens is to use a fair union contractor that has the good records and the skilled labor to make sure anything that stays in the ground is going to be the safest possible product available .



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Garrett Alexander

Address: ~~276~~ 276A E. 7th Ave

Phone: 970-456-6872

Email: Garrett@DurangoDevo.com

Comments:

Phil's World is a nationally known riding destination. It brings in financial resources to local businesses.

With ~~it~~ added roads and it becomes not only a safety issue with increased traffic but also a less attractive destination.

Southwest region is a special place littered ~~with~~ with many resources. It's important that we protect the resources currently in place i.e. Archeology, Mountain Biking, and general outdoor use.



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: Erika Brown

Address: 16 Artisan Ct, Durango

Phone: (801) 573-3806

Email: erikabrown1@gmail.com

Comments:

I support an MCP in order to plan oil and gas development in our region more strategically and to manage for other values. The current stipulations in the RMD do not appear to adequately protect recreation, water, agricultural and tourism values.

I have 2 young children and want to ensure that we plan ~~the~~ oil & gas development in a way that respects all the wonderful things about this region and community. PLANNING is a key to ensuring other values and ~~to~~ ensuring a long-term vision is realized.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Paula Sprenger

Address: 947 Mud Lane

Phone: 218 390-6880

Email: paulspre@msn.com

Comments:

The record indicates that the current regulations the gas and oil industry are under are inadequate for responsible activity. I support the MLP development process to consider the impact on land owners and the environment and to ^{and hold them to} establish a more responsible industry.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Joe Troncy

Address: 947 Mud Lane

Phone: 970 249 7640

Email: geojoet@hotmail.com

Comments: I support the MLP

Because there will not be adequate analysis of cumulative impacts without an MLP, Environmental analysis at the APD stage is too little + too late to address cumulative impacts of 3,000 new wells. Additionally the 1 minute public comment time is a slap in the face to the public.



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: Mark Franklin - Old Spanish Trail Association

Address: 2914 Junction St

Phone: 970-375-7992

Email: IO@Animas.net

Comments:

- 435 members who support the MLP process and its effect on the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.
- Your responsibility to consult with the BLM & NPS about cumulative impacts of oil & gas exploration & drilling to the OSNHT.

- We encourage & support an analysis of the effect, on the OSNHT, related to three levels of analysis

① Trail Segments, campsites, and inscriptions on the OSNHT

② The Corridor in which the trail travels, including braided Trail Segments

③ The Landscape sitting for the OSNHT corridor.

Thank you for your consideration



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Jake Niece

Address: 812 Terlun Dr Durango

Phone: 720 352 2250

Email: JacobNiece@gmail.com

Comments:

I support the MLP with hopes that it will limit new wells. I've worked for the last 5 years as a wildland firefighter in the region, and I've driven through and walked through our gas patches, and I don't want them to spread any further. Diesel generators can be heard anywhere you are, you smell the fumes, and I've been affected by H₂S gas. I've also almost been driven off the road in my fire truck by reckless oil & gas drivers. Do we really need wells every 1/4 mile over our entire landscape? Look at the Southern Ute reservation on Google Earth, look at how our region is a hotspot for methane (Nat. Gas) emissions - the #1 most harmful greenhouse gas. Enough already!



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: CHARLES CREEKNOR

Address: ~~4530 BULLHEAD CIRCLE~~, FARMINGTON NM

Phone: ~~505 326 4180~~

Email: ~~ccreeknor186@aol.com~~

Comments: I Encourage the committee to follow IM 2010-117. If the mandatory 4 criteria is not ~~followed~~ established the BLM should not ~~be~~ imposed an MLP. The rules were established for a reason. Use of discretionary approval Bypasses the purpose for the ⁱⁿ Rule.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Sue Spielman

Address: 100 Mariposa Dr Durango CO 81301

Phone: 970 259 2293

Email: sspielman@switchbacksoftware.com

Comments:

most of discussion for MLP so far seems to be focused on, activity & existing research & monitoring of conventional wells. How is this applicable to proposed fracking wells that have no history of being safe for humans or the environment. How will this take into account if it damages water resources forever? and what consequences if damage is done?



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: Josh Coffin

Address: 179 RIVERVIEW DR D60, CO

Phone: 303-653-5141

Email: Coffin.joshua@gmail.com

Comments: As a professional guide (both MTBing & Skiing) for over a decade I rely on recreational use of our public lands not only for livelihoods but for also sustained physical and mental health. Areas holding both current and proposed trails must be protected from development of any kind ^{inclusive to} ~~including~~ a perimeter around these areas ensuring that ensures a pollution free environment from noise or industrial traffic. This idea preserves the experience for the user. It is my understanding the the current Resource Mgmt Plan does not protect the area including and surrounding the Phil's World Trail system. I support a MLP that would protect both Phil's World Trail system and the surrounding lands so that this current recreational resource may be sustained.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO + Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Mary Dishman

Address: 179 Riverview Dr

Phone: 303-819-1409

Email: marydishman@gmail.com

Comments:

- I am worried that the current Resource Management Plan doesn't specifically protect the area surrounding the Phil's World trails
- I feel that by implamenting a MLP, ~~the~~ the relationship between oil + gas and recreation could be managed for ^{the} future.
- Vehicles and industrial development greatly erode the quality of the experrence for recreational use.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name:

Nanette Cresto

Address:

4359 CR 124 Hesperus CO

Phone:

970-560-1195

Email:

nancresto@gmail.com

Comments:

It is always obvious that the air quality in 4 Corners area is already very poorly effected.

Please remember that all extraction of carbon fossils will create more air + water pollation that does and has had an ill affect on our population.

I am a coach for local mtn. biking organization, DEVO, and have taken kids of all ages to experience their mt. bikes at Phil's World many times. Very important to protect Phil's World →

trail system from the catastrophic
remnants of oil + gas drilling —

We are not doing justice to our
public lands if all we do is to
pillage the lands for natural
resources.

Family Recreation
with clean air and water is
also a very worthy endeavor to
fight for with whole heartedness!

Keep oil + gas out of our
highly utilized trail system,
Phil's World.



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO • Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: Tom & Jane Robinson
Address: 200 Celadon Dr.
Phone: 259-8518
Email:

Comments:

Look at the map of La Plata County in the Herald. It is covered with wells, except for the area under discussion north of Durango. Now we are going to have the rest of the map dotted. 92% now open for more dots! When will you have enough?



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO + Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: John Taylor

Address: 438 Highland Hill Drive Durango

Phone: 405 858 3906

Email: seacrusejohn@gmail.com

Comments:

Total affected land
private surface private mineral
How much of BLM Total 40k+ mineral
can be accessed by (private private)

Define exclusion process so that folks like me
understand ~~that~~ what exclusion could
ever apply to non surface use.

Agriculture - Recreation - conservation
use needs to be equally respected
as well as all mineral or energy
use.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: MARK F. Norton

Address: 110 Hidden Treasure Durango, CO. 81301

Phone: 207-712-4496

Email: marknorton@dotmail.com

Comments: An MLP is necessary for the following reasons:

- A MULTITUDE OF OTHER RESOURCES EXIST WITHIN THE RMP AREA THAT ARE OF EQUAL VALUE TO SUBSURFACE OIL/GAS/MINERALS THAT DESERVE MORE STRINGENT PROTECTION
- AGRICULTURE/RANCHING NEED SIGNIFICANTLY MORE PROTECTION THAN PROVIDED IN THE RMP.
- CULTURE SITES SUCH AS MESA VERDE, CANYONS OF THE ANCIENTS, & OTHER AREAS ARE UNDER PROTECTED IN THE RMP.
- PHL'S WORLD & OTHER RECREATIONAL RESOURCES NEED MORE STRINGENT PROTECTION THAN PROVIDED BY THE RMP
- AREAS AROUND MESA VERDE, CANYONS OF THE ANCIENTS & ANASAZI HERITAGE LANDS SHOULD BE PROTECTED BY BEING EXCLUDED FROM LEASING VIA AN MLP.
- RATHER THAN GIVING PRIORITY TO EXTRACTION INDUSTRIES, EQUAL EMPHASIS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO OTHER SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DRIVERS SUCH AS TOURISM, RECREATION, AGRICULTURE, & RANCHING THAT TEND TO PROVIDE FOR MORE STABLE, CONSISTENT ECONOMIC GROWTH. THIS CAN BE DONE ONLY VIA AN MLP WITH MORE STRINGENT SAFEGUARDS.



Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO

Public Comment Form

Name: Deb Paulson
Address: 7852 CR 203, Durango, CO 81301
Phone: 970-403-3862
Email: deborah.paulson@gmail.com

Comments: I strongly support the creation of a Master Leasing Plan. The human pressures on our natural environment, waters, air, wildlife & agricultural land will continue to grow and only with strong long-term planning with specific criteria for development will we be able to minimize the negative impacts to our regions values. Oil & gas leasing is one of the most significant pressures we face. The resources we could, in fact lose without a Master leasing plan include the values of Mesa Verde & Canyon of the Ancients, opportunities for quiet, natural settings for recreation, air & water quality & wild life.

will likely

The general language in the RMP leaves too much discretion to a bureaucracy to grant waivers, exemptions and modifications. I have seen the pressures on administration at the federal level can exert on a region to grant multiple waivers, etc. - having lived in Wyoming during the Bush era. BLM employees got weekly phone calls from Washington asking 1 question - how many permits were approved this week. Pinedales air quality went from Class 1 to the worst in the country during the winter - not to mention impacts on wildlife & general quality of life. We must have more tools available to look carefully at each lease area in the COAs & BMPs needed to protect our assets & involve more decision makers in that planning. →

Lease stipulations will affect private land of whole communities. It does not matter that most of area is private land / split estate.

**Comments submitted to
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov**



January 13, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093
rwelch@blm.gov

Connie Clementson
Tres Rios Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, Colorado 81323
cclementson@blm.gov

RE: Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan

Dear Colorado State Director Ruth Welch and Tres Rios Field Manager Connie Clementson:

Public Land Solutions (PLS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing comprehensive recreation planning and stakeholder coordination to support effective and sustainable public land solutions. We would like to thank you for initiating a master leasing plan (MLP) process for the Tres Rios Field Office. Our organization has been an active participant in the Moab Master Leasing Plan effort, which has provided a strong forum for stakeholder engagement and ensuring that the concerns of businesses that rely on public lands for recreation and tourism have a seat at the table.

We at PLS are looking forward to the opportunity to provide input on a more detailed discussion and, ultimately, a plan that will better manage oil and gas development in southwestern Colorado where we have a strong interest and protecting and enhancing the recreation assets that support a thriving recreation economy. We appreciate the work that the BLM has already put into the Tres Rios Resource Management Plan and hope to now work with the agency to better address our concerns regarding protection of Mesa Verde National Park, mountain biking at Phil's World, climbing at the Hawkins Preserve and other opportunities for backcountry recreation, hunting, wildlife, and cultural resources. Fundamental to these experiences is protecting regional water and air quality, and the quality of life of local residents. Having the chance to contribute to the discussion around a MLP is very important to PLS. We want to see the commitment the BLM has already made to evaluating an MLP move forward and lead to a productive outcome.

As a concerned public interest organization, PLS wants to ensure the state BLM defers leasing for areas in Tres Rios that are being considered while a MLP is being prepared. Please follow the direction set out in BLM Colorado's guidance (Instruction Memorandum No. CO-2014-019, issued April 7, 2014) and apply it to the potential Tres Rios MLP. The ongoing process around the Tres Rios MLP meets the standard set out in BLM's own guidance that: "This policy applies only to those MLP areas that have been approved for analysis by the Colorado State Director." Deferring leasing while so many stakeholders are working to analyze this potential MLP will make sure the BLM's decisions can be most meaningful.

Since the decision on whether or not to pursue a Master Leasing Plan is currently planned for August, we request that the BLM publicly defer leasing until a decision is made, as provided for

in BLM's April 2014 guidance. If BLM continues to lease lands within the potential MLP area before a decision is made, the utility and effectiveness of the potential MLP will be undermined.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the Tres Rios Field Office once it begins a Master Leasing Plan effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Keith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason Keith
Managing Director
Public Land Solutions
478 Millcreek Drive
Moab, UT 84532
www.publiclandsolutions.org

CC: Lonny Bagley, CO Deputy State Director, Energy Lands & Minerals
Barb Sharrow, Field Manager BLM CO Uncompahgre Field Office

February 3, 2016

Via email and U.S. Mail

Ruth Welch, Director (rwelch@blm.gov)
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215-7210

Connie Clementson, Field Manager (cclementson@blm.gov)
Tres Rios Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, CO 81323

Re: Tres Rios Field Office Master Leasing Plan

Dear Director Welch and Field Manager Clementson:

In recent years, Conservation Colorado and a number of our partners in the conservation community have been advocating for the adoption of a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) process in the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO). Following the revision and eventual adoption of the TRFO Resource Management Plan (RMP), it became apparent that certain deficiencies in the RMP would need to be addressed in subsequent planning processes to ensure the balanced management of resources and uses could occur in a comprehensive manner.

So needless to say, we were very excited and thank BLM for moving forward with a MLP process in La Plata and Montezuma Counties. We feel that MLP's are a great tool that can help avoid and ameliorate resource and user conflicts and concerns around the Mesa Verde National Park region, as well engage the public in a substantive dialogue around future land management.

However, we are concerned that currently BLM has not instituted a moratorium on fluid mineral leasing within the proposed MLP. Previously in other field offices where MLP's were under consideration as part of RMP revisions or amendments (specifically the Dinosaur Trails MLP within the White River Field Office) lands within the proposed MLP boundary were temporarily withdrawn from lease sales in order to not foreclose upon future management opportunities and undermine public confidence within the planning process.

Additionally, we are a bit confused on what the MLP Working Group's role will be in relation to both the public and the Southwest Resource Advisory Council (SWRAC) and the SWRAC Oil and Gas Sub-group. Currently, the Working Group is charged with a mixture of data gathering and

providing recommendations. However, the protocols on how recommendations will be made by the Working Group or the RAC Oil and Gas Sub-group aren't clear. Will only consensus recommendations be forwarded up the chain as has been the norm for all sub-RAC's and working groups for the NWRAC? Or will a simple majority be sufficient? It would be helpful if these questions were addressed prior to the first working group meeting in order to provide clarity to both the public and working group members as well as empower these individuals with a clear road-map on how to achieve a successful outcome. We recommend the NWRAC Sub-group protocols that were developed for the current WRFO TMP Sub-group as a very useful reference document for RAC members, working group members and the public.

Again, we are pleased that BLM has taken a MLP under consideration in southwest Colorado and we believe that fostering a dialogue about the future of our public lands is always a worthwhile endeavor. We hope will consider the recommendations provided in this letter to help further aid the MLP evaluation process by not only producing a robust set of recommendations for the SWRAC to consider, but also to promote the most efficient and comprehensive level of public involvement possible.

We look forward to continue to work with BLM on this and all other planning processes and appreciate your consideration of the issues we have raised.

Sincerely,

Luke Schafer
Western Slope Advocacy Director
Conservation Colorado
529 Yampa Ave.,
Craig, CO 81725
luke@conservationco.org
970-756-5854



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

MLP vs RMP

1 message

betty ann kolner <bettyannkolner@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 11:56 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov, cclementson@blm.gov

In reading the RMP, I noticed that each resource listed for regulation had the disclaimer that the regs could be modified, by waivers, exceptions or modifications. This would easily nullify any stated regulations within the document, and without the public being notified.

The RMP does not address split estates, leaving surface landowners with few enforceable regulations they could utilize to control unwanted production activities on their land. As a surface owner, being pressured to sign a surface use contract, I was told 1) my signature doesn't matter; they have rights to subsurface minerals, signature or not and 2) in the case of multiple ownership, they need 1% of owners to sign--that's only one out of 100! Extraction on private property is not addressed in the RMP.

The RMP neglects to mention agriculture anywhere in the document. Local producers are a major asset to our economy. Without proper setbacks from water sources and growing areas, along w/attention to air quality and soil health, we stand to lose our ability to grow our own food.

The Master Leasing Plan is a chance to challenge the status quo. Industry can be required to monitor, clean up and reclaim their activities through enforceable stipulations. Industry can foot the bill for staff, equipment and the technology it takes to do the job without a toxic footprint. At present, there is no local independent monitoring of Volatile Organic Compounds, discovered to be escaping from the Yellow Jacket Compressor station, via private monitoring approximately one year ago.

As a tool with some "teeth", an MLP could give our community a chance to control how and where we want Industry presence. With it's guarantee of public input, this community can say what we want to look like from now and into the future.

Thanks you
Bettyann Kolner



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: Tres Rio Master Leasing Plan

1 message

Sharrow, Barbara <bsharrow@blm.gov>

Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 8:44 AM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Debra Anderson** <debraa@outlook.com>

Date: Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 7:37 AM

Subject: Tres Rio Master Leasing Plan

To: bsharrow@blm.gov

Greetings,

I encourage leasing BLM land for mineral development. The BLM is empowered by an act of Congress to exploit all manner of methods of producing revenue on the Federal land under its supervision. This includes mineral leasing of all kinds, grazing leases, and collecting fees for allowing hunting, fishing, and other recreational access. To not develop the minerals on this land would be in direct opposition to Congress. The revenues generated from leasing/development benefits everyone on both a local, personal and national level.

Thank you,

Debra

Debra Anderson

1972 S Grant St.

Denver, CO 80210

719-661-7614

debraa@outlook.com

Comments related to BLM Oil and Gas Subgroup Meeting

2/11/2016, Mancos Colorado

Good evening. My name is Jane Anderson. After retiring from the National Park in January of 2015 Service I moved to Montezuma County, purchased a home and property. I spent 8 years of my NPS career working at Mesa Verde National Park.

I appreciate the opportunity to make comments to the BLM about the necessity of developing a Master Leasing Plan for potential oil and gas development on 66, 422 acres managed by the Tres Rios Field Office.

The BLM as an agency of the Department of the Interior has a responsibility to insure that any lands leased for oil and gas development are protected from harm. In the current leasing allotment there are two areas of national and international importance that must be addressed with adequate protection to insure that those areas do not sustain irreparable damage. Those areas are Mesa Verde National Park and Canyon of the Ancients. The newly released Resource Management Plan does not adequately address lease stipulations for the lands adjacent to these two magnificent areas where conflict will occur. A MLP can address stipulations to protect air quality, water quality, protection of flora and fauna and any endangered or threatened species, viewsheds, soundscapes and night skies – especially important for Mesa Verde and its value to the public. Mesa Verde is a \$50 Million economic engine in this area and the viewsheds from the park are like no other. It will lose significant value if the landscape is marred with drilling rigs, access roads and off gassing of methane. The development of these adjacent lands results in increased truck traffic on dusty roads that lead to health issues and hazy skies. The BLM itself has data that shows increased vandalism to archeological sites as a result of access roads and development of leasing sites. A MLP can address these issues and insure conditions of approval are met and best practices implemented. In the case of Mesa Verde the BLM should be working closely with their sister agency to insure the best protection of the park and adjacent lands.

There are many other areas of concern that should be addressed by a MLP:

1. Wildlife – the impacts include disruption of wildlife corridors, habitat fragmentation due to road development and pipeline infrastructure, threats to rare and endangered species – all items that could be addressed with specific stipulations in a MLP
2. Air Quality – including visibility in the region – increased introduction of hazardous air pollutants such as benzene and n-hexane – known carcinogens
3. Water quality – drilling can affect both surface and below ground water sources. This is a major concern that have devastating results if there are not safeguards in place. While the RMP has some stipulations they are not specific and no particular water resource has been identified.
4. Agriculture is one of the major providers of income in this county. The current RMP does not adequately any conflicts that would arise between oil and gas development and agricultural resources.
5. Recreation, community and quality of life. This area is mostly undisturbed and provides incredible hiking, boating, biking skiing, wildlife observation and peaceful rural living like no other. The potential of destroying these resources without adequate protection would be disastrous. Is it worth short term job inflation and gas production only to destroy these precious resources that we all love? What about the future generations that would be affected?

Thank you

Jane Anderson

11822 Road 28.3

Dolores, CO 81323

andersonmorris@hotmail.com



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

No drilling in Montezuma County ~

1 message

Katherine Dobson <katdob11@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 4:23 PM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Cc: sborders@blm.gov

Dear BLM,

I am writing to strongly oppose the exploration of drilling/ fracking in Montezuma County and in particular, canyon of the ancients and Mesa Verde national park. Our county has precious tourist and nature resources which will be badly affected by drilling, not to mention our quality of life. Make Montezuma County an example of how to say "NO" to oil & gas to preserve our communities value on health and the environment and clean air and water. We will lose so much if the BLM decided to lease to oil&gas interests ~ stand up and say no!!!!!!

Thank you,

Katherine Dobson
12761 Road 41,9
Mancos, Co 81328

February 1, 2016

RECEIVED
FEB 03 2016
DOLORES PUBLIC
LANDS OFFICE

To the Southwest RAC:

I am unable to attend the meetings to provide my comments in person but wanted to say that there are a lot of us out here outside of the environmental groups that wonder what has come of our world? Seems that we live in a world of hypocrites and finger pointing.

So the La Plata county wants the BLM to do another study on ... what? So I saw the BLM's presentation on this master leasing plan. It appears they are being forced into something that the tax payers shouldn't have to pay for. So.. the BLM said that this area is that they're looking at only has around 80,000 acres of the government's minerals. Most of that is private property with the government's below. I believe it was something like only 26,000 acres remained that the BLM actually had total control over.

So where are the COUNTIES in this. They seem to be doing a lot of finger pointing, acting like they have no role or responsibility in this. I don't think so. Our current commissioners seem to not have any concept of reality.

Montezuma is trying to pass rules that they can't implement (hey guys .. can't implement county rules on federal lands).. and La Plata is busy pointing fingers and not taking any responsibility to lead additional rules for private property (isn't that your jurisdiction guys?).

I say. La Plata county should be doing this master leasing plan since most of the land is private property and it is going to be developed way before the federal land. Just look around. Private lands don't have near the red tape to go through to drill and develop.

Signed


Henry Michael Williams

Lewis, Colorado

Dear RAC members,

Please tell the newspapers to cover the whole story. They seem to only allow editorials from the LEFT and environmentalists. It's about time that the rest of folks are represented. These idiots that drive to protest.. where the hell do they think they think their clothes and mountain bikes and tires and heating comes from.. Or are they 'living' in a tent and walking everywhere. I doubt it.

RAC and BLM.. stop letting these people waste our tax payers money. I'd much rather see some more trails at Phil's world than BLM do another study. Does these idiots understand that developing on federal lands is the safest and most controlled processes in the country/world?

Stop waste my tax payer money...

Put that in the papers Cortez Journal and Durango Herald.

Let's get a petition started with that as our goal!

James and Haley Robins

(retired and left that damn county)

POB 77821

Seneca, New York

RECEIVED
JAN 09 2016
DOLORES PUBLIC
LANDS OFFICE



Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Master leading plan

1 message

Joanie Trussel <joaniepatricia@gmail.com>
To: sborders@blm.gov

Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 9:49 AM

I would like to submit the following opinion regarding gas and oil leasing in monte zuma county:

The arguments against a master leasing plan stand directly in opposition to what a master leasing plan is intended to do. It is about protection of our land which then leads to protection of our existence - the air we breathe and the water we drink. Realistically we are destroying our atmosphere with every well that is drilled. This is not about economics -- this is about how much digging in the ground we can continue to do before we have affected our physical health and the health of our children and the health of our forests, our wildlife and the health of our planet. This issue needs to be addressed and not ignored for the sake of economic security. It's time for us to wake up!

Joanie Trussel

Sent from my iPhone



Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Comments about the proposed Leasing Plan

1 message

DARCY LEVTZOW <darcylevtzow@hotmail.com>

Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 3:31 PM

To: "sborders@blm.gov" <sborders@blm.gov>

The current Resource Management Plan has many concerning issues for me.

It appears that any issue dealing with the No Occupancy Provisions has a disclaimer that the provisions may be waived, modified, or exempted as written. That seems as if the oil companies and/or the BLM can do whatever they wish with the land with no consideration for the people, animals, vegetation, and crops living on or near these sights.

It appears that farming and ranching do not seem to be a concern. The oil companies and the BLM should consider the livelihood also of the people living off of this land, growing crops and raising animals.

It also appears as if split estate owners are not protected from any conflict. The BLM should consult with people living on the land, farmers and ranchers, and split estate owners and draft more protective stipulations for their livelihood.

I believe having wells and contamination in our beautiful country and near our incredible cultural resources such as Mesa Verde and the Canyon of the Ancients can only diminish our tourism economy. I can only hope protective stipulations can protect our scenery as that's why the people who live here have their families, animals, and land.

I want there to be more protective overall stipulations or to simply close certain areas to leasing.

Why? More reasons?

The biggest reasons for me are water and air contamination.

Seeps and leakage can contaminate and ruin underground water supplies forever. This effects the people living here, their families, pets, livestock, and land. Seeps and leakages can contaminate our drinking water, streams, and reservoirs. Is any stipulation really going to protect everything? Doubtful.

Then, of course, we have the many chemicals we will be sending into our atmosphere. Yes, the air we breathe. Our area already suffers from poor air quality. Allowing all of these wells and areas to be drilled by the gas and oil companies is only going to make things worse.

So, in the many areas of water and air contamination, wildlife protection, cultural resources, recreation, irrigation canals, rivers, reservoirs, farming and ranching, please consider the most protective stipulations or closing any questionable areas to leasing. All of these deficiencies can contribute to the degradation of our communities quality of life. Please manage this precious land by doing the right thing.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Darcy Levtzow

Public Comment: Tres Rios BLM Working Group Meeting

From: M. B. McAfee
22277 Road 20
Lewis CO 81327
February 11, 2016
mbmcafee@fone.net

I am keenly interested in moving this process along; it's clear to me that there will be a Master Leasing Plan in western LaPlata County and a central swath of Montezuma County. I believe this process can move along more quickly than is outlined. BLM at the state and national levels will ultimately make the decision. The RAC and its subgroups are advisors. I urge this Working Group to come to grips with the fact that the RMP is inadequate on several fronts. An MLP will be derived from local input and is the best tool to protect our communities in terms of water and air quality, our agricultural heritage, and tourism potential.

I will make two points. First, it is not clear to me how the boundary of this map was determined other than Connie Clementson saying on two occasions (Montezuma County Commissioner meeting on Nov. 2, 2015 and during the Working Group meeting on Nov. 19, 2015), "We had to start somewhere." Experts predict the Gothic Shale Oil play will re-emerge when oil prices rise and the technology to deal with the salinity problem is solved. Therefore, it is a matter of common sense that the boundaries of the MLP map should include the area of the Gothic Shale play. I am in favor of an MLP in this larger area so as to give as much local control about oil and gas development in the largest area possible.

Second, I want to address the language of the Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan, particularly in Appendix H and in reference to Exceptions, Modifications and Waivers. I have read in Chapter 2 of the RMP that the fluid mineral program emphasizes the orderly and environmentally responsible development of oil and gas on lands subject to lease disposal. Also, it is stated on page 112 of Chapter 2 that, "All TRFO oil and gas leases are subject to Standard lease terms; these are the least restrictive terms under which an oil and gas lessee **may** operate." I want to emphasize the permissive language here – "**may**" rather than "**must**." Permissive language leaves too much wiggle room for the area to be regulated at the whim of personal discretion rather than regulations rooted in science and common sense. I'd rather pin my future to a sturdy juniper tree or sagebrush, the lasting sentinels of our high dessert plateau.

Furthermore, there is a pervasiveness of permissive language regarding Exceptions, Modifications, and Waivers in Appendix H. On page 8 of Appendix H Standard Lease language is explained; it illustrates that these stipulations can be bent, shaped, or ignored. It describes the Standard Lease language wherein the Authorizing Officer **may** grant exceptions to stipulations, **may** modify stipulations or **may** waive stipulations. This renders the long list of stipulations useless by allowing the Authorizing Officer to overcome any objections from the public or private sector regarding potential reasons to block or redesign oil and gas development activities. I believe this permissive language, alone, indicates that the RMP is deficient. For me this slices through most issues like a laser beam and leads simply to the conclusion that an MLP is the necessary for specific protections in an area that incorporates the entire Gothic Shale play.



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southwest Region Office
415 Turner Drive
Durango, CO 81303
P 970.375.6702 | F 970.375.6705

Ms. Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave
Montrose, CO 81401
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

10 February 2016

RE: Oil and Gas Leasing and Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Evaluation for Tres Rios Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata Counties, Colorado

Dear Ms. Borders:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata counties, Colorado. CPW's mission is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. Montezuma and La Plata counties receive combined economic benefits of approximately \$64.1 million annually from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 700 jobs (BBC Research and Consulting 2008). Hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing diversify and enhance the economy of these rural counties. These economic benefits are a sustainable annual source of economic benefit for these counties only if wildlife populations are maintained and quality hunting and fishing opportunities continue to exist.

CPW has a long history of working cooperatively with BLM to evaluate nominated lease parcels for potential conflicts with wildlife and park resources. On December 17, 2012, CPW submitted to BLM's State Office a protest letter requesting deferral of many parcels nominated for the February 2013 Quarterly Lease Sale that are within the current MLP Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata counties (see Exhibit 1).

CPW's recommendation to defer these parcels at that time (under the previous Resource Management Plan) was based primarily on the inadequacy of existing lease stipulations to adequately protect wildlife resources. BLM remedied many of our concerns with the RMP update completed in 2015. There are, however, a number of issues raised in our previous lease sale comments that have not been addressed in the updated RMP. Several of these issues are identified in BLM IM 2010-17 and BLM Manual H-1624-1 as potential MLP decisions:

- 1) **Surface facility density limits or caps on surface disturbance** - There is a growing body of evidence that Timing Limitation Stipulations on oil and gas development activities are not adequate to protect crucial winter habitats and migratory corridors for big game, and that limits on the density of surface facilities may be necessary to maintain big game populations (Sawyer et al. 2006, 2009, Sawyer and Neilsen 2010, Northrup et al. 2015);

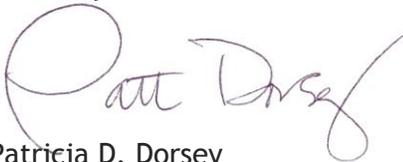


- 2) **Implementation of site-specific best management practices (BMPs)** - In this case, BMPs that promote the use of existing infrastructure to limit additional surface disturbance, such as the use of combined utility corridors, multiple well pads and liquids gathering systems could be appropriate. Phased development that focuses the most intense development activities in specific geographic areas may also reduce widespread impacts to wildlife;
- 3) **Implementation of site-specific lease stipulations to protect land conservation values** - A number of split estate fee surface/federal mineral properties in this area have conservation easements purchased by CPW and others to protect the surface estate for wildlife habitat and wildlife-related recreational values (see Exhibit 1). These values are potential jeopardized by unrestricted mineral development (in terms of facility placement and density). BLM could use the MLP process to develop an additional stipulation for these properties to allow mineral extraction with minimal impacts to the conservation values that they contain;
- 4) **Implementation of mitigation to address residual adverse wildlife impacts from mineral development** - Where mineral development requires surface facility densities exceeding one well pad/mile² in big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, CPW recommends requiring compensatory mitigation to offset the impacts to big game populations. In this context, compensatory mitigation to offset impacts to big game from development should focus on replacing the impacted habitat (through conservation of similar habitats) or improving adjacent habitats to the extent necessary to maintain existing big game populations in the lease area. BLM could use the MLP process to promote mineral extraction while offsetting residual adverse impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat;
- 5) **Defining site-specific lease exception, waiver, and modification criteria**- The Final San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) Land and Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement does not include explicit criteria outlining when and how exceptions, modifications, and waivers may be granted on BLM lands. This makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of these stipulations for protecting wildlife resources during development on. BLM could use the MLP process clarify lease stipulation exception, waiver, and modification criteria to avoid confusing oil and gas operators, resource agencies, and the public.

Conclusion

CPW appreciates BLM's solicitation of public input for its evaluation of a MLP for the Area of Interest identified in Montezuma and La Plata counties, Colorado. CPW values this opportunity to provide BLM with the best available information regarding protection of wildlife resources during oil and gas development. If you have any questions, please contact Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison, at (970) 759-9588.

Sincerely,



Patricia D. Dorsey
SW Region Manager

xc: CPW - M. Thorpe, Area 15 Wildlife Manager; Brian Magee, SW Region Land Use Coordinator; Scott Wait, SW Region Senior Terrestrial Biologist; John Alves, SW Region Senior Aquatic Biologist

Literature Cited

BBC Research & Consulting. 2008. The economic impacts of hunting, fishing and wildlife watching in Colorado (Final Report). 24 pp.

Northrup, J., Anderson, C.R., and G. Wittemyer. 2015. Quantifying spatial habitat loss from hydrocarbon development through assessing habitat selection patterns of mule deer. *Global Change Biology*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, doi: 10.1111/gcb.13037

Sawyer, H. and R. Neilsen. 2010. Mule deer monitoring in the Pinedale Anticline Project Area. Pinedale Anticline Planning Office (PAPO), Pinedale, WY. 19 pp.

Sawyer, H., Kauffman M.J., and R.M. Nielson. 2009. Influence of well pad activity on winter habitat selection patterns of mule deer. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 73:1052-1061.

Sawyer, H., Nielson, R., Lindzey, F., and L. McDonald. 2006. Winter habitat selection of mule deer before and during development of a natural gas field. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 70(2), 396-403. 2006



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

1313 Sherman Street, Room 618 • Denver, Colorado 80203
 Phone (303) 866-3437 • FAX (303) 866-3206
 wildlife.state.co.us • parks.state.co.us

December 17, 2012

Helen Hankins, State Director
 BLM Colorado State Office
 2850 Youngfield Street
 Lakewood, CO 80215
 FAX: (303) 239-3799

RE: February 2013 Quarterly Lease Sale

Dear Ms. Hankins:

Helen

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Notice of Competitive Lease Sale for the February 2013 quarterly lease sale, and the Environmental Assessments (EAs) completed by the BLM Field Offices involved in this sale. CPW has provided input on the parcels nominated for lease through correspondence with the appropriate BLM Field Offices statewide. CPW appreciates the opportunity to coordinate with BLM Field Office staff early in the review process for upcoming lease sales in order to provide the best available information regarding the protection of wildlife resources during oil and gas development.

Background

In 2010, BLM's State Office hosted a series of meetings between our agencies to coordinate a more consistent approach regarding management of wildlife resources during oil and gas development. Integral to those discussions was the desire to incorporate up-to-date wildlife protections in quarterly lease sales and Resource Management Plan (RMP) revisions. At your request, CPW provided BLM's State Office recommendations for oil and gas lease stipulations relevant to RMP revisions and quarterly lease sales in Colorado (see **Attachment 1 - "Lease Recommendations"**).

We derived an understanding from BLM during those meetings that it is extremely difficult to modify the terms of an oil and gas lease once it is issued. Our understanding in 2010 was that BLM intended to use CPW's Lease Recommendations for conducting Plan Maintenance to update lease stipulations in existing RMPs, for possible inclusion in a Statewide RMP amendment for oil and gas, and/or for incorporating updated lease stipulations into RMP revisions – with a goal of including up-to-date stipulations on newly issued leases.

STATE OF COLORADO

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor • Mike King, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources
 Rick D. Cables, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 Parks and Wildlife Commission: Robert W. Bray • Chris Castilian • Jeanne Home
 Bill Kane, Vice-Chair • Gaspar Perricone • James Pribyl • John Singletary, Chair
 Mark Smith, Secretary • James Vigil • Dean Wingfield • Michelle Zimmerman
 Ex Officio Members: Mike King and John Salazar

Since 2010, CPW has continued to coordinate with BLM's Field Office staff on quarterly lease sales. CPW generally reviews quarterly sale proposals for wildlife concerns, and where existing stipulations are inadequate to conserve the wildlife resource and/or do not reflect the best available information, CPW recommends that BLM incorporate the stipulations contained in our Lease Recommendations or defer the parcels until such time that appropriate wildlife protections can be attached to the affected leases.

In some cases, BLM Field Offices have deferred specific parcels associated with particularly problematic issues (such as sage grouse) until further analysis can be completed or until an out-of-date RMP is updated with the best available information. We appreciate BLM's responsiveness in those instances, and urge the BLM to take more comprehensive steps to address our Lease Recommendations Statewide in quarterly lease sales and RMP revisions.

February 2013 Lease Sale

On several occasions in the past, CPW has communicated our concerns associated with the February 2013 lease sale with the appropriate BLM Field Offices. For parcels located in Gunnison and Delta Counties, CPW provided scoping comments to the BLM Field Office in February 2012 (Attachment 2) and comments on the original Draft EA in April 2012 (Attachment 3). For parcels located in Montezuma County, CPW provided scoping comments to the appropriate BLM Field Office in September 2012 (Attachment 4).

The concerns outlined in our previous comments to each BLM Field Office remain the basis for this letter. We have outlined below the concerns that are not addressed in the EAs prepared by your Field Offices. These concerns and those stated in our previous correspondence comprise our **Statement of Reasons** for objecting to the sale of the parcels listed in **Attachment 5** until the wildlife issues associated with those parcels can be resolved.

1) Economic concerns raised by CPW have not been addressed

As described in our correspondence to your Field Offices, Delta and Gunnison counties received combined economic benefits of approximately \$80.9 million in 2007 from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 912 jobs. Similarly, Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Miguel counties received combined economic benefits of approximately \$103.3 million in 2007 from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 1157 jobs.

The economic benefits from hunting and fishing recreational activities are a sustainable annual source of economic benefit for these counties only if wildlife populations are maintained and quality hunting and fishing opportunities continue to exist. As described in our previous correspondence, CPW anticipates that oil and gas development on the

parcels identified in Attachment 5 will decrease population levels of big game and result in lower quality and fewer hunting and fishing recreational opportunities in the affected counties, decreasing sustainable revenues from these activities. No BLM Field Offices addressed this issue in their EAs for the February 2013 sale.

2) Potential impacts to big game winter habitats and migratory corridors have not been adequately addressed

BLM's existing RMPs generally contain a Timing Limitation (TL) stipulation for crucial deer and elk winter ranges, but do not contain a TL or other stipulations to protect migration corridors. We also note that they do not address the impacts of road and well density on the effectiveness of critical deer and elk winter ranges and migration corridors. There is a growing body of evidence that TL stipulations on oil and gas development activities are not adequate to protect critical winter habitats and migratory corridors for big game. Additional limitations on the density of surface facilities in these habitats, which comprise approximately 22 percent of Colorado, may be necessary to maintain big game population levels.

To address this issue, CPW currently recommends limiting the density of surface facilities in these habitats to one well pad (or less)/mile² to maintain existing big game populations (see Attachment 1 - Lease Recommendations). This recommendation is consistent with recommendations made by other state fish and game agencies in the Rocky Mountain Region. If the well pad density on the nominated parcels cannot be limited to one pad/mile² through appropriate lease stipulations or some other planning mechanism, we recommend that BLM defer these parcels until the applicable RMPs can be amended to address this well pad and road density issue with respect to these big game habitats. We urge all BLM Field Offices to address this issue in their EAs for this lease sale.

3) Potential impacts to raptor nest sites, including bald and golden eagle nest sites, have not been adequately addressed

Some BLM Colorado RMPs contain No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations to protect raptor nest sites; other BLM Colorado RMPs do not. As a result, protections are not being applied consistently to nesting raptors across the State. Field Offices without NSO stipulations in existing RMPs are relying on dated seasonal TL stipulations and Lease Notices (LN) to protect raptor nest sites. These mechanisms are not sufficiently protective of raptor nest sites that may be used year-after-year because both TL stipulations and LNs allow permanent production facilities to be built in very close proximity to active nest sites. Once an oil or gas facility is built in close proximity to a nest site (even outside the breeding season), ongoing operation and maintenance activities are required for the life of the facility and these activities may occur at any time during the breeding season.

As described in previous comments, repeated human-caused disturbance in close proximity to raptor nest sites during the incubation or nestling phase increases the probability of nest failure due to increased adult flushing frequency and time away from the nest, which increases the probability of egg incubation failure and predation on the eggs or nestlings. Even if the nest does not completely fail, human activities and habitat alteration that encroach upon active raptor nest sites, including those associated with oil and gas activities, change raptor behavior and may reduce nest productivity (i.e., numbers of chicks fledged), potentially resulting in local or regional population declines. We believe this issue can be better addressed in the EAs prepared by BLM Field Offices for the February 2013 lease sale.

4) Potential impacts to aquatic habitat and CPW mapped Recovery and Conservation Waters have not been adequately addressed

CPW maps Recovery and Conservation Waters for a variety of aquatic species. In order to avoid impacts to these habitats, CPW recommends a 300-foot NSO buffer. In addition, CPW recommends that a TL stipulation be implemented for any temporary stream crossings or other in-stream work to protect spawning activities for these species (see attached Lease Recommendations).

Several of the existing RMPs and Field Office EAs address the desired buffer around these habitats with Controlled Surface Use (CSU) stipulations or LNs. These stipulations may be adequate to address the 300-foot buffer recommended by CPW, but they are not adequate to address our TL recommendation for in-stream work. We don't believe this issue can be addressed site-specifically with Conditions of Approval on individual APDs because in some cases the recommended exclusion period exceeds 60 days (see 43 CFR 3101.1-2). If these protections cannot be added under the existing RMP or EAs, CPW recommends deferring these parcels until such time that these protections are incorporated into the RMPs and corresponding lease stipulations are included in quarterly lease sales.

Of particular concern is parcel 6619 (COC75860) that saddles Deep Creek. Deep Creek upstream from this parcel contains a conservation population of cutthroats. While most of the population occurs upstream, fish do occur on the parcel and we are part of a partnership that has been working for several years to extend the available habitat downstream. Together with the USFS, BLM, and the private landowner, several large projects have been completed on the stream including rebuilding and screening and irrigation diversion and building a large fish migration barrier below the proposed parcel. Partners have spent over \$185,000 on these projects with the aim of removing the brook trout between the two projects and then extending the cutthroat population downstream through it. The planned reclamation project is to occur in 2013 and 2014, so we expect the conservation population to be extended through the parcel this year or next.

5) Potential impacts to property interests purchased by CPW specifically for wildlife conservation values have not been adequately addressed

CPW continues to provide BLM Field Offices with information regarding State Wildlife Areas and other property interests that CPW has purchased specifically for wildlife habitat conservation. In most cases, CPW also provides information on the extent to which BLM oil and gas leasing and development without specific density limitations on surface facilities is incompatible with the conservation values for which these properties were purchased.

Parcels 6450 (COC75903), 6451 (COC75904), and 6452 (COC75905) in the February 2013 Lease Sale contain minerals beneath large portions of a 2,520 acre property on which CPW is purchasing a conservation easement (CE) to protect wildlife habitat at a cost of \$582,800. This CE is being purchased specifically to preserve a large block of unfragmented habitat and to provide remote recreational hunting opportunities in this area. These values would be compromised by leasing and development of this property for oil and gas. While CPW understands that the mineral estate is dominant regardless of a CE on the surface, we encourage BLM to only lease these parcels with an NSO stipulation to protect the conservation values of the CE. We believe that impacts to CPW's investment in this property and the associated wildlife values should receive additional consideration in the EAs prepared for the February 2013 lease sale.

Conclusion

CPW applauds BLM's leasing reform efforts, and in particular, your efforts to evaluate upcoming lease sales for potential surface conflicts and to resolve those conflicts prior to leasing. CPW is also encouraged by the close working relationships that our field staff have with BLM Field Office staff. BLM Field Office staff understand CPW's concerns, and in many cases, they have relied on information and references that CPW provided to draft portions of the effects analysis for the individual EAs that were prepared for the February 2013 lease sale.

BLM's Field Office EAs generally state that the act of leasing itself has no direct or indirect effects on wildlife. When viewed narrowly, we agree. However, given the investment backed expectation of the lessee, the property right that the lease conveys, and the extreme difficulty in modifying lease terms after they are issued, we feel we must plan as though leased parcels will eventually be developed to their fullest potential under the terms of the lease when it is issued. We will not have another opportunity to affect the terms of the lease that dictate the character of the development and associated impacts, so we should incorporate into the lease the best available information to address potential impacts when the lease is sold.

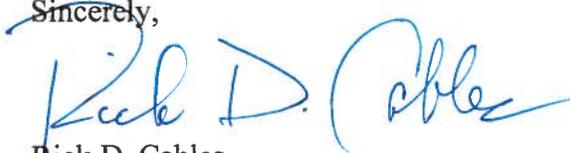
The wildlife stipulations attached to parcels nominated for lease in the February 2013 sale are limited to those contained in existing outdated RMPs and additional LNs that will not be effective for issues that warrant NSO protection or other density limits on surface facilities. Without specific NSO stipulations or other density limits on surface facilities outlined in the lease, we understand that the BLM is limited by its own regulations to relocating proposed operations no more than 200 meters or avoiding surface disturbing activities for a maximum of 60 days per year (43 CFR 3101.1-2). We advocate for additional flexibility to address the wildlife concerns raised for the parcels included in the February 2013 sale.

We are concerned that BLM Field Office staff may not have the planning tools necessary to incorporate up-to-date stipulations for wildlife resources in quarterly lease sales. With the limitations outlined in 43 CFR 3101.1-2 in mind, we recommend that the parcels identified in Attachment 5 be deferred until such time that the lease stipulations can be updated in BLM's planning documents to reflect the best available information.

CPW looks forward to continuing to work with BLM staff on leasing reform and efforts to revise existing RMPs to reflect the best available information on wildlife resources. If there are other avenues to address our concerns in the interim – until the RMP revisions are completed – we welcome the opportunity to discuss those options with you. Our hope is that implementation of consistent stipulations in RMPs and quarterly lease sales will streamline appropriate oil and gas development while also providing for the long-term conservation of wildlife resources across the State of Colorado.

If you have any questions, please contact Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison, at (970) 759-9588.

Sincerely,



Rick D. Cables
Director

xc: CPW – A. Gurzick, Acting SW Region Manager; P. Dorsey, Area 15 Wildlife Manager; J. Wenum, Area 16 Wildlife Manager; Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison; Scott Wait, SW Region Senior Terrestrial Biologist; John Alves, SW Region Senior Aquatic Biologist

Attachments 1 – 4

Omitted Intentionally [contact CPW for information]

ATTACHMENT 5 - Parcels Without Adequate Stipulations

<u>BLM Serial #</u>	<u>Parcel ID</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED BY BLM</u>
COC75910	6401	ARCHULETA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75906	6433	LA PLATA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75907	6449	LA PLATA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75903	6450	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts
COC75904	6451	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts
COC75905	6452	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75865	6604	GUNNISON	Elk Migration Corridor Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75869	6605	DELTA	Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75870	6606	DELTA & GUNNISON	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75875	6607	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range

COC75876	6608	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75871	6609	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75877	6610	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75872	6611	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75878	6612	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75878	6613	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75879	6614	DELTA	Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75880	6615	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75866	6616	DELTA	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75867	6617	DELTA & GUNNISON	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range

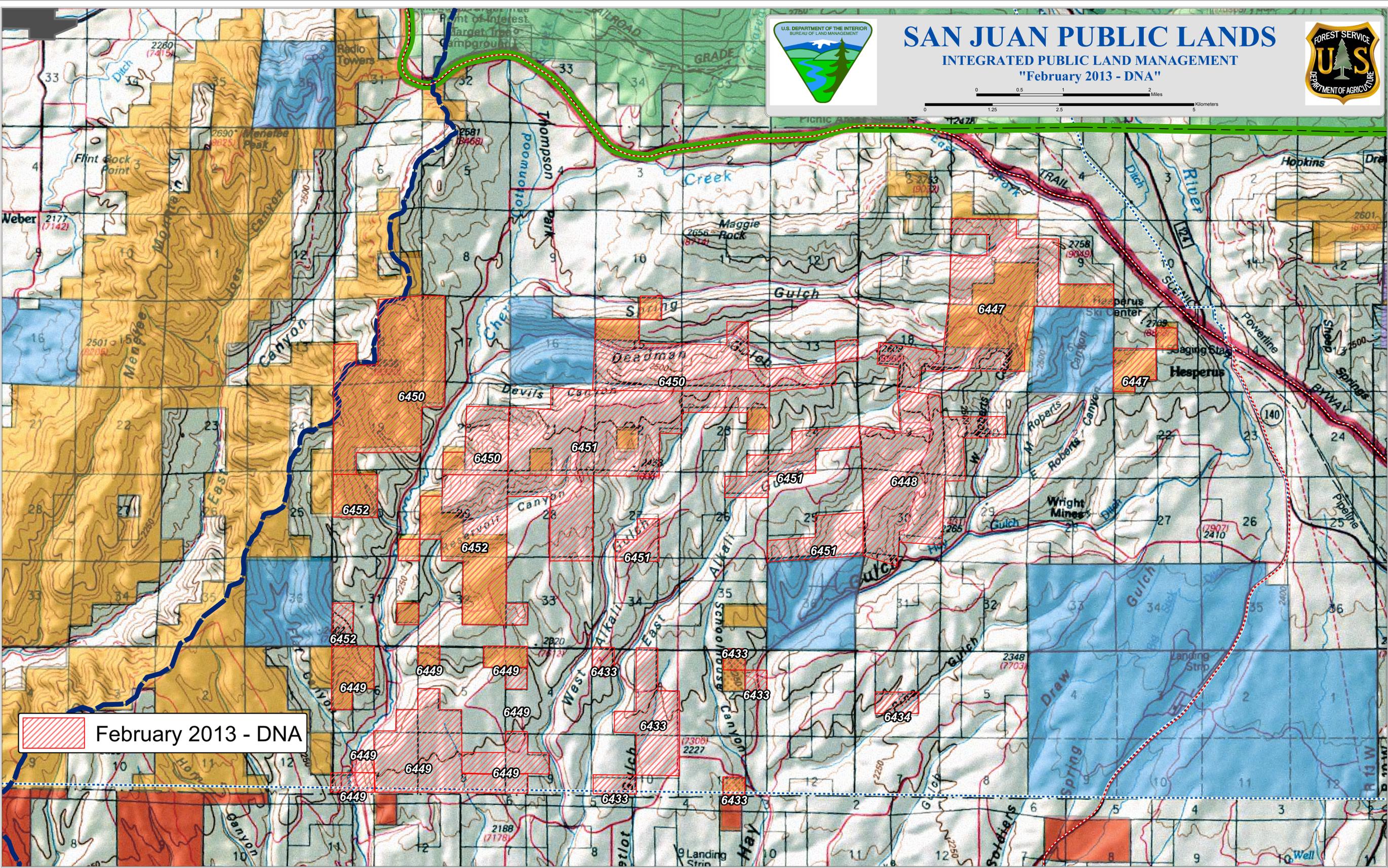
			Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75863	6618	GUNNISON	Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters In-Stream work
COC75860	6619	GUNNISON	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Cutthroat Trout Designated Critical Habitat Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75726	6621	DELTA	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75864	6623	GUNNISON	Golden Eagle Active Nest Sites Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lack of NSO for Rapor Nest Sites Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75868	6624	DELTA	Golden Eagle Active Nest Sites Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lack of NSO for Rapor Nest Sites Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density



SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS

INTEGRATED PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

"February 2013 - DNA"



 February 2013 - DNA

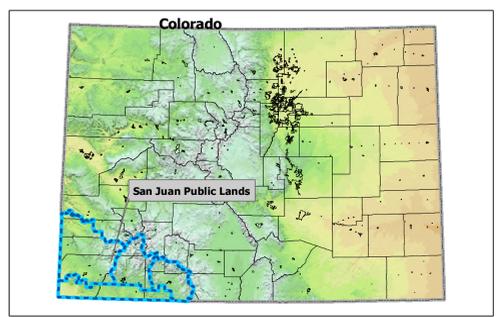
San Juan Public Lands - Legend

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Surface Ownership |  National Forest |  Wilderness |
|  Bureau of Land Management |  Major Waterways |  Cities |
|  National Park Service and Other Federal Land |  USFS/BLM - Ranger Districts / Field Office Boundary |  San Juan Forest Boundary |
|  Indian Reservation |  Private Land |  County Boundary |
|  State Public Use Land |  State Land Subject to Leasing |  State & Federal Highways |



NAD 83 UTM Zone 13N
MAY 9, 2010

The USFS attempts to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS reserves the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.



February 12, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch, BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093

Connie Clementson, Tres Rios Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 84
Dolores, Colorado 81323

Transmitted by email: rwelch@blm.gov; cclementson@blm.gov



Dear State Director Ruth Welch and Tres Rios Field Manager Connie Clementson:

The Colorado Wildlife Federation and the National Wildlife Federation urge that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) apply its master leasing planning tool to the public lands it manages in La Plata County and Montezuma County. We understand that a decision will be made in August. We also ask that additional oil and gas leasing be deferred until a decision is reached, within the spirit of the April 2014 Colorado BLM Instruction Memorandum.

A master leasing planning process will enable BLM to address the range of potential impacts of future oil and gas development on a landscape level, where there likely will be conflicts among multiple uses and the numerous resource values. The lands BLM manages in the area are situated within a mosaic of public, state, and private lands. These resources and uses include important intact wildlife habitats including big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, viewsheds from Mesa Verde and Canyon of the Ancients, ground water, agriculture, recreation, and archeological/cultural resources. We are optimistic that master leasing planning will be a really productive process for this area, and note our excellent experience and that of many other stakeholders during preparation for and the initial stages of master leasing planning with BLM's Royal Gorge Field Office in South Park, an area that also is a mosaic of public and private lands.

CWF and NWF look forward to the opportunity to actively work with the Tres Rios Field Office during a master leasing planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne O'Neill".

Suzanne O'Neill, Executive Director
Colorado Wildlife Federation
1410 Grant St., C-313
Denver CO 80203
303-987-0400 cwfed@coloradowildlife.org

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Dvorak".

Bill Dvorak, Public Lands Organizer
National Wildlife Federation
303 E. 17th Ave., Suite 15
Denver CO 80203
719-221-3212 dvorakb@nwf.org



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: speaking at meeting

1 message

Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Fri, Feb 12, 2016 at 12:56 PM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joanie Howland** <joaniehowland@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 11, 2016 at 4:01 PM

Subject: Re: speaking at meeting

To: "Borders, Shannon" <sborders@blm.gov>

Hi Shannon,

I was planning on speaking tonight at the meeting, but my husband is not feeling well and we have decided not to come. Thank you for your help. Following are my comments for the record:

Though there are a myriad of problems with oil and gas drilling for residents of the affected areas, today I'd like to mention the problem of well sites that the industry has finished with, but equipment sits idly on the surface.

A few years ago my husband and I spent a few days in Rangely. There is a canyon there along the road with rock art. The BLM did a lovely job with trails and interpretive signs. But in the middle of the area were all these abandoned well pads. It certainly made me not want to be there. On the other side of town it was even worse.

It appears that there are similar problems in eastern LaPlata county.

According to an associated press article in the Cortez Journal on January 5th there are 45,000 wells in Colorado that are ready for final reclamation. 45,000! This appears to be an industry that doesn't think it needs to clean up after itself.

I think we need to have a Master Leasing Plan to address this problem in our area. Perhaps we could encourage the drilling companies by getting a deposit that would be large enough to clean up the site in 20 years. If they reclaim the site, their money is returned. If not, it is not left to the taxpayers to clean it up, nor would the equipment be left there forever. Maybe someone else has a better idea.

I'd hate to see our area look like Rangely.

Joanie Howland

Resident of Montezuma County



February 10, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215
rwelch@blm.gov

Field Manager Connie Clementson
Tres Rios Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, CO 81323
cclementson@blm.gov

Re: Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Process

Dear Director Welch and Field Manager Clementson:

We at Osprey Packs, the individuals and businesses listed below are very interested and invested in land management decisions that affect our community in southwest Colorado. Our business and the culture of Osprey is built on the responsible use, access and protection of our natural resources and as such we have a vested interest in what is happening in our backyard. As a growing economic engine in this region we want to be involved in the process and have a voice during the discussion. We value the amazing outdoor recreation opportunities afforded to us, including true gems like the trail system at Phil's World and the recent announcement of the proposed Paths to Mesa Verde — a multimodal trail connecting Cortez, Mesa Verde National Park and Mancos. With Osprey's investment in a new Cortez facility it is our intention to more actively host partners and guests from all over the world and proudly engage them and celebrate the unrivaled cultural and natural resources Montezuma County has to offer.

That's why we want to thank the Bureau of Land Management at both the state and local level for moving forward with a Master Leasing Plan process. A Master Leasing Plan (MLP) for southwestern Colorado will truly enhance our region by ensuring any future oil and gas development will be balanced with other important resources and interests such as our recreation opportunities, access, and economy. As a company and as individual community members in the region, we at Osprey Packs support the creation of a Master Leasing Plan because it is the best way to protect the places and natural resources that make southwest Colorado such an amazing place to live and grow our business.

We also want to acknowledge that many members of our community are volunteering their time to gather public input and participate in the MLP process. In order to make sure that our time and theirs is adequately valued, we respectfully request that the BLM defer any future oil and gas leasing in the proposed MLP area until a final decision on the plan is determined and the full planning process is

concluded. We understand the agency has deferred leasing while other master leasing plans, like Dinosaur Trails, were considered and southwest Colorado is worthy of the same treatment.

Moreover, since many of our staff members are eager to participate in the public process around the MLP, we want to better understand how this process will work. Unfortunately, beyond when and where the upcoming public meetings will take place, there is a dearth of information on how public information and comments on the MLP will be compiled, considered, and how a final recommendation will be made. Any efforts to provide clarity to our community at large would be greatly appreciated.

In summary, this issue is of the utmost importance to Osprey's growing business and our vibrant outdoor culture and we feel strongly that having a seat at the table to express our interests and concerns is important because in the end, if you are not at the table, you are on it. This home we have chosen both for business and personal reasons has far more to offer than oil and gas and we would like to see it managed in a way that carefully considers all uses, including the vast potential for exemplary outdoor recreation.

Thank you for the consideration of these issues and we look forward to working with you on this process.

Sincerely,

Osprey Packs Inc. and the following concerned individuals and businesses

- Kenny Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Tom Barney, Chief Executive Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Diane Wren, Owner, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Mike Pfothauer, Owner/Founder, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Mychal McCormick, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Matthew Walker, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Rob BonDurant, Director of Marketing, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Geoff Peck, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Courtney Hart, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Bill Chandler, Outdoor Sales Manager, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Jeff Busic, International Sales Director, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Scott Robertson, Copywriter, Osprey Packs Inc.
- David Dunn, Operations Management, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Kimberly Mendenhall, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Emily Mason, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Rich Pierce, Dealer Services, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Sam Mix, Conduit of Corporate Outreach, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Southwest Colorado Cycling Association, Jeff Fox, President
- Kristin Carpenter Ogden, Owner/Founder, Verde Brand Communications
- Anna Peterson, Communications Specialist, Verde Brand Communications
- Pete Eschallier, Owner, Kokopelli Bike and Board
- Kathy Hands, Owner, Mancos Brewing Company
- Kristin Ruger, Concerned citizen
- Ginny Chandler, Concerned Citizen

Statement to RAC Group for BLM Consideration of a MLP in Tres Rios Field Area - February 11, 2016

The overwhelming weight of my husband's and my decision to move his medical practice as a Family Practitioner and raise our family in this area was the natural beauty and varied outdoor opportunities we could readily enjoy on a daily basis. He gave himself tirelessly to the health and well-being of his patients and saw first hand the devastation and ill effects of some of the issues our community members faced working in such high-risk occupations like mining and the oil and gas extraction industries. An athlete in his own right, non-smoker, early proponent and ardent cyclist from the inception of Phil's World, he, too, would fall victim to metastatic lung cancer.

Our home and property has become a refuge and a place of retreat with small vacation rentals for those who continue to travel from around the globe to this uniquely grand locale which has, no less, a designated WORLD HERITAGE PARK at MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK. I have personally had potential guests query my drinking water source. They would not take accommodations in the Durango area because of last year's mining tailings spill into the Animas River. As a result of this disastrous event they chose to utilize my lodging which felt less "endangered" to them.

But we are all imminently "endangered" by our short-sided, narrowly focused goals on how to use the resources this area offers, most specifically, hastily and poorly regulated extraction of oil, gas and minerals. This one pointed and dogged pursuit to develop these limited resources has a much larger impact on the economic, social, and emotional health of our communities. Additionally, the threats being imposed on the natural wildlife, agricultural sustainability, and panoramic beauty we all take such pleasure in having just outside our back doors are of significant consideration for the ongoing, future viability of not just our small area of the country, but of this planet. Please consider the long-term ramifications over the short-term lure of oil and gas development and use this proposed MLP as a means to mitigate the draw backs of this "race to ravage" our land, air, water and sense of place...

Sincerely and most urgently noted,

jeanne cain, proprietor of casa cielo retreats (Ph: 970-882-7503)
15975 Rd 30
Dolores, CO 81323

Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas Sub-group Minutes

February 11, (Evening Session) 2016 @ Mancos, CO

Welcome and Introductions-John Reams, SW RAC Chairperson, opened the session at 6:10 p.m.

Southwest Colorado RAC oil and gas subgroup members present: Ernie Williams (SW RAC member), Eric Sanford (SW RAC member), John Reams (SW RAC Chairperson), James Dietrich (SW RAC member), Pete Eschallier (Kokopelli Bike and Board), Christi Zeller (La Plata Energy Council), Jimbo Buickerood (San Juan Citizens Alliance), Dale Davidson (Southwest Canyons Alliance), George San Miguel (Mesa Verde National Park), Matt Thorpe (Colorado Parks and Wildlife), Rod Oliver (landowner), James Lambert (Montezuma County Commission), Gregg Dubit (user group), Dan Huntington (landowner).

BLM staff: Connie Clementson (Tres Rios Field Office Manager), Justin Abernathy (Tres Rios Assistant Field Manager), Ryan Joyner (BLM physical scientist), Barb Sharrow (Acting Southwest District Manager), Matt Azhocar (Southwest Associate District Manager).

Barb Sharrow – gave brief overview and clarification of the Southwest Resource Advisory Council, the RAC Sub-group, and public process. The RAC consists of 15 members, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, these members have applied, been vetted through multiple levels to include Washington D.C. and consist of 3 categories – Category 1, commercial uses, i.e. livestock and grazing – Category 2, environmental organizations such as dispersed recreation, tribal entities, wild horse and burro interests and Category 3, elected officials, public-at-large and the state and local government, such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife. During previous RAC meetings, it was decided to utilize the existing Oil and Gas Sub-group of the RAC to explore the need for a Southwest BLM Master Leasing Plan.

The RAC Sub-group, consisting of three RAC members, wrote a letter to the counties to request help finding people in their respective communities to serve on a community based work group. They were asked to assign folks, those in the committee here, and charge them with determining the facts and information needed for making a recommendation to the RAC within this area of interest. We have been asked today to talk about what's in the RMP, so that the group can begin to determine what the issues are – the RMP describes a certain level of coverage on the issues, but may not include everything needed to make that recommendation – this group can explore that, this group is in charge of that – the group can determine what information is needed to make that recommendation, and when as far as meetings or amount of meetings etc. A recommendation from the RAC oil and gas sub-group, then goes to the full RAC – 15 described earlier, remember the larger RAC is also a diverse group – they will need to reach a quorum and vote on whether there is a resolution from the RAC to move forward with recommending an MLP or not to BLM. There is a lot of confidence in the RAC that they represent this group and your community – I thank you –

Barbara Sharrow – introduces the BLM staffers.

John Reams –Asks Ryan Joyner to begin the [PowerPoint presentation](#).

John Reams – opened the floor to questions.

Jim B. please explain the maps on the wall –Ryan Joyner gave an overview of the maps of the area of interest boundary. To download maps, go to http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/TRFO_NEPA/TRFOMLP.html.

John Reams – request – Justin Abernathy please explain the 3,000 wells we keep seeing and hearing about –

Justin Abernathy – In 2006, the BLM prepared a [reasonably foreseeable development scenario](#) (RFD) as part of the land use planning process for the current [Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan](#). That 2006 RFD predicted that over the next 20 years approximately 1,200 conventional oil and gas wells would be drilled in the planning area. It was noted that the planning area for the RFD encompasses approximately 3.5 million acres of BLM, Forest Service, private and state lands that stretch from Archuleta County in the east over the Utah border. Also noted that the area of interest encompasses only a portion of the planning area for the RFD – maybe around 25% or so. In 2008 or 2009, the BLM decided that it needed to amend the 2006 RFD in order to address exploration and development that was occurring at that time on the Gothic Shale Gas Play. So the BLM went back and prepared a supplement to the [2006 RFD](#) which it issued in 2009. That [2009 RFD](#) confirmed the 2006 RFD’s prediction of approximately 1,200 conventional oil and gas wells over a 15 year period, and in addition to the conventional wells it also predicted that approximately 1,800 Gothic Shale wells would be drilled over the 15 year period. So, when you add the 1,200 conventional oil and gas wells predicted to the 1,800 Gothic Shale gas wells predicted, that’s where the 3,000 wells you’ve been hearing about is coming from.

Ryan Joyner - forecasting is a benchmark for analysis – need a benchmark to start analysis and so these numbers come from various conservative projections -- not something asked for, it is number we use to start the analysis.

Ernie Williams – please explain maps more – you said, (Ryan Joyner), what we’re seeing is the total fed mineral estate – 31,100 acres are fed/fed; 15,100 are split estate – so the acres we’re looking at is what?

Ryan Joyner - The BLM applies stipulations to federal surface lands and for split-estate lands where there are federal minerals but the surface is private or state lands or any kind of non-federal land, the BLM talks to the landowner about the stipulations that could be applied to the non-federal surface lands and it applies the stipulations if landowner wants it. So of the around 46,000 acres of federal mineral estate in the area of interest, about 15,000 acres are split-estate where the surface is non-federal land and (on those 15,000 acres of non-federal surface split-estate lands) depending on landowner desires, which is where the on-site visit and earlier process I covered comes into play, the private landowner would have a chance to discuss with the BLM and the oil and gas company proposing the development what their options are and what stipulations would be applied before any development occurs.

John Reams – Used the “drinking out of a fire hose” analogy in reference to the community process and the amount of information that the process is trying to cover – He has asked Ryan Joyner to write a narrative of the BLM PowerPoint presentation on the federal oil and gas development process and the RMP information, and also asked Ryan to place that narrative document on the project website. Ryan agreed to do so.

John Reams – points to website address on the wall – please send your written questions and comments in for the subgroup to include –

Oil and Gas Subgroup starts discussion:

Eric Sanford – I would ask all to appreciate the fact we don't do this all the time – these are regular citizens appointed to make sense of this – to give the oil and gas perspective – (points to) the white area on the maps – are not federal minerals or in Parks (CPW, NPS) or in any other control – let's say someone finds oil and gas on those areas, they will likely be developed – assume leases will be developed and drilled – BLM does not control “fee / fee” - private surface and private mineral lands, that said, even if NSO stipulations exist on federal land surrounded by a private parcel, then he (the proponent of the oil and gas development from federal minerals) could go to the private land owner and ask to drill horizontally – that's a scenario that could occur – look at it with this perspective – private minerals surrounding fed are under an entirely different process –

James Dietrich – There are already a lot of wells in Montezuma County following the same scenario Eric Sanford just described – to avoid federal and split estate – development goes to private land first – thinks majority of development will continue to be on the private parcels.

John Reams – we're just gathering info – lets go around the table and talk – I would like to get advice and input from around the table.

Christie Zeller – asks for clarification of the discussion.

Matt Thorpe – are we stuck with the same meeting format – from feedback he heard, the public was agitated at the earlier meeting for not being heard – are we gathering information or are we taking public comment? – How much time should we dedicate to each? – How's this going to work for the next meeting?

Dale Davidson – liked James Dietrich's way and format of previous Montezuma County meeting where he worked through smaller grouping of areas, using [Appendix H](#) as a way to compare areas – heavy on GIS but valuable.

John Reams – however many meetings and ways needed, we can try – this is exactly the input we need.

Gregg Dubit – it would be helpful to have a timeline – articulated for the entire process for which the full considerations which would lead to a MLP needing to be done – people may not have had adequate timeframes and an understanding of the timeline needed and would ask BLM to cover that.

John Reams – we've covered this – we could spend a long time but we want to make the August RAC meeting as a goal – at that time, we would like to have a resolution and/or make that recommendation to the full RAC Committee.

Eric Sanford – We need to try to get BLM our advice this fall, the MLP could take 5 years.

Jim Buickerood – on process - as he understands it, we need to listen to the public and synthesize that input - then this group will need some time also– we would need more meetings to review and discuss that synthesis – it’s one thing to get verbal comments, but getting correlation of those comments to the areas on the map and thoroughly discussing those points is different – do we have a way to tie the comments with the areas of the map?

John Reams – explains his role as chairman of the SW RAC – doesn’t make that recommendation (the oil and gas sub-group does), he’s just facilitating the meeting.

Eric Sanford – you heard some of that, this morning from the mountain biking groups –if some have comments on other areas then the more specific the better, generating comments against or for provide us very little for which to give the BLM advice on the process.

Christie Zeller — my suggestion is that it was very helpful to have comments following the way Montezuma County held their meeting – my suggestion is that if La Plata County wants to do something similar, they should and in order to respect everyone’s time – the area by area method and using the [Appendix H](#) was helpful to focus comments – the three things she’s interested in is; pipeline safety, conservation easements referring to the letter from Colorado Parks and Wildlife – and so far we have heard nothing from the public that isn’t covered by what she has seen in the available documents. She described listening better with her eyes and needing to read the CPW letter first before being able to comment – in August we need to have a public comment meeting.

Dan Huntington – he came away from the meeting this morning with nothing – public comment was so general – he could not use it – get specific – He wants to know how will the private landowners be impacted by doing this – they need to be included.

Pete Eschallier – interest is in Phil’s World - has not read RMP and Appendices – can someone from BLM explain the stipulations, what already exists in the area of Phil’s World? – if that answer is too detailed for this meeting, then how can someone from the public learn and understand more? – can we come with that information next meeting? –

Ryan Joyner - I can bring that info to the next meeting –

Connie Clementson - would like to know if Montezuma County could sit down with the RAC and go over what they did?

Pete Eschallier – doesn’t hear much talk about recreation tourism, economic stipulations and effects on the local economy – does the RMP address that? Economic benefits are a resource issue that maybe we can talk about – develop smartly.

Eric Sanford – Question maybe, is it covered in the RMP? How would it be addressed by a MLP? – Is there another process that would address that issue? If we could look at every issue and their respective specific resources, we can get answers. There is a lot of information to take in – I’m not the only one that may be able to understand what a MLP can or cannot do.

Greg Dubit – with all this information and synthesis to gather thoughts – what is the deadline people can come and speak or make written comments, what’s the deadline – we need to compile for the full RAC – not totally clear on the timeline for people to have their thoughts as part of the compiling and synthesis in order to have that included.

Connie Clementson – originally we talked about targeting the August RAC meeting for a recommendation to BLM due to member turnover on the RAC –plug for applications to serve on the RAC –we asked John Reams to have the recommendation available during a full quorum – and resolution.

Ernie Williams – I think we need to set a date, end of June, and have time after to review and synthesize comments – time to put data together – then have a July meeting – and meeting in August.

Dale Davidson – Remembers a discussion around the idea that if deficiencies in RMP exist, then the MLP could lead to RMP Amendment? Is that still in play?

Connie Clementson – complicated question – the MLP would likely be an Environmental Assessment, it’s hard to answer because we don’t know what the issues are – a RMP amendment would take longer to complete – I think we can say we are not looking for a RMP Amendment – generally, the issues are covered within a new RMP.

Dale Davidson - referring to the private vs federal minerals; it’s a matter of scale, may not be a way to judge importance/relevance – Where are those lands? – Let’s not just think about it on a one-to-one basis.

John Reams - we have 10 minutes remaining before public comments, we may need to address the format of the next meeting.

Matt Thorp – waives time

Jimbo Buickerood – on process – doesn’t see any need to change the agenda for the next couple meetings – suggest we find time to look into the public comments, don’t need to wait until summer, why don’t we think end of March and then sit down and talk and review, let’s move it along and not leave it hanging. Are we still on for what we’re thinking about the MLP and the audience? – going through the RMP definitions not much for Agriculture and Conservation Easements – these are strong pieces of our tourism economy, our organization will be writing up comments to address these - referring to earlier explanation by BLM, I want to talk private surface, I don’t think it’s fair to say that a private landowner is in the driver seat when talking the on-site meetings and using federal stipulations when looking at private minerals and fed minerals – a private landowner that has no attorney doesn’t compare with the government who does –the reality is industry would rather deal with private landowner than the federal government.

James Lambert - something Connie Clementson said, the MLP would deal specifically with environmental concerns –

Connie Clementson – the MLP would look at the key issues – they may be socioeconomic – that’s what

we're looking at, are there things we didn't address in the RMP, she wants to hear from the community –

James Lambert – public comments so far have little to do with environmental issues and more to do with process – he's a proponent of returning lands to the State – one of the objections is that you can't trust the State but he hears the public don't trust the BLM - somewhere somebody has to be trusted – How are we going to deal with environmental concerns in this process?

Chris Lopez – appreciates the dialogue – some frustration this morning – supportive of Jimbo Buickerood suggestion we speed up, not drag on – described his job title – want to discuss what Eric Sanford said earlier – there are multiple layers of regulation that the oil and gas industry already has to go through – state, federal, local – What is the appropriate level to address these concerns? – wants to know where this level is for addressing protections and having protections in place – was involved in SE Utah MLP – this SW MLP is unique because it doesn't even meet the criteria for completing a MLP – and – in this case State Director discretion is being exercised – on the process – CO has 4 other MLPs underway, and have not even started, this is not a quick fix – What is appropriate? – This is brand new territory for BLM nationally, they take a long time – 2010 Canyonlands decision to do MLPs in UT have not even started, named the Greater Canyonlands MLP – frustration, 6 years later and not started – CO is in the same situation.

Rod Oliver – the working group does not have an accurate cross section of the county – it's not about the meeting and who shows up, there are more people in the community that need to be considered.

James Dietrich – asks the group, what value would the mapping exercise add – We could do - if subgroup thinks there is value – He will do –

Public Comments:

Ellen Foster (see attached comments)

M. B. McAfee (see attached comments)

Betty Ann Kolner (see attached comments)

Katie Koppenhafer (see attached comments)

Bruce Short (see attached comments)

Maddy Butcher (see attached comments)

Dennis Styles – W Ranchers Alliance – pipelines – issues codes and regulations. Talk is cheap – not against the MLP but construction traffic and traffic on dirt roads, dust needs to be addressed – all pipelines from wells need to be buried lines – example, Deadhorse Lateral – 100% x-rayed for integrity – meet standards and codes, all inspections should be CDWI – follow guidelines —see comments given at Durango meeting.

Phillip Walters (see attached comments)

Dennis Beasler – Business owner – Montezuma County – are commissioners going to be on final plan development? – will everyone's issues be made public and is anyone answering their issues and comments or will the board and sub-group take them up the line?

Citizen (A name was not captured for the minutes.) -- Concerned about the amount of water fracking will use – keep our water safe for Agricultural uses and all else – is in support of MLP if there is an option to exempt lands from oil and gas extraction – the area has already leased enough if we burn all that is leased we'll harm planet.

Quinn Swope (see attached comments).

Chad Gilbert (see attached comments)

Jane Anderson (see attached comments)

Richard Fulton – Mancos – maps show Weber and WSAs - last night he took a walk and noticed the beauty of the area, the valley and this valley is made unique by its quietness and beauty – look and listen-

Chris Easton – Cortez – Connie C. mentioned socioeconomic – current RMP stipulations. Resource protections are just a part of MLP – are there other MLPs and Stipulations crafted that this process can borrow and formulate stipulations to address specific concerns – put them before the RAC.

Tyler Hoyt – Farmer – Mancos – already see drilling impacts of oil and gas everyday – already too much – can't imagine more trucks and traffic driving by his house – looked all over for residence and chose Mancos because of the lack of oil and gas – farmers rely on water and irrigation – Animas had negative influence on farmers – we have something special living here because of the lack of those dangers, economies need to be protected – supportive of MLP.

Andrea Hackensack – Green table farm – expressed concern for water quality – farmers and ranchers have clean water and don't want to see the same thing happening like in La Plata County to move to Mancos – continue to make it safe.

Ollie Bye – Mancos – similar concerns for water – MLP and citizens input into the process – just because private lands are out of the process, doesn't mean they are doomed to development– resent that notion – those in the room, thanks for being activists for showing up and thanks for coming out.

John Reams – next move – mapping exercise for the Sub-group similar to what Montezuma County conducted

John Reams – concluded meeting 8:32 p.m.

**Comments submitted during
public comment period on
2-11-16 in Hesperus, CO**

TRES RIOS FIELD OFFICE, MASTER LEASING PLAN, FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Public Comments by Ellen Foster, 25314 County Road T, Dolores, CO 81323

The boundary of the MLP should be expanded to include all the private land north and west of the proposed boundary, extending to the Montezuma County line.

McPhee Reservoir, the Dam and Narraguinnep are not included in the proposed MLP boundary. And the only protection provided for any Reservoir or Lake in the Resource Management Plan is No Surface Occupancy within 0.25 mile of the high water shoreline. (Stipulation 1.7), but this is also subject to waiver, exception and modification as decided by the BLM. More specific criteria are needed. And more consideration of the risks to these water sources is warranted, as shown by the BLM's recent lease deferral near McPhee.

The BLM should consult with the Bureau of Reclamation and the USGS to establish an appropriate buffer zone around McPhee Reservoir and all reservoirs, where drilling, seismic activities and waste water disposal wells are prohibited. There should be absolutely no exceptions, modifications, or waivers allowed on all protective measures for new AND EXISTING leases.

There must be regular monitoring and review to ensure that Special Lease Stipulations and Conditions of Approval are being met. If the BLM does not have adequate staff to monitor and review these requirements, this area should be closed to oil and gas leasing.

Montezuma County has a long tradition of farming and ranching. Consumers are increasingly concerned about where and how crops are raised. Organic farmers are held to especially high standards. Clean air, water and soil are essential for their economic survival. I couldn't find one reference to agriculture in the Resource Management Plan.

There is immense potential for conflict between oil and gas developers and farmers who don't own the minerals below their private property. Increased oil and gas development threatens not only their livelihood, but their property values, their health, and their quality of life.

You may look at the map of split estate owners and think that there isn't that much acreage involved, but even a small parcel is important to the person who farms it. Final approval of exceptions, modifications, and waivers is left to the discretion of the Authorized Officer, whose determination is partially based on whether or not something has a "substantial" effect. But there are no guidelines for what is considered "substantial".

We need an MLP to create specific lease stipulations and conditions of approval, similar to those included in the Moab MLP, that would protect local farmers, ranchers and other surface owners.

For example, the Moab MLP contains this Stipulation:

On split-estate lands within the Planning Area, the operator would comply with the lease stipulations applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface. The Authorized Officer would apply the same lease exceptions, modifications and waivers as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.

In conclusion, I'm asking the Working Group to recommend that a Master Leasing Plan be done, that the Working Group make their recommendation as soon after the March 16 public hearing as possible, and that no leasing take place until the MLP is finalized.

Thank you all for taking the time to be involved in this process.

Public Comment: Tres Rios BLM Working Group Meeting

From: M. B. McAfee
22277 Road 20
Lewis CO 81327
February 11, 2016
mbmcafee@fone.net

I am keenly interested in moving this process along; it's clear to me that there will be a Master Leasing Plan in western LaPlata County and a central swath of Montezuma County. I believe this process can move along more quickly than is outlined. BLM at the state and national levels will ultimately make the decision. The RAC and its subgroups are advisors. I urge this Working Group to come to grips with the fact that the RMP is inadequate on several fronts. An MLP will be derived from local input and is the best tool to protect our communities in terms of water and air quality, our agricultural heritage, and tourism potential.

I will make two points. First, it is not clear to me how the boundary of this map was determined other than Connie Clementson saying on two occasions (Montezuma County Commissioner meeting on Nov. 2, 2015 and during the Working Group meeting on Nov. 19, 2015), "We had to start somewhere." Experts predict the Gothic Shale Oil play will re-emerge when oil prices rise and the technology to deal with the salinity problem is solved. Therefore, it is a matter of common sense that the boundaries of the MLP map should include the area of the Gothic Shale play. I am in favor of an MLP in this larger area so as to give as much local control about oil and gas development in the largest area possible.

Second, I want to address the language of the Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan, particularly in Appendix H and in reference to Exceptions, Modifications and Waivers. I have read in Chapter 2 of the RMP that the fluid mineral program emphasizes the orderly and environmentally responsible development of oil and gas on lands subject to lease disposal. Also, it is stated on page 112 of Chapter 2 that, "All TRFO oil and gas leases are subject to Standard lease terms; these are the least restrictive terms under which an oil and gas lessee **may** operate." I want to emphasize the permissive language here – "**may**" rather than "**must**." Permissive language leaves too much wiggle room for the area to be regulated at the whim of personal discretion rather than regulations rooted in science and common sense. I'd rather pin my future to a sturdy juniper tree or sagebrush, the lasting sentinels of our high desert plateau.

Furthermore, there is a pervasiveness of permissive language regarding Exceptions, Modifications, and Waivers in Appendix H. On page 8 of Appendix H Standard Lease language is explained; it illustrates that these stipulations can be bent, shaped, or ignored. It describes the Standard Lease language wherein the Authorizing Officer **may** grant exceptions to stipulations, **may** modify stipulations or **may** waive stipulations. This renders the long list of stipulations useless by allowing the Authorizing Officer to overcome any objections from the public or private sector regarding potential reasons to block or redesign oil and gas development activities. I believe this permissive language, alone, indicates that the RMP is deficient. For me this slices through most issues like a laser beam and leads simply to the conclusion that an MLP is the necessary for specific protections in an area that incorporates the entire Gothic Shale play.

Hello, my name is Katie Koppenhafer. I live in Cortez and work with the team at Osprey Packs. I enjoy big game hunting and I'm an avid mountain biker.

This evening I am here to speak on behalf of the Southwest Colorado Cycling Association, formerly known as Kokopelli Bike Club. We currently have over 350 local members and have been active in the community for over 15 years.

The bike club has been instrumental in the building, expansion and maintenance of many of the local trail systems such as Boggy Draw, Sage Hen and Phil's World. Most recently we have secured an agreement with the Forest Service to groom trails for snow biking on Boggy Draw.

The bike club would like to express our gratitude for the staff at the BLM and to you, the volunteers, on the working group for donating your time and energy to this important process.

The Southwest Colorado Cycling Association supports the creation of a Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan because we believe that an MLP is a way to ensure our important recreation resources are protected. With smart planning we can avoid conflicts with future oil and gas development. Areas like Phil's World are consistently named among the top mountain bike destinations in Colorado. Phil's World is also nationally known and is a huge draw for our region. Recreation resources like these are why many of us choose to live here. Unfortunately the way things stand now, oil and gas development could occur in and around Phil's World. A master leasing plan would need to include protections to ensure that future oil and gas development does not detract from the user experience.

The new trail project "Paths to Mesa Verde" is a proposed trail system to connect Mancos, Mesa Verde NP, and Cortez. Once completed it would be just another draw to our region and enhance our already amazing recreation opportunities. An ambitious project like this would benefit greatly from a Master Leasing Plan. The SWCO MLP would take a broad look at the region and involve local stake-holders to create a plan that makes sense. It would ensure that future development decisions do not harm our recreation resources.

Our recreation resources are indeed, amazing. Which is why the Southwest Colorado Cycling Association supports the creation of a SWCO MLP. Thank you.

February 11, 2016

To: Tres Rios BLM Office Resource Advisory Committee

From: Cedar Mesa Ranches HOA

P.O. Box 62

Mancos, CO 81328

Subject: Concerns on BLM Oil and Gas Leasing in Montezuma County and Support of Master Leasing Planning Process

This letter regards potential oil and gas leases on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management surrounding the Cedar Mesa Ranches subdivision plus current and potential leases on the publicly-owned subsurface mineral estate underlying private lands within the subdivision.

The residents of Cedar Mesa Ranches (CMR) understand the economic and strategic importance of potential hydrocarbon resources in the Gothic Shale Gas Play underlying our area. We all use petroleum and natural gas to heat our homes, provide electricity and run our vehicles and we understand that supplying those energy sources is necessary to the continued health of our local and national economy. We do believe that oil and gas exploration and development can be done in a manner sensitive to the health, financial stability and quality of life of the local residents. To that end, we offer our concerns for potential leasing of development rights on the public lands and publicly held mineral estate in the CMR vicinity.

- 1. Road Use and Maintenance:** The 10.7 miles of roads within CMR are Montezuma County roads but were not constructed to current County standards and are not maintained by the County. Dues paid to the HOA by the CMR residents pay for all maintenance and improvement of the road system. The roads do not access any place but the subdivision itself. Use of the road system for exploration and development of any oil and gas leases would require heavy truck and equipment traffic which the road system was never designed or constructed to handle. Present road surfacing, alignment, sight distances and grades are not conducive to mixed residential and heavy truck traffic and would present additional safety hazards for the subdivision residents. Reconstruction of the roads to accommodate such heavy traffic would cost far more than the residents could afford, and maintenance costs would increase greatly. The ability of the County to require road reconstruction and maintenance to accommodate oil and gas traffic as well as residential use has not been fully effective as shown by problems with Kinder Morgan on County-maintained roads in the northwest part of the County. An additional issue is increased heavy truck traffic using the exits and intersections at the entrance to Mesa Verde National Park.
- 2. Noise:** The subdivision does not experience through traffic and the location directly across from Mesa Verde National Park and seven miles from both Cortez and Mancos means ambient noise levels are low. Exploration and development within or in close proximity to CMR would bring greatly increased noise levels from traffic, drilling operations, extraction (i.e. pump jacks and

compressor facilities) and well maintenance. Many residents bought land here because of that low ambient noise environment.

3. **Visual Impacts:** CMR residents value the excellent views we have of the La Platas, the Mancos Valley, Mesa Verde and Point Lookout, Sleeping Ute and the Montezuma Valley. A patchwork of drill pads, cleared pipeline corridors and service roads is out of character with the landscape and present an industrial character rather than the rural character we currently enjoy. Our night sky is nearly free of light pollution and security lighting for drill rigs, well pads and associated infrastructure would destroy that.
4. **Air Pollution:** Leakage of gasses during drilling and after are of concern. Hydrogen sulfide leaks have occurred during drilling operations in the Four Corners area in the past and we ask that emergency resident notification protocols be put into place prior to any development activity.
5. **Property Values:** Some studies in Northwest and Northeast Colorado, Northern New Mexico, Wyoming, and Southern La Plata County has shown that property values of tracts with well pads are lowered from 2 up to 22% (La Plata County Commissioner's 2002 report). This is due to all the factors listed above. Additional severance tax revenue from the number of wells that could potentially exist within and around CMR would likely not make up for loss of property tax revenue from the residences in CMR. It has been demonstrated in La Plata County (Durango Herald 2/8/16) that once an oil and gas program is planned or being developed in an area that residents may have a difficult time selling or obtaining property insurance.
6. **Big Game Winter Range:** Cedar Mesa Ranches lies in the area designated by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and noted in the Tres Rios RMP as Critical Winter Range for big game, particularly mule deer. Given the concerns about mule deer populations on the western slope over the past several years, maintaining RMP standards and guides on seasonal use of the BLM parcels surrounding the subdivision are important.
7. **Tres Rios Field Office RMP Compliance:** The CMR HOA and concerned residents have examined the RMP and specifically Appendix H to determine what stipulations O&G exploration and development would be required to meet, and what are the stated management objectives for BLM managed lands surrounding the subdivision. The BLM parcels surrounding CMR are the Summit and Chutes and Ladders portions of the Cortez Special Recreation Management Area. Targeted activities are hiking/trail running and equestrian use in the Summit and mountain biking in Chutes and Ladders sections. Other program management actions for the Summit and Chutes and Ladders sections in the RMP include fuels treatments, but no new temporary or permanent road construction for fuel treatments is allowed, or actions that would adversely impact the recreational settings, experiences or outcomes of the targeted activities. It would seem that O&G exploration and development would also need to comply with those management objectives.

8. **Possible Solutions:** The CMR HOA recommends a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile No Surface Occupancy (NSO) zone around the subdivision. Exploration activities using CMR roads would be subject to road use standards and limitations commensurate with vehicle weights and use frequency, and road use fees would be paid to the HOA. No development traffic would be allowed unless roads to be used were reconstructed to county standards for the planned vehicle weights and use frequencies prior to any O&G development. Drilling on existing and future leases would be required to use directional drilling methods from pads located outside the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile NSO zone.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cedar Mesa Ranches HOA

Mancos, Colorado

In reading the RMP, I noticed that each resource listed for regulation had the disclaimer that the regs could be modified, by waivers, exceptions or modifications. This would easily nullify any stated regulations within the document, and without the public being notified.

The RMP does not address split estates, leaving surface landowners with few enforceable regulations they could utilize to control unwanted production activities on their land. As a surface owner, being pressured to sign a surface use contract, I was told 1) my signature doesn't matter, they have rights to subsurface minerals, signature or not and 2) in the case of multiple ownership, they need 1% of owners to sign—that's only one out of 100! Extraction on private property is not addressed in the RMP.

The RMP neglects to mention agriculture anywhere in the document. Local producers are a major asset to our economy. Without proper setbacks from water sources and growing areas, along w/attention to air quality and soil health, we stand to lose our ability to grow our own food.

The Master Leasing Plan is a chance to challenge the status quo. Industry can be required to monitor, clean up and reclaim their activities through enforceable stipulations. Industry can foot the bill for staff, equipment and the technology it takes to do the job without a toxic footprint. At present, there is no local independent monitoring of Volatile Organic Compounds, discovered to be escaping from the Yellow Jacket Compressor station, via private monitoring approximately one year ago.

As a tool with some "teeth", an MLP could give our community a chance to control how and where we want Industry presence. With it's guarantee of public input, this community can say what we want to look like from now and into the future.

Thanks
Bettyann Kolner

To THE SWRAC Sub-group

Comments For Feb. 11 Mancos Meeting

I Also Read Eric Sanford's comment in today's Journal - & I don't know what restrictions that The "public doesn't understand" are in place & what do you mean by: "So when you talk about things like night sky, you're talking about MLP preventing O&G from being on federal land, wherein the background there might be a dozen rigs on public land."

Philip Walters (Elk Stream Ranch) Comments to MLP session in Mancos, CO Feb 10, 2016

Hi, I am Philip Walters, and I live at 6137 Road 46 in East Canyon about 3 miles south of Mancos Hill. I am also speaking on behalf of the Board of Elk Stream Ranch, one of the communities in East Canyon.

We want to thank BLM Tres Rios staff, and the Working Group members, the representatives from Montezuma County, La Plata County, National Park Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife and today's participants for your valuable time and participation in this MLP process.

We live in a very special place in SW Colorado, and are blessed with many resources. The mineral wealth of this area belonging to the people of the United States is certainly an important resource, but we have many other resources, public and private that are also valuable, and we support the creation of this MLP as a way to balance the protection of these other resources when further mineral development occurs.

Specifically, those of us with property in East Canyon are living on that land, grazing livestock as well, and we are critically dependent upon a shallow and small aquifer for all of our drinking water as well as for livestock water. This aquifer is a locally recharged riparian aquifer, with no impervious formation above it. Any spill or surface contamination will easily enter the aquifer, and can render it unusable for everyone in the canyon. It is imperative that the MLP protect this water resource we depend upon to live in East Canyon. We ask the MLP classify all of the residential private land in East Canyon as "No Surface Use" (a designation that was in place in past lease offers) and the MLP should provide specific protections for this aquifer to protect it from damage.

East Canyon has a low density of development, and low traffic, which makes it a wildlife corridor for most of the wildlife species of this area, giving access to wildlife from public land to the north side of US 160 to the Menifee Wilderness Study Area to our west, and to BLM and Ute lands to our south. East Canyon serves as a buffer for the east side of the WSA. A "no surface use" designation of East Canyon would protect these wildlife resources.

We would like to submit further written comments to the Working Group and are happy to discuss the specific resource issues in East Canyon further.

Thank You

Philip Walters
PO Box 57
Mancos, CO 81328
(970) 533-7177
pwalters@eastcanserv.com

The current NSO map does not include some areas in East Canyon that are near aquifer recharge zones,



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

uinn Swope

1 message

quinn swope <qswope@yahoo.com>

Fri, Feb 12, 2016 at 8:18 PM

Reply-To: quinn swope <qswope@yahoo.com>

To: "blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov" <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

To the MLP research committee:

I am a citizen of Dolores and appreciate those of you who have volunteered to read these comments. I am a retired educator and grew up in Cortez. I am in favor of an MLP in the Tres Rios area of La Plata and Montezuma counties. Having spent the past 50 years exploring and enjoying the public lands of the area I have a vested interest in seeing our lands protected.

I would like the committee to be sure to protect the edges of Mesa Verde National Park as well as all other cultural resources. We are known worldwide as a cultural hub for archaeology and the study of early people in North America. We need to be sure to be able to conserve these areas for the future. They are important economically and socially in this county.

Being an avid outdoorsman I would be in favor of minimizing the oil and gas industry's impact on all recreation in the area. Please be sure to protect the Phil's World biking area. I live here in order to enjoy our public lands on a regular basis. My retirement income could be spent elsewhere, but I choose this county because of the recreational opportunities in hiking, biking and fishing. Being over run with roads, and pumping jacks would seriously affect the quality of our air, water and therefore our lives.

I volunteer to do trail work on local hiking and biking trails every year about 5 hours a week during the summer and fall. To see my trails cut with new roads everywhere would be really depressing. Recreation if protected will continue to be a big draw for our area. Economically it makes long term sense to preserve what we have.

Many of my fellow retirees appreciate this area as a peaceful and beautiful spot to live. The environment is important to this group and we have a large economic impact in the county. Please be wise in how you guide our future outdoor experience.

Thank you

Quinn Swope
201 North 19th Street
PO Box 374
Dolores, CO

Hello my name is Chad Gilbert and I represent 7000 oil and gas workers nation wide for members of Pipeliners Union 798. I also live in Cedar Mesa Ranches near proposed development of oil and gas reserves in the Gothic Shale Play.

Although I am pro gas and oil development as a union member and craftsmen, I am also for quality construction and for using a local workforce, when possible, and prevailing wages for development of our local resources.

I urge the committee to pursue the Master Lease Plan and also to insure the socio economics of the project. Contractors should be required to have healthcare for their employees so we, as citizens of Montezuma and La Plata Counties, are not responsible for out of state low wage workers that cannot pay for hospital and clinic visits for their families. We also request these jobs be prevailing wage so the workers will be able to afford good housing and shop in local businesses. This will help build the economy in our communities.

So many times in my career I have seen workers living in poor living conditions and barely making enough money to send home to Texas or Arizona, or where the workers families reside. I have also seen workers who are forced to work for contractors because they fear being turned into authorities for lack of citizenship.

I ask the commission to help workers by addressing our issues of unscrupulous contractors being used to develop our resources in Montezuma and La Plata Counties under the socio economics of a Master Leasing Plan.

Quality should also be looked at so every aspect of the development is safe for our families. Gathering systems should be 100 percent weld X-rayed and only Certified Welding inspectors should be used for construction of the piping and facilities. Pipeline safety needs to be addressed in a MLP . These are issues I see from my 30 years in the field that I know the Counties are not prepared to consider and address.

To finish, I truly believe that all these issues need to be addressed in order for the Gothic Shale Play and the leases we are addressing today to be successful.

Thank you
Chad Gilbert
36013 Rd K.3
Mancos Co. 81328



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C-851-TU

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Cell: 918-606-9458
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Fax: 918-627-9327

Comments related to BLM Oil and Gas Subgroup Meeting

2/11/2016, Mancos Colorado

Good evening. My name is Jane Anderson. After retiring from the National Park in January of 2015 Service I moved to Montezuma County, purchased a home and property. I spent 8 years of my NPS career working at Mesa Verde National Park.

I appreciate the opportunity to make comments to the BLM about the necessity of developing a Master Leasing Plan for potential oil and gas development on 66,422 acres managed by the Tres Rios Field Office.

The BLM as an agency of the Department of the Interior has a responsibility to insure that any lands leased for oil and gas development are protected from harm. In the current leasing allotment there are two areas of national and international importance that must be addressed with adequate protection to insure that those areas do not sustain irreparable damage. Those areas are Mesa Verde National Park and Canyon of the Ancients. The newly released Resource Management Plan does not adequately address lease stipulations for the lands adjacent to these two magnificent areas where conflict will occur. A MLP can address stipulations to protect air quality, water quality, protection of flora and fauna and any endangered or threatened species, viewsheds, soundscapes and night skies – especially important for Mesa Verde and its value to the public. Mesa Verde is a \$50 Million economic engine in this area and the viewsheds from the park are like no other. It will lose significant value if the landscape is marred with drilling rigs, access roads and off gassing of methane. The development of these adjacent lands results in increased truck traffic on dusty roads that lead to health issues and hazy skies. The BLM itself has data that shows increased vandalism to archeological sites as a result of access roads and development of leasing sites. A MLP can address these issues and insure conditions of approval are met and best practices implemented. In the case of Mesa Verde the BLM should be working closely with their sister agency to insure the best protection of the park and adjacent lands.

There are many other areas of concern that should be addressed by a MLP:

1. Wildlife – the impacts include disruption of wildlife corridors, habitat fragmentation due to road development and pipeline infrastructure, threats to rare and endangered species – all items that could be addressed with specific stipulations in a MLP
2. Air Quality – including visibility in the region – increased introduction of hazardous air pollutants such as benzene and n-hexane – known carcinogens
3. Water quality – drilling can affect both surface and below ground water sources. This is a major concern that have devastating results if there are not safeguards in place. While the RMP has some stipulations they are not specific and no particular water resource has been identified.
4. Agriculture is one of the major providers of income in this county. The current RMP does not adequately any conflicts that would arise between oil and gas development and agricultural resources.
5. Recreation, community and quality of life. This area is mostly undisturbed and provides incredible hiking, boating, biking skiing, wildlife observation and peaceful rural living like no other. The potential of destroying these resources without adequate protection would be disastrous. Is it worth short term job inflation and gas production only to destroy these precious resources that we all love? What about the future generations that would be affected?

Thank you

Jane Anderson

11822 Road 28.3

Dolores, CO 81323

andersonmorris@hotmail.com

On a local level there are numerous economic and environmental reasons to stop oil, gas and other extractions on BLM land in Montezuma and La Plata counties—preserving the beauty of the land we love, not adding to the air pollution that already exists in our area, not interfering with recreational and agricultural use of BLM and surrounding land, etc.

But when we jump to a big-picture perspective, there we find the biggest, most crucial, motivator of all—climate change. We—all of us, every living being on this planet, our only planet—are on track for a 4 degree increase in global temperature, double what all models say we need to prevent. Therefore, all of us as global citizens need to consider this necessary prevention in virtually every decision we make.

Thus, BLM as a governmental agency representing many, many global citizens and having great influence over the land use of BLM lands and surrounding areas needs to do its part in keeping carbon in the ground. Please change BLM's focus, policy, and work to the truly sustainable management of the lands BLM stewards—no further extractions and instead support communities and individuals to build solar arrays, wind farms, public transportation, keep water sources clean, preserve open space and beauty, etc., etc.

Think and act in the big-picture reality—you can do it!

Lisa Allee, RN, CNM
14493 Rd 31
Mancos, CO 81328
lisaalleecn@gmail.com
970-570-7936

Specifically—
yes to a MLP, increase the area
the MLP covers, use the
MLP to push BLM to
change course ~~to~~ away
from fossil fuel extraction
& towards 100% renewable
energy

The RMP does not address
climate change & it
is crucial that it does!



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
February 11, 2016
Durango, CO ♦ Mancos, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: STAN MATTINGLY

Address: 35987 ROAD J.9 MANCOS CO 81328

Phone: 970 565 0118

Email: stanbmattingly@hotmail.com

Comments: Does the RMP adequately describe the role and authorities of Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) as it applies to the proposed oil and gas program in southwest Colorado? If it does not, I believe it should because activities on Federal lands and subsurface mineral holdings impact neighboring private lands and vice versa. The public deserves to be informed.

Stan S. Mattingly

Statement to RAC Group for BLM Consideration of a MLP in Tres Rios Field Area - February 11, 2016

The overwhelming weight of my husband's and my decision to move his medical practice as a Family Practitioner and raise our family in this area was the natural beauty and varied outdoor opportunities we could readily enjoy on a daily basis. He gave himself tirelessly to the health and well-being of his patients and saw first hand the devastation and ill effects of some of the issues our community members faced working in such high-risk occupations like mining and the oil and gas extraction industries. An athlete in his own right, non-smoker, early proponent and ardent cyclist from the inception of Phil's World, he, too, would fall victim to metastatic lung cancer.

Our home and property has become a refuge and a place of retreat with small vacation rentals for those who continue to travel from around the globe to this uniquely grand locale which has, no less, a designated WORLD HERITAGE PARK at MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK. I have personally had potential guests query my drinking water source. They would not take accommodations in the Durango area because of last year's mining tailings spill into the Animas River. As a result of this disastrous event they chose to utilize my lodging which felt less "endangered" to them.

But we are all imminently "endangered" by our short-sided, narrowly focused goals on how to use the resources this area offers, most specifically, hastily and poorly regulated extraction of oil, gas and minerals. This one pointed and dogged pursuit to develop these limited resources has a much larger impact on the economic, social, and emotional health of our communities. Additionally, the threats being imposed on the natural wildlife, agricultural sustainability, and panoramic beauty we all take such pleasure in having just outside our back doors are of significant consideration for the ongoing, future viability of not just our small area of the country, but of this planet. Please consider the long-term ramifications over the short-term lure of oil and gas development and use this proposed MLP as a means to mitigate the draw backs of this "race to ravage" our land, air, water and sense of place...

Sincerely and most urgently noted,

jeanne cain, proprietor of casa cielo retreats (Ph: 970-882-7503)
15975 Rd 30
Dolores, CO 81323



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Comment Letter

1 message

Maddy Butcher <maddybutcherhere@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 15, 2016 at 10:12 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Dear Subgroup members:

Thanks very much for your volunteer efforts.

I'm one of the many residents of southwestern Colorado who landed here for the area's unique splendor and outdoor opportunities. As you contemplate recommendations to the BLM, please consider:

Despite whatever revenues might be gained by leasing acreage to oil and gas interests, such leases will have a direct and detrimental impact on the existing economy.

The outdoor recreation industry is a \$34.5 billion business in Colorado. According to a 2014 report by the Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, twenty-five thousand jobs exist here in the southwest region because of outdoor recreation.

The choice to live here has been quantified as a Willingness to Pay (WTP), an economic model developed by researchers at the University of Utah, Weber State University, and Utah State University for the huge, 784-page study looking into whether transferring federal land to the states would make sense for Utah. It's a model that is readily relevant in the Tres Rios MLP discussion.

The researchers calculated significant WTP losses if there were more extraction in previously undeveloped areas. For example, folks pay huge money to hunt trophy elk in pristine wilderness. If industry comes in, stirs up the elk population and wrecks the panoramic photo opportunities, the WTP goes down. Hunters go elsewhere.

Researchers have found that folks move to places like Montezuma and LaPlata counties for the natural amenities of public lands and protected landscapes. Those conditions are directly connected to "local economic well-being, including in particular income levels, income growth, and employment growth."

In other words, people who move here aren't slackers, living out of their cars, camping on BLM land, and cooking up ramen night after night. They're smart, go-getters who contribute significantly to the economy:

"[They] tend to be highly educated and employed in skilled and professional occupations [which] can cause such areas to exhibit enhanced levels of "human capital."

Generations ago, bringing more industry to the area might have made sense. But clearly, the area can move away from an economy reliant on environmentally-damaging industries.

Keep it in the ground and it's a win-win.

Maddy Butcher

Mancos, CO

--

[Writer/Reporter/Author/Outsider](#)

**Comments submitted to
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov**



January 13, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093
rwelch@blm.gov

Connie Clementson
Tres Rios Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, Colorado 81323
cclementson@blm.gov

RE: Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan

Dear Colorado State Director Ruth Welch and Tres Rios Field Manager Connie Clementson:

Public Land Solutions (PLS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing comprehensive recreation planning and stakeholder coordination to support effective and sustainable public land solutions. We would like to thank you for initiating a master leasing plan (MLP) process for the Tres Rios Field Office. Our organization has been an active participant in the Moab Master Leasing Plan effort, which has provided a strong forum for stakeholder engagement and ensuring that the concerns of businesses that rely on public lands for recreation and tourism have a seat at the table.

We at PLS are looking forward to the opportunity to provide input on a more detailed discussion and, ultimately, a plan that will better manage oil and gas development in southwestern Colorado where we have a strong interest and protecting and enhancing the recreation assets that support a thriving recreation economy. We appreciate the work that the BLM has already put into the Tres Rios Resource Management Plan and hope to now work with the agency to better address our concerns regarding protection of Mesa Verde National Park, mountain biking at Phil's World, climbing at the Hawkins Preserve and other opportunities for backcountry recreation, hunting, wildlife, and cultural resources. Fundamental to these experiences is protecting regional water and air quality, and the quality of life of local residents. Having the chance to contribute to the discussion around a MLP is very important to PLS. We want to see the commitment the BLM has already made to evaluating an MLP move forward and lead to a productive outcome.

As a concerned public interest organization, PLS wants to ensure the state BLM defers leasing for areas in Tres Rios that are being considered while a MLP is being prepared. Please follow the direction set out in BLM Colorado's guidance (Instruction Memorandum No. CO-2014-019, issued April 7, 2014) and apply it to the potential Tres Rios MLP. The ongoing process around the Tres Rios MLP meets the standard set out in BLM's own guidance that: "This policy applies only to those MLP areas that have been approved for analysis by the Colorado State Director." Deferring leasing while so many stakeholders are working to analyze this potential MLP will make sure the BLM's decisions can be most meaningful.

Since the decision on whether or not to pursue a Master Leasing Plan is currently planned for August, we request that the BLM publicly defer leasing until a decision is made, as provided for

in BLM's April 2014 guidance. If BLM continues to lease lands within the potential MLP area before a decision is made, the utility and effectiveness of the potential MLP will be undermined.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the Tres Rios Field Office once it begins a Master Leasing Plan effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Keith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason Keith
Managing Director
Public Land Solutions
478 Millcreek Drive
Moab, UT 84532
www.publiclandsolutions.org

CC: Lonny Bagley, CO Deputy State Director, Energy Lands & Minerals
Barb Sharrow, Field Manager BLM CO Uncompahgre Field Office

February 3, 2016

Via email and U.S. Mail

Ruth Welch, Director (rwelch@blm.gov)
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215-7210

Connie Clementson, Field Manager (cclementson@blm.gov)
Tres Rios Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, CO 81323

Re: Tres Rios Field Office Master Leasing Plan

Dear Director Welch and Field Manager Clementson:

In recent years, Conservation Colorado and a number of our partners in the conservation community have been advocating for the adoption of a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) process in the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO). Following the revision and eventual adoption of the TRFO Resource Management Plan (RMP), it became apparent that certain deficiencies in the RMP would need to be addressed in subsequent planning processes to ensure the balanced management of resources and uses could occur in a comprehensive manner.

So needless to say, we were very excited and thank BLM for moving forward with a MLP process in La Plata and Montezuma Counties. We feel that MLP's are a great tool that can help avoid and ameliorate resource and user conflicts and concerns around the Mesa Verde National Park region, as well engage the public in a substantive dialogue around future land management.

However, we are concerned that currently BLM has not instituted a moratorium on fluid mineral leasing within the proposed MLP. Previously in other field offices where MLP's were under consideration as part of RMP revisions or amendments (specifically the Dinosaur Trails MLP within the White River Field Office) lands within the proposed MLP boundary were temporarily withdrawn from lease sales in order to not foreclose upon future management opportunities and undermine public confidence within the planning process.

Additionally, we are a bit confused on what the MLP Working Group's role will be in relation to both the public and the Southwest Resource Advisory Council (SWRAC) and the SWRAC Oil and Gas Sub-group. Currently, the Working Group is charged with a mixture of data gathering and

providing recommendations. However, the protocols on how recommendations will be made by the Working Group or the RAC Oil and Gas Sub-group aren't clear. Will only consensus recommendations be forwarded up the chain as has been the norm for all sub-RAC's and working groups for the NWRAC? Or will a simple majority be sufficient? It would be helpful if these questions were addressed prior to the first working group meeting in order to provide clarity to both the public and working group members as well as empower these individuals with a clear road-map on how to achieve a successful outcome. We recommend the NWRAC Sub-group protocols that were developed for the current WRFO TMP Sub-group as a very useful reference document for RAC members, working group members and the public.

Again, we are pleased that BLM has taken a MLP under consideration in southwest Colorado and we believe that fostering a dialogue about the future of our public lands is always a worthwhile endeavor. We hope will consider the recommendations provided in this letter to help further aid the MLP evaluation process by not only producing a robust set of recommendations for the SWRAC to consider, but also to promote the most efficient and comprehensive level of public involvement possible.

We look forward to continue to work with BLM on this and all other planning processes and appreciate your consideration of the issues we have raised.

Sincerely,

Luke Schafer
Western Slope Advocacy Director
Conservation Colorado
529 Yampa Ave.,
Craig, CO 81725
luke@conservationco.org
970-756-5854



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

MLP vs RMP

1 message

betty ann kolner <bettyannkolner@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 11:56 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov, cclementson@blm.gov

In reading the RMP, I noticed that each resource listed for regulation had the disclaimer that the regs could be modified, by waivers, exceptions or modifications. This would easily nullify any stated regulations within the document, and without the public being notified.

The RMP does not address split estates, leaving surface landowners with few enforceable regulations they could utilize to control unwanted production activities on their land. As a surface owner, being pressured to sign a surface use contract, I was told 1) my signature doesn't matter; they have rights to subsurface minerals, signature or not and 2) in the case of multiple ownership, they need 1% of owners to sign--that's only one out of 100! Extraction on private property is not addressed in the RMP.

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The Master Leasing Plan is a chance to challenge the status quo. Industry can be required to monitor, clean up and reclaim their activities through enforceable stipulations. Industry can foot the bill for staff, equipment and the technology it takes to do the job without a toxic footprint. At present, there is no local independent monitoring of Volatile Organic Compounds, discovered to be escaping from the Yellow Jacket Compressor station, via private monitoring approximately one year ago.

As a tool with some "teeth", an MLP could give our community a chance to control how and where we want Industry presence. With it's guarantee of public input, this community can say what we want to look like from now and into the future.

Thanks you
Bettyann Kolner



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: Tres Rio Master Leasing Plan

1 message

Sharrow, Barbara <bsharrow@blm.gov>

Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 8:44 AM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Debra Anderson** <debraa@outlook.com>

Date: Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 7:37 AM

Subject: Tres Rio Master Leasing Plan

To: bsharrow@blm.gov

Greetings,

I encourage leasing BLM land for mineral development. The BLM is empowered by an act of Congress to exploit all manner of methods of producing revenue on the Federal land under its supervision. This includes mineral leasing of all kinds, grazing leases, and collecting fees for allowing hunting, fishing, and other recreational access. To not develop the minerals on this land would be in direct opposition to Congress. The revenues generated from leasing/development benefits everyone on both a local, personal and national level.

Thank you,

Debra

Debra Anderson

1972 S Grant St.

Denver, CO 80210

719-661-7614

debraa@outlook.com

Comments related to BLM Oil and Gas Subgroup Meeting

2/11/2016, Mancos Colorado

Good evening. My name is Jane Anderson. After retiring from the National Park in January of 2015 Service I moved to Montezuma County, purchased a home and property. I spent 8 years of my NPS career working at Mesa Verde National Park.

I appreciate the opportunity to make comments to the BLM about the necessity of developing a Master Leasing Plan for potential oil and gas development on 66, 422 acres managed by the Tres Rios Field Office.

The BLM as an agency of the Department of the Interior has a responsibility to insure that any lands leased for oil and gas development are protected from harm. In the current leasing allotment there are two areas of national and international importance that must be addressed with adequate protection to insure that those areas do not sustain irreparable damage. Those areas are Mesa Verde National Park and Canyon of the Ancients. The newly released Resource Management Plan does not adequately address lease stipulations for the lands adjacent to these two magnificent areas where conflict will occur. A MLP can address stipulations to protect air quality, water quality, protection of flora and fauna and any endangered or threatened species, viewsheds, soundscapes and night skies – especially important for Mesa Verde and its value to the public. Mesa Verde is a \$50 Million economic engine in this area and the viewsheds from the park are like no other. It will lose significant value if the landscape is marred with drilling rigs, access roads and off gassing of methane. The development of these adjacent lands results in increased truck traffic on dusty roads that lead to health issues and hazy skies. The BLM itself has data that shows increased vandalism to archeological sites as a result of access roads and development of leasing sites. A MLP can address these issues and insure conditions of approval are met and best practices implemented. In the case of Mesa Verde the BLM should be working closely with their sister agency to insure the best protection of the park and adjacent lands.

There are many other areas of concern that should be addressed by a MLP:

1. Wildlife – the impacts include disruption of wildlife corridors, habitat fragmentation due to road development and pipeline infrastructure, threats to rare and endangered species – all items that could be addressed with specific stipulations in a MLP
2. Air Quality – including visibility in the region – increased introduction of hazardous air pollutants such as benzene and n-hexane – known carcinogens
3. Water quality – drilling can affect both surface and below ground water sources. This is a major concern that have devastating results if there are not safeguards in place. While the RMP has some stipulations they are not specific and no particular water resource has been identified.
4. Agriculture is one of the major providers of income in this county. The current RMP does not adequately any conflicts that would arise between oil and gas development and agricultural resources.
5. Recreation, community and quality of life. This area is mostly undisturbed and provides incredible hiking, boating, biking skiing, wildlife observation and peaceful rural living like no other. The potential of destroying these resources without adequate protection would be disastrous. Is it worth short term job inflation and gas production only to destroy these precious resources that we all love? What about the future generations that would be affected?

Thank you

Jane Anderson

11822 Road 28.3

Dolores, CO 81323

andersonmorris@hotmail.com



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

No drilling in Montezuma County ~

1 message

Katherine Dobson <katdob11@gmail.com>

Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 4:23 PM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Cc: sborders@blm.gov

Dear BLM,

I am writing to strongly oppose the exploration of drilling/ fracking in Montezuma County and in particular, canyon of the ancients and Mesa Verde national park. Our county has precious tourist and nature resources which will be badly affected by drilling, not to mention our quality of life. Make Montezuma County an example of how to say "NO" to oil & gas to preserve our communities value on health and the environment and clean air and water. We will lose so much if the BLM decided to lease to oil&gas interests ~ stand up and say no!!!!!!

Thank you,

Katherine Dobson
12761 Road 41,9
Mancos, Co 81328

February 1, 2016

RECEIVED
FEB 03 2016
DOLORES PUBLIC
LANDS OFFICE

To the Southwest RAC:

I am unable to attend the meetings to provide my comments in person but wanted to say that there are a lot of us out here outside of the environmental groups that wonder what has come of our world? Seems that we live in a world of hypocrites and finger pointing.

So the La Plata county wants the BLM to do another study on ... what? So I saw the BLM's presentation on this master leasing plan. It appears they are being forced into something that the tax payers shouldn't have to pay for. So.. the BLM said that this area is that they're looking at only has around 80,000 acres of the government's minerals. Most of that is private property with the government's below. I believe it was something like only 26,000 acres remained that the BLM actually had total control over.

So where are the COUNTIES in this. They seem to be doing a lot of finger pointing, acting like they have no role or responsibility in this. I don't think so. Our current commissioners seem to not have any concept of reality.

Montezuma is trying to pass rules that they can't implement (hey guys .. can't implement county rules on federal lands).. and La Plata is busy pointing fingers and not taking any responsibility to lead additional rules for private property (isn't that your jurisdiction guys?).

I say. La Plata county should be doing this master leasing plan since most of the land is private property and it is going to be developed way before the federal land. Just look around. Private lands don't have near the red tape to go through to drill and develop.

Signed


Henry Michael Williams

Lewis, Colorado

Dear RAC members,

Please tell the newspapers to cover the whole story. They seem to only allow editorials from the LEFT and environmentalists. It's about time that the rest of folks are represented. These idiots that drive to protest.. where the hell do they think they think their clothes and mountain bikes and tires and heating comes from.. Or are they 'living' in a tent and walking everywhere. I doubt it.

RAC and BLM.. stop letting these people waste our tax payers money. I'd much rather see some more trails at Phil's world than BLM do another study. Does these idiots understand that developing on federal lands is the safest and most controlled processes in the country/world?

Stop waste my tax payer money...

Put that in the papers Cortez Journal and Durango Herald.

Let's get a petition started with that as our goal!

James and Haley Robins

(retired and left that damn county)

POB 77821

Seneca, New York

RECEIVED
JAN 09 2016
DOLORES PUBLIC
LANDS OFFICE



Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Master leading plan

1 message

Joanie Trussel <joaniepatricia@gmail.com>
To: sborders@blm.gov

Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 9:49 AM

I would like to submit the following opinion regarding gas and oil leasing in monte zuma county:

The arguments against a master leasing plan stand directly in opposition to what a master leasing plan is intended to do. It is about protection of our land which then leads to protection of our existence - the air we breathe and the water we drink. Realistically we are destroying our atmosphere with every well that is drilled. This is not about economics -- this is about how much digging in the ground we can continue to do before we have affected our physical health and the health of our children and the health of our forests, our wildlife and the health of our planet. This issue needs to be addressed and not ignored for the sake of economic security. It's time for us to wake up!

Joanie Trussel

Sent from my iPhone



Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Comments about the proposed Leasing Plan

1 message

DARCY LEVTZOW <darcylevtzow@hotmail.com>

Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 3:31 PM

To: "sborders@blm.gov" <sborders@blm.gov>

The current Resource Management Plan has many concerning issues for me.

It appears that any issue dealing with the No Occupancy Provisions has a disclaimer that the provisions may be waived, modified, or exempted as written. That seems as if the oil companies and/or the BLM can do whatever they wish with the land with no consideration for the people, animals, vegetation, and crops living on or near these sights.

It appears that farming and ranching do not seem to be a concern. The oil companies and the BLM should consider the livelihood also of the people living off of this land, growing crops and raising animals.

It also appears as if split estate owners are not protected from any conflict. The BLM should consult with people living on the land, farmers and ranchers, and split estate owners and draft more protective stipulations for their livelihood.

I believe having wells and contamination in our beautiful country and near our incredible cultural resources such as Mesa Verde and the Canyon of the Ancients can only diminish our tourism economy. I can only hope protective stipulations can protect our scenery as that's why the people who live here have their families, animals, and land.

I want there to be more protective overall stipulations or to simply close certain areas to leasing.

Why? More reasons?

The biggest reasons for me are water and air contamination.

Seeps and leakage can contaminate and ruin underground water supplies forever. This effects the people living here, their families, pets, livestock, and land. Seeps and leakages can contaminate our drinking water, streams, and reservoirs. Is any stipulation really going to protect everything? Doubtful.

Then, of course, we have the many chemicals we will be sending into our atmosphere. Yes, the air we breathe. Our area already suffers from poor air quality. Allowing all of these wells and areas to be drilled by the gas and oil companies is only going to make things worse.

So, in the many areas of water and air contamination, wildlife protection, cultural resources, recreation, irrigation canals, rivers, reservoirs, farming and ranching, please consider the most protective stipulations or closing any questionable areas to leasing. All of these deficiencies can contribute to the degradation of our communities quality of life. Please manage this precious land by doing the right thing.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Darcy Levtzow

Public Comment: Tres Rios BLM Working Group Meeting

From: M. B. McAfee
22277 Road 20
Lewis CO 81327
February 11, 2016
mbmcafee@fone.net

I am keenly interested in moving this process along; it's clear to me that there will be a Master Leasing Plan in western LaPlata County and a central swath of Montezuma County. I believe this process can move along more quickly than is outlined. BLM at the state and national levels will ultimately make the decision. The RAC and its subgroups are advisors. I urge this Working Group to come to grips with the fact that the RMP is inadequate on several fronts. An MLP will be derived from local input and is the best tool to protect our communities in terms of water and air quality, our agricultural heritage, and tourism potential.

I will make two points. First, it is not clear to me how the boundary of this map was determined other than Connie Clementson saying on two occasions (Montezuma County Commissioner meeting on Nov. 2, 2015 and during the Working Group meeting on Nov. 19, 2015), "We had to start somewhere." Experts predict the Gothic Shale Oil play will re-emerge when oil prices rise and the technology to deal with the salinity problem is solved. Therefore, it is a matter of common sense that the boundaries of the MLP map should include the area of the Gothic Shale play. I am in favor of an MLP in this larger area so as to give as much local control about oil and gas development in the largest area possible.

Second, I want to address the language of the Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan, particularly in Appendix H and in reference to Exceptions, Modifications and Waivers. I have read in Chapter 2 of the RMP that the fluid mineral program emphasizes the orderly and environmentally responsible development of oil and gas on lands subject to lease disposal. Also, it is stated on page 112 of Chapter 2 that, "All TRFO oil and gas leases are subject to Standard lease terms; these are the least restrictive terms under which an oil and gas lessee **may** operate." I want to emphasize the permissive language here – "**may**" rather than "**must**." Permissive language leaves too much wiggle room for the area to be regulated at the whim of personal discretion rather than regulations rooted in science and common sense. I'd rather pin my future to a sturdy juniper tree or sagebrush, the lasting sentinels of our high dessert plateau.

Furthermore, there is a pervasiveness of permissive language regarding Exceptions, Modifications, and Waivers in Appendix H. On page 8 of Appendix H Standard Lease language is explained; it illustrates that these stipulations can be bent, shaped, or ignored. It describes the Standard Lease language wherein the Authorizing Officer **may** grant exceptions to stipulations, **may** modify stipulations or **may** waive stipulations. This renders the long list of stipulations useless by allowing the Authorizing Officer to overcome any objections from the public or private sector regarding potential reasons to block or redesign oil and gas development activities. I believe this permissive language, alone, indicates that the RMP is deficient. For me this slices through most issues like a laser beam and leads simply to the conclusion that an MLP is the necessary for specific protections in an area that incorporates the entire Gothic Shale play.



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southwest Region Office
415 Turner Drive
Durango, CO 81303
P 970.375.6702 | F 970.375.6705

Ms. Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave
Montrose, CO 81401
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

10 February 2016

RE: Oil and Gas Leasing and Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Evaluation for Tres Rios Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata Counties, Colorado

Dear Ms. Borders:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata counties, Colorado. CPW's mission is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. Montezuma and La Plata counties receive combined economic benefits of approximately \$64.1 million annually from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 700 jobs (BBC Research and Consulting 2008). Hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing diversify and enhance the economy of these rural counties. These economic benefits are a sustainable annual source of economic benefit for these counties only if wildlife populations are maintained and quality hunting and fishing opportunities continue to exist.

CPW has a long history of working cooperatively with BLM to evaluate nominated lease parcels for potential conflicts with wildlife and park resources. On December 17, 2012, CPW submitted to BLM's State Office a protest letter requesting deferral of many parcels nominated for the February 2013 Quarterly Lease Sale that are within the current MLP Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata counties (see Exhibit 1).

CPW's recommendation to defer these parcels at that time (under the previous Resource Management Plan) was based primarily on the inadequacy of existing lease stipulations to adequately protect wildlife resources. BLM remedied many of our concerns with the RMP update completed in 2015. There are, however, a number of issues raised in our previous lease sale comments that have not been addressed in the updated RMP. Several of these issues are identified in BLM IM 2010-17 and BLM Manual H-1624-1 as potential MLP decisions:

- 1) **Surface facility density limits or caps on surface disturbance** - There is a growing body of evidence that Timing Limitation Stipulations on oil and gas development activities are not adequate to protect crucial winter habitats and migratory corridors for big game, and that limits on the density of surface facilities may be necessary to maintain big game populations (Sawyer et al. 2006, 2009, Sawyer and Neilsen 2010, Northrup et al. 2015);

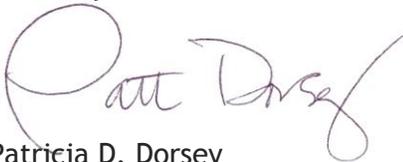


- 2) **Implementation of site-specific best management practices (BMPs)** - In this case, BMPs that promote the use of existing infrastructure to limit additional surface disturbance, such as the use of combined utility corridors, multiple well pads and liquids gathering systems could be appropriate. Phased development that focuses the most intense development activities in specific geographic areas may also reduce widespread impacts to wildlife;
- 3) **Implementation of site-specific lease stipulations to protect land conservation values** - A number of split estate fee surface/federal mineral properties in this area have conservation easements purchased by CPW and others to protect the surface estate for wildlife habitat and wildlife-related recreational values (see Exhibit 1). These values are potential jeopardized by unrestricted mineral development (in terms of facility placement and density). BLM could use the MLP process to develop an additional stipulation for these properties to allow mineral extraction with minimal impacts to the conservation values that they contain;
- 4) **Implementation of mitigation to address residual adverse wildlife impacts from mineral development** - Where mineral development requires surface facility densities exceeding one well pad/mile² in big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, CPW recommends requiring compensatory mitigation to offset the impacts to big game populations. In this context, compensatory mitigation to offset impacts to big game from development should focus on replacing the impacted habitat (through conservation of similar habitats) or improving adjacent habitats to the extent necessary to maintain existing big game populations in the lease area. BLM could use the MLP process to promote mineral extraction while offsetting residual adverse impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat;
- 5) **Defining site-specific lease exception, waiver, and modification criteria**- The Final San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) Land and Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement does not include explicit criteria outlining when and how exceptions, modifications, and waivers may be granted on BLM lands. This makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of these stipulations for protecting wildlife resources during development on. BLM could use the MLP process clarify lease stipulation exception, waiver, and modification criteria to avoid confusing oil and gas operators, resource agencies, and the public.

Conclusion

CPW appreciates BLM's solicitation of public input for its evaluation of a MLP for the Area of Interest identified in Montezuma and La Plata counties, Colorado. CPW values this opportunity to provide BLM with the best available information regarding protection of wildlife resources during oil and gas development. If you have any questions, please contact Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison, at (970) 759-9588.

Sincerely,



Patricia D. Dorsey
SW Region Manager

xc: CPW - M. Thorpe, Area 15 Wildlife Manager; Brian Magee, SW Region Land Use Coordinator; Scott Wait, SW Region Senior Terrestrial Biologist; John Alves, SW Region Senior Aquatic Biologist

Literature Cited

BBC Research & Consulting. 2008. The economic impacts of hunting, fishing and wildlife watching in Colorado (Final Report). 24 pp.

Northrup, J., Anderson, C.R., and G. Wittemyer. 2015. Quantifying spatial habitat loss from hydrocarbon development through assessing habitat selection patterns of mule deer. *Global Change Biology*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, doi: 10.1111/gcb.13037

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Sawyer, H., Kauffman M.J., and R.M. Nielson. 2009. Influence of well pad activity on winter habitat selection patterns of mule deer. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 73:1052-1061.

Sawyer, H., Nielson, R., Lindzey, F., and L. McDonald. 2006. Winter habitat selection of mule deer before and during development of a natural gas field. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 70(2), 396-403. 2006



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

1313 Sherman Street, Room 618 • Denver, Colorado 80203
 Phone (303) 866-3437 • FAX (303) 866-3206
 wildlife.state.co.us • parks.state.co.us

December 17, 2012

Helen Hankins, State Director
 BLM Colorado State Office
 2850 Youngfield Street
 Lakewood, CO 80215
 FAX: (303) 239-3799

RE: February 2013 Quarterly Lease Sale

Dear Ms. Hankins:

Helen

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Notice of Competitive Lease Sale for the February 2013 quarterly lease sale, and the Environmental Assessments (EAs) completed by the BLM Field Offices involved in this sale. CPW has provided input on the parcels nominated for lease through correspondence with the appropriate BLM Field Offices statewide. CPW appreciates the opportunity to coordinate with BLM Field Office staff early in the review process for upcoming lease sales in order to provide the best available information regarding the protection of wildlife resources during oil and gas development.

Background

In 2010, BLM's State Office hosted a series of meetings between our agencies to coordinate a more consistent approach regarding management of wildlife resources during oil and gas development. Integral to those discussions was the desire to incorporate up-to-date wildlife protections in quarterly lease sales and Resource Management Plan (RMP) revisions. At your request, CPW provided BLM's State Office recommendations for oil and gas lease stipulations relevant to RMP revisions and quarterly lease sales in Colorado (see **Attachment 1 - "Lease Recommendations"**).

We derived an understanding from BLM during those meetings that it is extremely difficult to modify the terms of an oil and gas lease once it is issued. Our understanding in 2010 was that BLM intended to use CPW's Lease Recommendations for conducting Plan Maintenance to update lease stipulations in existing RMPs, for possible inclusion in a Statewide RMP amendment for oil and gas, and/or for incorporating updated lease stipulations into RMP revisions – with a goal of including up-to-date stipulations on newly issued leases.

STATE OF COLORADO

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor • Mike King, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources
 Rick D. Cables, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 Parks and Wildlife Commission: Robert W. Bray • Chris Castilian • Jeanne Home
 Bill Kane, Vice-Chair • Gaspar Perricone • James Pribyl • John Singletary, Chair
 Mark Smith, Secretary • James Vigil • Dean Wingfield • Michelle Zimmerman
 Ex Officio Members: Mike King and John Salazar

Since 2010, CPW has continued to coordinate with BLM's Field Office staff on quarterly lease sales. CPW generally reviews quarterly sale proposals for wildlife concerns, and where existing stipulations are inadequate to conserve the wildlife resource and/or do not reflect the best available information, CPW recommends that BLM incorporate the stipulations contained in our Lease Recommendations or defer the parcels until such time that appropriate wildlife protections can be attached to the affected leases.

In some cases, BLM Field Offices have deferred specific parcels associated with particularly problematic issues (such as sage grouse) until further analysis can be completed or until an out-of-date RMP is updated with the best available information. We appreciate BLM's responsiveness in those instances, and urge the BLM to take more comprehensive steps to address our Lease Recommendations Statewide in quarterly lease sales and RMP revisions.

February 2013 Lease Sale

On several occasions in the past, CPW has communicated our concerns associated with the February 2013 lease sale with the appropriate BLM Field Offices. For parcels located in Gunnison and Delta Counties, CPW provided scoping comments to the BLM Field Office in February 2012 (Attachment 2) and comments on the original Draft EA in April 2012 (Attachment 3). For parcels located in Montezuma County, CPW provided scoping comments to the appropriate BLM Field Office in September 2012 (Attachment 4).

The concerns outlined in our previous comments to each BLM Field Office remain the basis for this letter. We have outlined below the concerns that are not addressed in the EAs prepared by your Field Offices. These concerns and those stated in our previous correspondence comprise our **Statement of Reasons** for objecting to the sale of the parcels listed in **Attachment 5** until the wildlife issues associated with those parcels can be resolved.

1) Economic concerns raised by CPW have not been addressed

As described in our correspondence to your Field Offices, Delta and Gunnison counties received combined economic benefits of approximately \$80.9 million in 2007 from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 912 jobs. Similarly, Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Miguel counties received combined economic benefits of approximately \$103.3 million in 2007 from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 1157 jobs.

The economic benefits from hunting and fishing recreational activities are a sustainable annual source of economic benefit for these counties only if wildlife populations are maintained and quality hunting and fishing opportunities continue to exist. As described in our previous correspondence, CPW anticipates that oil and gas development on the

parcels identified in Attachment 5 will decrease population levels of big game and result in lower quality and fewer hunting and fishing recreational opportunities in the affected counties, decreasing sustainable revenues from these activities. No BLM Field Offices addressed this issue in their EAs for the February 2013 sale.

2) Potential impacts to big game winter habitats and migratory corridors have not been adequately addressed

BLM's existing RMPs generally contain a Timing Limitation (TL) stipulation for crucial deer and elk winter ranges, but do not contain a TL or other stipulations to protect migration corridors. We also note that they do not address the impacts of road and well density on the effectiveness of critical deer and elk winter ranges and migration corridors. There is a growing body of evidence that TL stipulations on oil and gas development activities are not adequate to protect critical winter habitats and migratory corridors for big game. Additional limitations on the density of surface facilities in these habitats, which comprise approximately 22 percent of Colorado, may be necessary to maintain big game population levels.

To address this issue, CPW currently recommends limiting the density of surface facilities in these habitats to one well pad (or less)/mile² to maintain existing big game populations (see Attachment 1 - Lease Recommendations). This recommendation is consistent with recommendations made by other state fish and game agencies in the Rocky Mountain Region. If the well pad density on the nominated parcels cannot be limited to one pad/mile² through appropriate lease stipulations or some other planning mechanism, we recommend that BLM defer these parcels until the applicable RMPs can be amended to address this well pad and road density issue with respect to these big game habitats. We urge all BLM Field Offices to address this issue in their EAs for this lease sale.

3) Potential impacts to raptor nest sites, including bald and golden eagle nest sites, have not been adequately addressed

Some BLM Colorado RMPs contain No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations to protect raptor nest sites; other BLM Colorado RMPs do not. As a result, protections are not being applied consistently to nesting raptors across the State. Field Offices without NSO stipulations in existing RMPs are relying on dated seasonal TL stipulations and Lease Notices (LN) to protect raptor nest sites. These mechanisms are not sufficiently protective of raptor nest sites that may be used year-after-year because both TL stipulations and LNs allow permanent production facilities to be built in very close proximity to active nest sites. Once an oil or gas facility is built in close proximity to a nest site (even outside the breeding season), ongoing operation and maintenance activities are required for the life of the facility and these activities may occur at any time during the breeding season.

As described in previous comments, repeated human-caused disturbance in close proximity to raptor nest sites during the incubation or nestling phase increases the probability of nest failure due to increased adult flushing frequency and time away from the nest, which increases the probability of egg incubation failure and predation on the eggs or nestlings. Even if the nest does not completely fail, human activities and habitat alteration that encroach upon active raptor nest sites, including those associated with oil and gas activities, change raptor behavior and may reduce nest productivity (i.e., numbers of chicks fledged), potentially resulting in local or regional population declines. We believe this issue can be better addressed in the EAs prepared by BLM Field Offices for the February 2013 lease sale.

4) Potential impacts to aquatic habitat and CPW mapped Recovery and Conservation Waters have not been adequately addressed

CPW maps Recovery and Conservation Waters for a variety of aquatic species. In order to avoid impacts to these habitats, CPW recommends a 300-foot NSO buffer. In addition, CPW recommends that a TL stipulation be implemented for any temporary stream crossings or other in-stream work to protect spawning activities for these species (see attached Lease Recommendations).

Several of the existing RMPs and Field Office EAs address the desired buffer around these habitats with Controlled Surface Use (CSU) stipulations or LNs. These stipulations may be adequate to address the 300-foot buffer recommended by CPW, but they are not adequate to address our TL recommendation for in-stream work. We don't believe this issue can be addressed site-specifically with Conditions of Approval on individual APDs because in some cases the recommended exclusion period exceeds 60 days (see 43 CFR 3101.1-2). If these protections cannot be added under the existing RMP or EAs, CPW recommends deferring these parcels until such time that these protections are incorporated into the RMPs and corresponding lease stipulations are included in quarterly lease sales.

Of particular concern is parcel 6619 (COC75860) that saddles Deep Creek. Deep Creek upstream from this parcel contains a conservation population of cutthroats. While most of the population occurs upstream, fish do occur on the parcel and we are part of a partnership that has been working for several years to extend the available habitat downstream. Together with the USFS, BLM, and the private landowner, several large projects have been completed on the stream including rebuilding and screening and irrigation diversion and building a large fish migration barrier below the proposed parcel. Partners have spent over \$185,000 on these projects with the aim of removing the brook trout between the two projects and then extending the cutthroat population downstream through it. The planned reclamation project is to occur in 2013 and 2014, so we expect the conservation population to be extended through the parcel this year or next.

5) Potential impacts to property interests purchased by CPW specifically for wildlife conservation values have not been adequately addressed

CPW continues to provide BLM Field Offices with information regarding State Wildlife Areas and other property interests that CPW has purchased specifically for wildlife habitat conservation. In most cases, CPW also provides information on the extent to which BLM oil and gas leasing and development without specific density limitations on surface facilities is incompatible with the conservation values for which these properties were purchased.

Parcels 6450 (COC75903), 6451 (COC75904), and 6452 (COC75905) in the February 2013 Lease Sale contain minerals beneath large portions of a 2,520 acre property on which CPW is purchasing a conservation easement (CE) to protect wildlife habitat at a cost of \$582,800. This CE is being purchased specifically to preserve a large block of unfragmented habitat and to provide remote recreational hunting opportunities in this area. These values would be compromised by leasing and development of this property for oil and gas. While CPW understands that the mineral estate is dominant regardless of a CE on the surface, we encourage BLM to only lease these parcels with an NSO stipulation to protect the conservation values of the CE. We believe that impacts to CPW's investment in this property and the associated wildlife values should receive additional consideration in the EAs prepared for the February 2013 lease sale.

Conclusion

CPW applauds BLM's leasing reform efforts, and in particular, your efforts to evaluate upcoming lease sales for potential surface conflicts and to resolve those conflicts prior to leasing. CPW is also encouraged by the close working relationships that our field staff have with BLM Field Office staff. BLM Field Office staff understand CPW's concerns, and in many cases, they have relied on information and references that CPW provided to draft portions of the effects analysis for the individual EAs that were prepared for the February 2013 lease sale.

BLM's Field Office EAs generally state that the act of leasing itself has no direct or indirect effects on wildlife. When viewed narrowly, we agree. However, given the investment backed expectation of the lessee, the property right that the lease conveys, and the extreme difficulty in modifying lease terms after they are issued, we feel we must plan as though leased parcels will eventually be developed to their fullest potential under the terms of the lease when it is issued. We will not have another opportunity to affect the terms of the lease that dictate the character of the development and associated impacts, so we should incorporate into the lease the best available information to address potential impacts when the lease is sold.

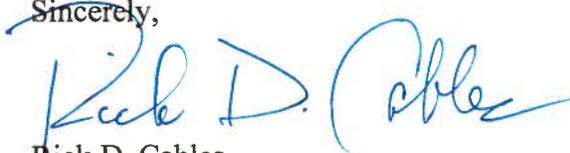
The wildlife stipulations attached to parcels nominated for lease in the February 2013 sale are limited to those contained in existing outdated RMPs and additional LNs that will not be effective for issues that warrant NSO protection or other density limits on surface facilities. Without specific NSO stipulations or other density limits on surface facilities outlined in the lease, we understand that the BLM is limited by its own regulations to relocating proposed operations no more than 200 meters or avoiding surface disturbing activities for a maximum of 60 days per year (43 CFR 3101.1-2). We advocate for additional flexibility to address the wildlife concerns raised for the parcels included in the February 2013 sale.

We are concerned that BLM Field Office staff may not have the planning tools necessary to incorporate up-to-date stipulations for wildlife resources in quarterly lease sales. With the limitations outlined in 43 CFR 3101.1-2 in mind, we recommend that the parcels identified in Attachment 5 be deferred until such time that the lease stipulations can be updated in BLM's planning documents to reflect the best available information.

CPW looks forward to continuing to work with BLM staff on leasing reform and efforts to revise existing RMPs to reflect the best available information on wildlife resources. If there are other avenues to address our concerns in the interim – until the RMP revisions are completed – we welcome the opportunity to discuss those options with you. Our hope is that implementation of consistent stipulations in RMPs and quarterly lease sales will streamline appropriate oil and gas development while also providing for the long-term conservation of wildlife resources across the State of Colorado.

If you have any questions, please contact Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison, at (970) 759-9588.

Sincerely,



Rick D. Cables
Director

xc: CPW – A. Gurzick, Acting SW Region Manager; P. Dorsey, Area 15 Wildlife Manager; J. Wenum, Area 16 Wildlife Manager; Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison; Scott Wait, SW Region Senior Terrestrial Biologist; John Alves, SW Region Senior Aquatic Biologist

Attachments 1 – 4

Omitted Intentionally [contact CPW for information]

ATTACHMENT 5 - Parcels Without Adequate Stipulations

<u>BLM Serial #</u>	<u>Parcel ID</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED BY BLM</u>
COC75910	6401	ARCHULETA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75906	6433	LA PLATA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75907	6449	LA PLATA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75903	6450	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts
COC75904	6451	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts
COC75905	6452	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75865	6604	GUNNISON	Elk Migration Corridor Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75869	6605	DELTA	Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75870	6606	DELTA & GUNNISON	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75875	6607	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range

COC75876	6608	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75871	6609	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75877	6610	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75872	6611	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75878	6612	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75878	6613	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75879	6614	DELTA	Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75880	6615	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75866	6616	DELTA	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75867	6617	DELTA & GUNNISON	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range

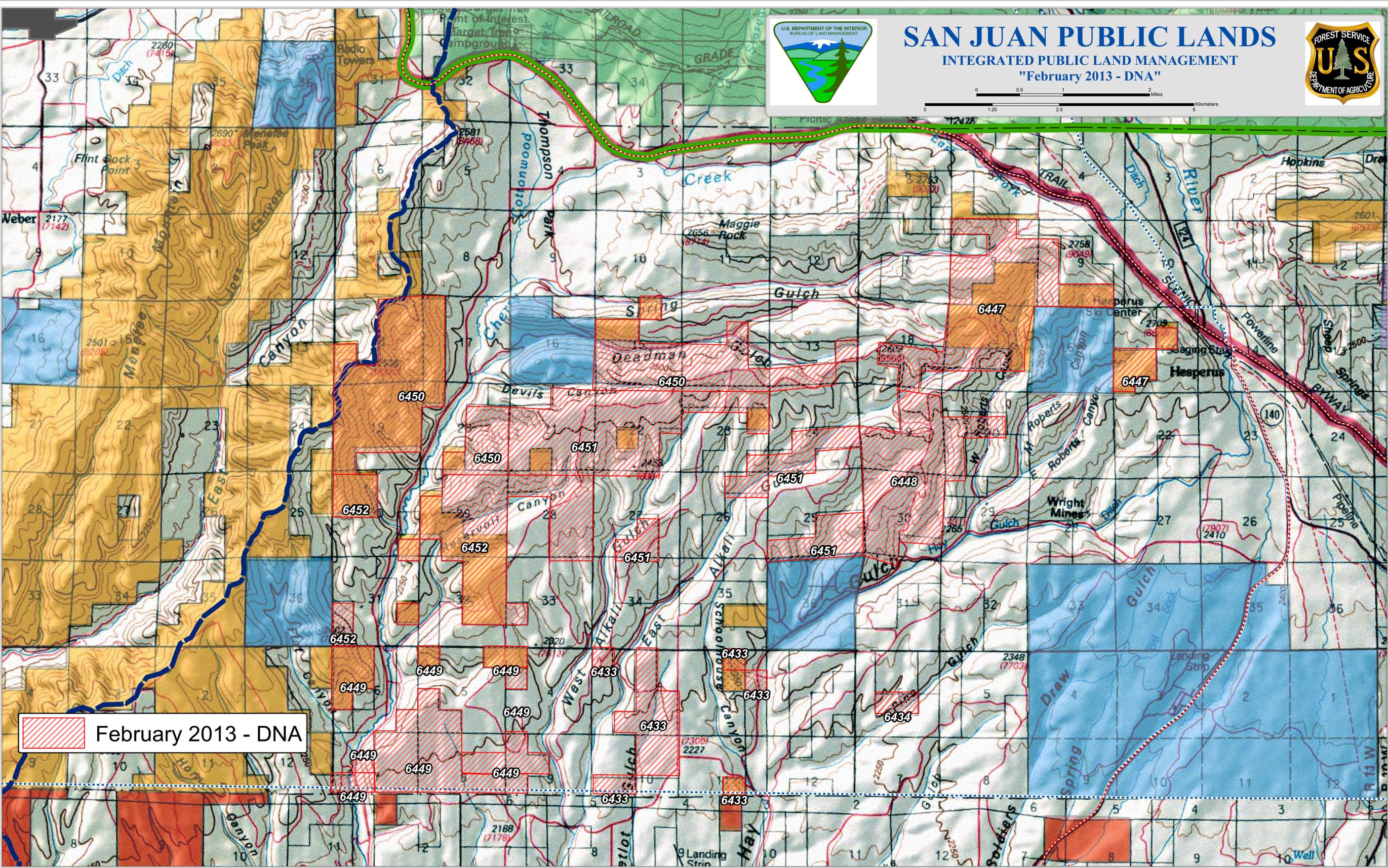
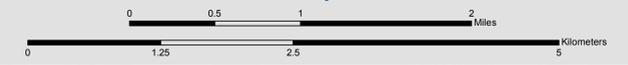
			Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75863	6618	GUNNISON	Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters In-Stream work
COC75860	6619	GUNNISON	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Cutthroat Trout Designated Critical Habitat Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75726	6621	DELTA	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75864	6623	GUNNISON	Golden Eagle Active Nest Sites Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lack of NSO for Rapor Nest Sites Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75868	6624	DELTA	Golden Eagle Active Nest Sites Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lack of NSO for Rapor Nest Sites Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density



SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS

INTEGRATED PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

"February 2013 - DNA"



February 2013 - DNA

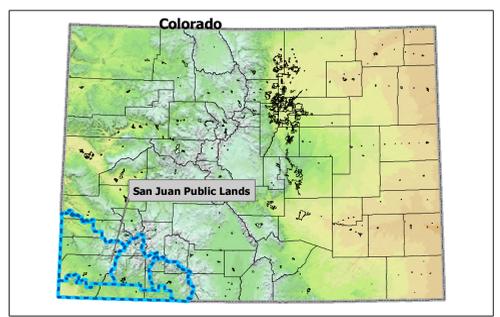
San Juan Public Lands - Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
| Surface Ownership | Wilderness |
| National Forest | Major Waterways |
| Bureau of Land Management | Cities |
| National Park Service and Other Federal Land | USFS/BLM - Ranger Districts / Field Office Boundary |
| Indian Reservation | San Juan Forest Boundary |
| Private Land | County Boundary |
| State Public Use Land | State & Federal Highways |
| State Land Subject to Leasing | |



NAD 83 UTM Zone 13N
MAY 9, 2010

The USFS attempts to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS reserves the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.



February 12, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch, BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093

Connie Clementson, Tres Rios Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 84
Dolores, Colorado 81323

Transmitted by email: rwelch@blm.gov; cclementson@blm.gov



Dear State Director Ruth Welch and Tres Rios Field Manager Connie Clementson:

The Colorado Wildlife Federation and the National Wildlife Federation urge that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) apply its master leasing planning tool to the public lands it manages in La Plata County and Montezuma County. We understand that a decision will be made in August. We also ask that additional oil and gas leasing be deferred until a decision is reached, within the spirit of the April 2014 Colorado BLM Instruction Memorandum.

A master leasing planning process will enable BLM to address the range of potential impacts of future oil and gas development on a landscape level, where there likely will be conflicts among multiple uses and the numerous resource values. The lands BLM manages in the area are situated within a mosaic of public, state, and private lands. These resources and uses include important intact wildlife habitats including big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, viewsheds from Mesa Verde and Canyon of the Ancients, ground water, agriculture, recreation, and archeological/cultural resources. We are optimistic that master leasing planning will be a really productive process for this area, and note our excellent experience and that of many other stakeholders during preparation for and the initial stages of master leasing planning with BLM's Royal Gorge Field Office in South Park, an area that also is a mosaic of public and private lands.

CWF and NWF look forward to the opportunity to actively work with the Tres Rios Field Office during a master leasing planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne O'Neill".

Suzanne O'Neill, Executive Director
Colorado Wildlife Federation
1410 Grant St., C-313
Denver CO 80203
303-987-0400 cwfed@coloradowildlife.org

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Dvorak".

Bill Dvorak, Public Lands Organizer
National Wildlife Federation
303 E. 17th Ave., Suite 15
Denver CO 80203
719-221-3212 dvorakb@nwf.org



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: speaking at meeting

1 message

Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Fri, Feb 12, 2016 at 12:56 PM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joanie Howland** <joaniehowland@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 11, 2016 at 4:01 PM

Subject: Re: speaking at meeting

To: "Borders, Shannon" <sborders@blm.gov>

Hi Shannon,

I was planning on speaking tonight at the meeting, but my husband is not feeling well and we have decided not to come. Thank you for your help. Following are my comments for the record:

Though there are a myriad of problems with oil and gas drilling for residents of the affected areas, today I'd like to mention the problem of well sites that the industry has finished with, but equipment sits idly on the surface.

A few years ago my husband and I spent a few days in Rangely. There is a canyon there along the road with rock art. The BLM did a lovely job with trails and interpretive signs. But in the middle of the area were all these abandoned well pads. It certainly made me not want to be there. On the other side of town it was even worse.

It appears that there are similar problems in eastern LaPlata county.

According to an associated press article in the Cortez Journal on January 5th there are 45,000 wells in Colorado that are ready for final reclamation. 45,000! This appears to be an industry that doesn't think it needs to clean up after itself.

I think we need to have a Master Leasing Plan to address this problem in our area. Perhaps we could encourage the drilling companies by getting a deposit that would be large enough to clean up the site in 20 years. If they reclaim the site, their money is returned. If not, it is not left to the taxpayers to clean it up, nor would the equipment be left there forever. Maybe someone else has a better idea.

I'd hate to see our area look like Rangely.

Joanie Howland

Resident of Montezuma County



February 10, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215
rwelch@blm.gov

Field Manager Connie Clementson
Tres Rios Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, CO 81323
cclementson@blm.gov

Re: Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Process

Dear Director Welch and Field Manager Clementson:

We at Osprey Packs, the individuals and businesses listed below are very interested and invested in land management decisions that affect our community in southwest Colorado. Our business and the culture of Osprey is built on the responsible use, access and protection of our natural resources and as such we have a vested interest in what is happening in our backyard. As a growing economic engine in this region we want to be involved in the process and have a voice during the discussion. We value the amazing outdoor recreation opportunities afforded to us, including true gems like the trail system at Phil's World and the recent announcement of the proposed Paths to Mesa Verde — a multimodal trail connecting Cortez, Mesa Verde National Park and Mancos. With Osprey's investment in a new Cortez facility it is our intention to more actively host partners and guests from all over the world and proudly engage them and celebrate the unrivaled cultural and natural resources Montezuma County has to offer.

That's why we want to thank the Bureau of Land Management at both the state and local level for moving forward with a Master Leasing Plan process. A Master Leasing Plan (MLP) for southwestern Colorado will truly enhance our region by ensuring any future oil and gas development will be balanced with other important resources and interests such as our recreation opportunities, access, and economy. As a company and as individual community members in the region, we at Osprey Packs support the creation of a Master Leasing Plan because it is the best way to protect the places and natural resources that make southwest Colorado such an amazing place to live and grow our business.

We also want to acknowledge that many members of our community are volunteering their time to gather public input and participate in the MLP process. In order to make sure that our time and theirs is adequately valued, we respectfully request that the BLM defer any future oil and gas leasing in the proposed MLP area until a final decision on the plan is determined and the full planning process is

concluded. We understand the agency has deferred leasing while other master leasing plans, like Dinosaur Trails, were considered and southwest Colorado is worthy of the same treatment.

Moreover, since many of our staff members are eager to participate in the public process around the MLP, we want to better understand how this process will work. Unfortunately, beyond when and where the upcoming public meetings will take place, there is a dearth of information on how public information and comments on the MLP will be compiled, considered, and how a final recommendation will be made. Any efforts to provide clarity to our community at large would be greatly appreciated.

In summary, this issue is of the utmost importance to Osprey's growing business and our vibrant outdoor culture and we feel strongly that having a seat at the table to express our interests and concerns is important because in the end, if you are not at the table, you are on it. This home we have chosen both for business and personal reasons has far more to offer than oil and gas and we would like to see it managed in a way that carefully considers all uses, including the vast potential for exemplary outdoor recreation.

Thank you for the consideration of these issues and we look forward to working with you on this process.

Sincerely,

Osprey Packs Inc. and the following concerned individuals and businesses

- Kenny Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Tom Barney, Chief Executive Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Diane Wren, Owner, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Mike Pfothauer, Owner/Founder, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Mychal McCormick, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Matthew Walker, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Rob BonDurant, Director of Marketing, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Geoff Peck, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Courtney Hart, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Bill Chandler, Outdoor Sales Manager, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Jeff Busic, International Sales Director, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Scott Robertson, Copywriter, Osprey Packs Inc.
- David Dunn, Operations Management, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Kimberly Mendenhall, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Emily Mason, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Rich Pierce, Dealer Services, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Sam Mix, Conduit of Corporate Outreach, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Southwest Colorado Cycling Association, Jeff Fox, President
- Kristin Carpenter Ogden, Owner/Founder, Verde Brand Communications
- Anna Peterson, Communications Specialist, Verde Brand Communications
- Pete Eschallier, Owner, Kokopelli Bike and Board
- Kathy Hands, Owner, Mancos Brewing Company
- Kristin Ruger, Concerned citizen
- Ginny Chandler, Concerned Citizen



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

MLP for Tres Rios Field Office

1 message

Laurie and Dan Parkinson <danandlauriep@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 24, 2016 at 3:27 PM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Dear Ms Borders,

I attended the February 11th meeting at the La Plata County Fairgrounds, but did not comment at that time. I would like to urge the BLM to create a Master Leasing Plan for the lands in the Tres Rios District. I appreciate the opportunity for input on this subject, but frankly don't understand why the agency has not moved forward with the MLP rather than investing all this time, effort and money into deciding whether or not it is warranted!

We are talking about a landscape that includes two incredible national treasures (Mesa Verde National Park and Canyon of the Ancients National Monument), valuable wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities that drive the local economy. Why would we not do the necessary ground work to protect these valuable assets?

The fact that Colorado Parks and Wildlife has made the financial commitment that they have to big game and fish habitat in this area speaks volumes about the importance of these areas. Crucial winter ranges and migration corridors face pressure from many sources, and it is imperative that oil and gas leasing be carefully managed to limit impacts on wildlife.

The leeway that the RMP allows in granting exceptions, waivers and modifications is completely unacceptable.

The local communities, the wildlife, the split estate owners, those who will visit our national parks and monuments and recreate on our lands....all of us, deserve to have the leasing process be as clear, and protective of ALL our "treasures" as possible.

Thank you,
Laurie Parkinson
Bayfield, Colorado



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Master Leasing Plan

1 message

PHILIP AYERS <payers99@msn.com>

Wed, Mar 16, 2016 at 1:43 AM

To: "blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov" <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

I am attaching a list of comments prepared for us by Public Land Solutions.

I would also like to expand upon the issue of water.

Water is a precious and scarce resource in our area. It is not a resource directly under the control of the BLM, but decisions that the BLM makes about oil and gas drilling permits could certainly effect our water quantity and quality.

In fracking, in particular, huge quantities of water are required. Then that water is typically contaminated with drilling and fracking chemicals. It does not seem to me that we have millions of gallons of water to spare, and we certainly don't want to contaminate any of it.

Under the current RMP, any decisions impacting our water quality and quantity are left up to the discretion of the Authorized Officer.

Thank you.

Philip Ayers
Secretary, Southwest Colorado Cycling Association, Inc.

—
This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.
<https://www.avast.com/antivirus>

Tres Rios Fact Sheet.v4.docx
29K



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Public comment on MLP

1 message

Grant Coffey <GCoffey@crowcanyon.org>

Wed, Mar 16, 2016 at 2:18 PM

To: "blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov" <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Ms. Clementson,

My name is Grant Coffey and I am a lifelong resident of southwest Colorado. I grew up on a dry-land bean farm near Dove Creek, Colorado and now I am employed as an archaeologist at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center just outside of Cortez.

I support the development of a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) for the area currently defined by the BLM. In my opinion additional protections need to be afforded to BLM lands in this area due to the unique character of the area under consideration. In particular, the comments that follow pertain to the western part of the MLP in Sections 4 and 5.

The western boundary of the MLP is defined by the eastern boundary of the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument; an expansive area that was set aside for the number and density of Ancestral Pueblo or Anasazi sites there. In Section 5, a small island excluded from the MLP, the Goodman Point Unit of Hovenweep National Monument, is part of a larger parcel (a complete section) that was originally reserved from homesteading in 1889 due the density and diversity of cultural sites found there. This area is historic because it represents one of the first federal properties to be set aside for the preservation of cultural resources. Private holding largely surround the parcel today.

Because of this history of preservation, and the density of sites outside of these areas on lands with federal mineral rights, I believe it is appropriate to adopt a landscape level approach to managing cultural resources in Sections 4 and 5. In particular, to include language in the MLP that explicitly states that cultural landscape are to be considered in aggregate (not just as individual sites) to minimize impacts from mineral exploration and extraction. In other words, from the onset planning should be undertaken to consider landscapes, not particular sites, in development planning. This would reduce cumulative effects from drilling by potentially minimizing the number of wells that could be drilled while also avoiding a site-by-site or well pad-by-well pad approach. It would also compel produces to be more efficient in terms of their well placement and associated impacts.

I understand further exploration and extraction of fluid minerals is going to occur in Southwest Colorado, and we need to find a balance between exploitation and conservation. I believe that balance can be partially found in considering entire cultural landscapes (sections on the BLM map, entire leasing areas, etc.,) rather than individual wells or individual sites. A single well pad produces a pretty limited impact to the resource base but constellations of single well pads produce impacts that can degrade entire landscapes.

Thank you for your time, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Grant Coffey

3/23/2016

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Public comment on MLP

GIS Archaeologist

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

23390 Road K

Cortez, CO 81321

970-564-4370

gcoffey@crowcanyon.org



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

MLP comments

1 message

Fulton, Richard <fulton_r@fortlewis.edu>

Thu, Mar 10, 2016 at 11:16 AM

To: "blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov" <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Dear Tres Rio Field Office

I am writing as a resident of Mancos Colorado and am very concerned about issues related to the potential leasing of federal minerals within a geographic "area of interest" in eastern Montezuma and western La Plata counties Colorado. Clearly, the best step forward is for the Tres Rio Field Office to conduct a Master Leasing Plan.

Specifically, I would like to comment on three issues face the area of interest that must be addressed in a Master Leasing Plan. Undeniably, predictable shortage of water and rising temperatures in this region will reach critical levels in the generation ahead. For thousands of years, humans have lived in this area with limited water supplies and if we are to plan for any human habitation in this area in the future, all measures are needed to protect and focus our precious water on agriculture and food production, not oil and gas production. In many places, oil and gas production provides the allure of making large sums of money through the leasing process, but always dries up, leaves unused and expensive infrastructure in it's wake and wastes precious water in the meanwhile. Current and future need for additional oil and gas extraction is on the decline and I would demand (if it is already obvious) that the Bureau of Land Management not allow any oil and gas leasing on federal lands. Leasing is not necessary and would be an irresponsible use of limited water in this arid environment.

Secondly, the BLM has created two Wilderness Study regions, one on Menefee Mountain and another further south surrounding Weber Mountain. Both of these areas support a wide diversity of wildlife, impressive visual corridor for visitors to Mesa Verde National Park and residents of the region. The wilderness study areas represent an incredible sense of nature dominated serenity, silence from man-made noise pollution, and unique seasonal natural beauty so close to a small community of Mancos, that every effort should be made to preserve this ionic resource. The Master Leasing Plan must consider any leasing (such small lease land is available on federal property) has unnecessarily destroying the wilderness qualities of the Mancos Valley. BLM should never open leases in the Mancos Valley. Even one well would ruin the pristine nature of the Valley.

These two points should be enough to activate a Master Leasing Plan that identifies ways to preserve water for historic water uses and enhance the natural wilderness qualities of the area of interest.

Please take to hear the majority public input and not focus on the limited but powerful pressures of energy related development constituents.

Dr. Richard Fulton
fulton_r@fortlewis.edu



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Endorse BLM Trios Rios plan

1 message

John Schuenemeyer <jackswsc@q.com>

Sat, Mar 19, 2016 at 11:36 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

To: Connie Clementson

My wife Judith Schuenemeyer and I are 16 year residents of Montezuma County, Colorado. We strongly endorse the BLM MLP plan for the Trios Rios public lands area. Its implementation would further the quality of life in our area by protecting cultural resources and scenic beauty. I hope that our endorsement of this important BLM work will be considered when a final decision is made.

Sincerely, John H and Judith A Schuenemeyer

—

John H (Jack) Schuenemeyer, Ph.D
Southwest Statistical Consulting, LLC
www.swstatconsult.com

Residence: 960 Sligo St., Cortez, CO 81321



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

MLP Montezuma County

1 message

Randy Mcknight <karamck@q.com>

Fri, Mar 18, 2016 at 9:03 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

I attended the meeting today and have a few comments. Having lived in a high density oil and gas community I have seen first hand the total

destruction, environmentally, socially, economically, and the disastrous health consequences especially for children.

I'm only going to discuss the economic impact on Montezuma County.

Not one person brought up the fact that the economy in our county will be destroyed. The three economic driver's (as published in the Cortez Journal) in our county are:

1. Retirees.
2. Commuters.
3. Tourism/recreation.

All three of these area's which are the economic backbone of Montezuma County will either be reduced dramatically or disappear. Retiree's don't want to live in a

polluted oil and gas town. Commuters will no longer have an incentive to live here when it will be just as polluted as Farmington if not more so. Tourism will dry up.

Recreation may be the last victim, but at some point the toxins emitted from gas production will discourage many people from enjoying the outdoors.

Deer and Elk may experience the same decline that the substantial antelope herd north of Kirtland NM has. Last time I spoke to a ranger there he said he thought there

were 2 or 3 left.

I spent 7 years in Farmington NM and speaking from experience I saw the social, economic, and moral breakdown of an oil and gas town and it is frightening. This is

a job killer; you can expect rising property tax's, the depopulating of the Cortez area, increase in cancer, asthma, heart disease and a dramatic increase in children

with learning disability's. There is no balance, we have to choose between a healthy community and destruction.

Two quote's from friends that have seen the destruction of franking first hand. First - Bob (3rd generation farmer) in North Dakota, "People should be careful what they

wish for", Oil and gas has destroyed western N.D. Second - Scott from Oklahoma said "this area will be decimated within 10 years".

Randy McKnight

3/20/2016

To Who it Concerns:

I am writing in support of a Master Leasing Plan for eastern Montezuma County and western La Plata County.

I attended the SWRAC sub-group hearing in Mancos on February 11th, which was very informative. I want to thank all of you for your time commitment and consideration of this issue.

I own the Mancos Brewery in Mancos, and as is the case for a small business in a small community, I attract customers from both local residents and people visiting Mesa Verde country. I have several reasons for supporting a MLP:

- I support local market farms in the Mancos Valley, both directly and through the Southwest Farm Fresh Coop, by using local produce in the brewery kitchen. I believe the growing presence of market farming in the valley is deserving of extra protection from adverse effects of drilling.
- Mesa Verde National Park is the main underpinning of tourism dependent business in this area, and the prominent Mesa Verde escarpment should be protected from visual impacts, both from decreased air quality and from drilling rigs. Also the view shed from Mesa Verde itself is world class, and should be protected as well.
- The archeological richness of this area should be afforded extra care, it is irreplaceable.
- I am also concerned about the effect of drilling on the recreational uses of federal lands in this region. I am an avid hiker and mountain biker, and would like to see protections in particular for Phil's World.
- The area being considered for the MLP does encompass a lot of private land which would be unaffected by increased restrictions put in place by the BLM. I personally believe this makes it even more important for the BLM to take greater care when leasing on lands they oversee.

I appreciate the chance an MLP gives a community to create an alternative reality for the public lands that surround them. Thank you for listening to my input.

Kathy Hands

PO Box 788, Mancos, CO 81328



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Proposed Master Leasing Plan for Tres Rios - Comment

1 message

TONI <TONIGP@msn.com>

Sat, Mar 26, 2016 at 4:50 PM

To: "blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov" <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Dear BLM Representative(s),

My name is Toni Ward. I thank you for considering the development of a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) to address and manage the competing, and often mutually exclusive, desires of various stakeholders in the Tres Rios area of interest. I am one of the stakeholders in the sense that I am a resident of the area and an avid outdoor enthusiast. I am very much opposed to the granting of many, if any, additional oil and gas drilling leases in this area. An MLP would be the process for making a fair evaluation of all stakeholders' needs.

I work as a ski instructor and know first-hand that the quality of the outdoor experience in this area is important not only to me personally but also to the national and international visitors who come here to ski, hike, bike and enjoy the cultural and historical offerings of our region. From Mesa Verde NP to the internationally-renowned Phil's World mountain biking trails, this region has economic as well as aesthetic value that is completely independent of the economic benefits that oil and gas drilling may generate, with little or none of the diverse costs from road upgrades to increased health impacts that may be associated with drilling activity.

I would appreciate the following points being taken into account when considering whether to implement an MLP for this area. They are listed in no particular order.

- Mesa Verde protection: Drilling/fracking processes have a possible association with increased seismic activity. The fragile Mesa Verde complex, which is a driver of economic benefit to the region by bringing in national and international tourists, would be vulnerable to any earth movement.
- The potential economic benefit, short-term and particularly long-term, of drilling vs. that of other regional activity - tourism, agriculture, recreation, etc. - must be calculated in the BLM's cost/benefit analysis.
- The Tres Rios area's population demographics are changing; these changes are bringing changed priorities for land use that should be taken into account.

- Drilling - with its associated noise, traffic including heavy equipment and large trucks, dust, road degradation, light pollution, effects on view sheds - can negatively affect quality of life for area residents.
- Water quality and availability is a major concern in this area, which is experiencing a multi-year drought; agriculture and residential requirements would compete with the fairly great water requirements of drilling operations.
- Historically, extractive industries' interests have been disproportionately advantaged over the interests of other stakeholders. Fairness should now swing that advantage at least somewhat in the direction of other, possibly competing, interests.
- The Four Corners region has thousands of oil and gas wells already. We are the home of the "methane hot-spot" which has significant negative environmental and climate implications. Gas wells have been demonstrated to leak methane, adding to a methane load that is already the highest anywhere. Oil and gas prices have dropped greatly, calling expected economic return of further drilling into serious question.
- If industry is tasked with monitoring its compliance with applicable laws and regulations it may be tempted to under-report the scope and nature of violations. If public officials are tasked with such monitoring additional qualified resources will be needed to perform compliance assessments, resulting in additional costs for the responsible agency/agencies.

Again, thank you for your consideration of all interested parties' positions on this matter.

Toni Ward
1945 County Road 203
Durango, CO 81301



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Montezuma County

1 message

Randy Mcknight <karamck@q.com>

Tue, Mar 29, 2016 at 8:55 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

I recently offered a comment concerning the negative impact high density fracking will have on the county. Retirees will move, tourism will dry up, and commuters will

not find it advantageous to live in Cortez.

Today I would like to offer two articles for consideration. The first was published today in the online paper Huffington Post. Fox science published the same exact report

if you prefer another news outlet. The article details findings of the USGS's most recent study. Fracking causes earthquakes, and damages homes and business's. You'll

need to copy and paste the article.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/human-induced-earthquake-report_us_56f959a0e4b014d3fe239339?ir=Science§ion=us_science&utm_hp_ref=science

The second article is from Reuters. A Pennsylvania family spent 6.5 years trying to force a Fracking company to do the right thing by compensating them for poisoning

their drinking water.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/pennsylvania-fracking-idUSL1N16I1QC>

These are just two of hundreds of articles that document the destruction of the oil and gas industry. I don't expect to influence the "industry representative", or the

landowner/mineral rights members of the board because their decisions will be based solely on greed. But I do think that most members of the RAC have a sincere desire to

protect S.W. Colorado for their children and grandchildren.

Randy McKnight

Cortez CO



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Master Leasing Plan for Montezuma and Dolores Counties

1 message

Bill Williams <bkw81323@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 29, 2016 at 9:06 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

I strongly favor a Master Leasing Plan for our two counties to be done by the BLM. These two areas cannot become a sacrifice zone for the oil industry. We must protect the Federal lands in order to protect private property which will be affected by this industry. View sheds, air quality, water quality-the environment in general are too precious to be ruined forever by greed. These two counties rely on tourism and the development of wells will directly and negatively impact this source of revenue. As a resident of Montezuma County since 1981, I continue to see the negative impacts from this industry and I am sure there will be little accountability for the damage they will do to public lands after these wells are no longer productive. Please include hefty dollar amounts to be sure the impacts from their drilling will be mitigated. And hold them accountable for the impacts they create while drilling and with productive wells to include methane venting and flaring which must be captured as it is a source of revenue.

Thank you-
Bill Williams
24226 CRS6
Dolores, CO 81323



County Commissioners:

Keenan G. Ertel
Larry Don Suckla
James Lambert

County Administrator:

Melissa A. Brunner

Board of County Commissioners

March 28, 2016

109 West Main, Room 302
Cortez, CO 81321
(970) 565-8317
(970) 565-3420 Fax

Ruth Welch, BLM State Director
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093

Dear Mrs. Welch,

The Montezuma County Board of County Commissioners has dutifully participated in the BLM SWRAC Master Leasing Plan (MLP) analysis. After four public meetings and a review of the public comments submitted it is not apparent that any new or significant information has been brought to light regarding any missing elements in the RMP.

The brand new BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP) was released in February, 2015. In the RMP, the BLM, as per the Federal Lands Policy Act (FLPMA, 1976) multiple use and sustained yield directive, has analyzed and allocated lands that are available for lease. In addition the RMP has identified appropriate stipulations for each lease unit to mitigate potential risks to other resources.

The RMP already provides an extremely high level of protection for both BLM parcels and private parcels with federal minerals. The current RMP already withdraws from leasing the two largest parcels of BLM in Montezuma County MLP area, and almost all BLM parcels on the eastern side of the proposed MLP in La Plata County.

In the BLM Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS, 2013) the BLM concludes;

Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, focuses on balancing the goals of maintaining working forest and rangelands and retaining core, undeveloped lands and providing and maintaining the full diversity of uses and active recreation opportunities. Uses and activities that require roads, such as timber harvesting and oil and gas development, would be mostly focused in areas that already have roads, while the relatively undeveloped areas and areas that currently do not have roads would, for the most part, remain that way.

We believe the RMP accomplishes what is stated in the FEIS by creating balance between competing uses. Given the dominate estate is private within the proposed MLP area, the BLM parcels amount to inholdings within a large, semi-developed, privately held landscape. The RMP correctly adheres to the statement, "Uses and activities that require roads, such as timber harvesting and oil and gas development, would be mostly focused in areas that already have roads" The semi- developed nature of the proposed MLP area fits that criteria.

We believe the current RMP is completely adequate with regard to fluid minerals, and is balanced in a manner that will protect all other resources while still allowing opportunity for a limited amount of mineral exploration and regulated development. All the environmental community wants through the MLP is simply to re-open the allocation process to withdraw more land from leasing. Energy development is a critical sector of the Montezuma County economy and withdrawing any additional acreage would reduce potential and could be devastating to our economy. Montezuma County supports all sectors of its economy including energy development along with recreation. We do not believe that the two are mutually exclusive as the environmental community would like you to believe. Energy development has co-existed with all other uses in our County since the first well was drilled in 1921 and the RMP already provides the path forward to ensure continued compatibility in the future.

The BLM itself concluded that none of the four criteria were met to substantiate a need for an MLP in this area. The BLM RMP went through a protest period and was upheld in its current form. Montezuma County participated in the RMP process, and we too have several other out-comes that we are dissatisfied with we would also like the BLM to provide another special opportunity to revisit those issues. If the RMP has missed as many things as the environmental community alleges then and MLP is not needed because the RMP is fatally flawed and therefore should be repealed and started over in its entirety.

We would prefer to see a simple and efficient conclusion to this analysis of the need for the proposed MLP. After reviewing the public comments and hearing from our constituents on a regular basis, we believe the best course of action is amend the RMP to cover the Phil's World trail park with a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation, including the proposed area of expansion. This would satisfy the call to protect the special recreational resources, within that area which actually has recreational access, (only 24% of the BLM land in Montezuma County is not landlocked by private lands), and is important to our local economy and quality of life. We feel that this measure will address the majority of the concerns from the public, and can easily be accomplished at the same time the BLM amends the RMP to include the ACEC areas that were omitted during the RMP development.

Sincerely,

The Montezuma County Board of Commissioners,



Keenan G. Ertel



Larry Don Suckla



James Lambert

cc. Connie Clementson, BLM Tres Rios Field Office Manager
BLM SWRAC
Janice Schneider, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management
Congressman Scott Tipton
Senator Cory Gardner
Senator Michal Bennet
Representative Don Coram
Senator Ellen Roberts



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Crow Canyon Public Comment

1 message

Deborah J. Gangloff <DGangloff@crowcanyon.org>

Fri, Apr 1, 2016 at 1:49 PM

To: "blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov" <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

To the SWRAC Oil & Gas Sub-group:

The Mesa Verde region represents one of the richest archaeological areas in the world. Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients have the highest density of recorded sites anywhere in United States, with over 100 sites per square mile in some areas. Because of the region's arid climate, the sites exhibit remarkable preservation: buildings remain partially intact and artifacts are abundant. These artifacts are both artistic treasures and a treasure trove of information that can be used to reconstruct the lifeways of people who once called the region home. Using tree-ring analysis, the period when these sites were occupied can be dated with precision unheard of in other parts of the world, specifying the exact year when some buildings were constructed. Tree-ring analysis also provides a reconstruction of the past environment that is unrivaled elsewhere. As a result, the Mesa Verde region is one of the world's most important areas for reconstructing the human past.

The area also holds great significance for the Native American tribal groups living throughout the Four Corners, which include tribes from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. These groups consider the Mesa Verde region of southwestern Colorado a part of their ancestral homeland and view the archaeological sites there as an important part of their cultural heritage. These sites are critical to their religious beliefs and to the preservation of their cultural identity because they provide a place where modern Native Americans can connect directly with their past and their ancestors. As such, they are deeply concerned about the preservation of these cultural resources.

Within the southwestern Colorado Master Leasing Plan (MLP) area west of Mancos, there are about 27,900 acres of lands with federal mineral rights (excluding the Wilderness Study Areas and the northern escarpment of Mesa Verde National Park).

Of this total area, about 9,760 acres have been surveyed for archaeological sites (about 35 percent of the total). About 35 percent of the existing relevant land has been surveyed. This is a relatively high percentage of survey, so we can be confident in what the sample from this area tells us. The site density is not as high as the most densely settled areas of the Mesa Verde region, for example Mesa Verde National Park or Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, but it is still a high site density by national standards. Some places, like that just around Cortez, have a much higher density, but that figure should be close to the average across all lands with federal mineral rights that have been surveyed for archaeological sites.

Many sites could be expected to be found in the un-surveyed areas; likely at roughly the same density as documented in this sample. Some areas at lower elevations with good agricultural soils could have considerably higher site densities. By law these new sites would have to be documented and either avoided or mitigated if impacted. There are likely artifacts and features in between what archaeologists would designate as sites, and impacts to these artifacts and features would be unknown. For these reasons (and others) an MLP would provide a more detailed plan for leasing and conducting fluid mineral extraction than the current Resource Management Plan. The MLP can do this through measures that cluster the impacts in areas with the fewest cultural resources and minimize the cumulative effects that could occur if leasing and extraction proceeded on a case-by-case/well-pad-by-well-pad basis.

The expansive archaeological landscape of the Mesa Verde region holds tremendous cultural resources and archaeological significance. These resources are important to reconstructing the history of specific groups and to understanding, in a more general way, how and why ancient societies changed and how we came to be the way we are today. In particular, the Mesa Verde region is one of the most valuable areas of the world for understanding the transformation of human society known as the Neolithic Revolution; the transition of hunting and gathering groups to societies that depended on farming domesticated crops and raising domesticated animals. Much remains to be learned about the ancestral Pueblo people and other tribes who lived here, as well as the early settlers and historical populations who made this area their home.

Thank you for your work and for the opportunity to provide public comment on this important issue.

Deborah Gangloff, Ph.D.

President & CEO

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

23390 Road K

Cortez, CO 81321

970-564-4385 (O)

970-403-9553 (cell)

www.CrowCanyon.org

Bureau of Land Management
Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-Group
Southwest District Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, Colorado 81401

Re: A Potential Master Leasing Plan in Western La Plata and Eastern Montezuma Counties

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on a potential Master Leasing Plan (MLP) in the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO). Founded in 1907, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU) represents family farmers and ranchers in Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico. As part of our mission, we promote responsible stewardship of land, water and other natural resources to keep family farms and ranches profitable, and to ensure safe, healthy food for consumers. As described in more detail below, based on our review of the recently-adopted TRFO Resource Management Plan (RMP), we believe an MLP is needed to address impacts from oil and gas development on farms, ranches and split-estate lands in the TRFO.

To help accomplish its mission, RMFU has identified specific principles and standards for oil and gas development near farms and ranches.¹ To protect water, for example, we support lease stipulations and regulatory measures that prevent surface and groundwater contamination, like stringent casing standards and produced water treatment requirements. We also support frequent testing and monitoring of water resources near oil and gas operations, and robust bonding, reclamation, and remediation obligations for operators. Further, we support meaningful opportunities for farmers, ranchers, local governments, and the broader public to participate in federal oil and gas management decisions, both when land use plans are being drafted, and later on, during the leasing and permitting stages of development. We also believe that, at a minimum, surface owners of split-estate lands should have the right to carefully condition oil and gas development on their lands, and they should be assured of full compensation for, and remediation of, any damages to their property.

Based on our review, the recently-approved TRFO RMP falls short of our standards for responsible stewardship of agricultural resources. First, the RMP does not adequately protect water resources in the planning area. While the plan does include a variety of stipulations intended to protect its waters, most of the stipulations fail to identify the specific water sources they were designed to protect. Since the stipulations are not source-specific, farmers and ranchers cannot know which protections apply to the individual sources they use or have rights to, or whether all sources, like their irrigation ditches and canals, are fully protected. Likewise, without tying stipulations to sources, farmers and ranchers cannot know when leases near their sources are offered or sold by BLM, or when stipulations attached to these leases are modified or removed. And, since stipulations for water sources are subject to “general” waiver, exception and modification criteria under the RMP, BLM has broad discretion to remove protections for agricultural waters. As a result,

¹ See RMFU Policy (2016), available at <https://www.rmfu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2016-Policy-RMFU-2.pdf>.

protections for water resources under the existing RMP are neither transparent nor reliable enough to fully protect local farms and ranches in the planning area.

Second, the RMP fails to directly protect against, or account for, impacts from oil and gas development on farming and local agriculture. Although BLM typically does not plan directly for agriculture—instead opting to protect related resources, like air and water—the wealth of agricultural operations in the TRFO warrants direct protections for, and a closer look at, the potential impacts of oil and gas development on local agriculture. Not only can oil and gas development impact resources used for farming, it can directly harm crops themselves, and even the public perception of crop quality. These are critical impacts BLM failed to fully consider or directly address in the existing RMP.

Lastly, the RMP does not adequately protect surface owners of split-estate lands with federally-owned minerals. As with agricultural resources, the plan neither contemplates nor accounts for conflicts associated with split-estate oil and gas development, and it fails to include any specific stipulations to protect surface owners of split-estate lands. Noise and light pollution, surface-disturbance from roads and infrastructure, environmental risks to water and soil quality, and even reputational threats can make oil and gas development on split-estate farms and ranches highly contentious. Yet, the RMP does not include any specific protections for split-estate surface owners, and BLM appears not to have considered surface owner conflicts in deciding where oil and gas leasing should be allowed in the planning area, and under what stipulations and conditions.

In light of these shortcomings, we recommend that BLM prepare a Master Leasing Plan in the TRFO. As described in BLM Handbook H-1624-1, MLPs take a “narrower” and “more focused look” at planning decisions than the broader level of analysis normally conducted in an RMP. As part of taking a more focused look, MLPs allow for progressive, innovative stipulations and conditions of approval that are narrowly-tailored to the development they allow and the resources they aim to protect. In our experience, MLPs are more effective than traditional RMPs at planning for complex resource-use conflicts related to oil and gas development on federal public lands, like those in the TRFO.

We also believe an MLP could directly resolve many of the problems associated with the recently-approved RMP. As to water resources, for example, a more closely-focused plan could include comprehensive, source-specific stipulations, including stipulations for irrigation ditches and canals; identify narrow, specific criteria under which stipulations can be waived, excepted or modified; require consultation with local farmers and ranchers in planning, leasing and permitting decisions; provide water quality standards as “resource condition objectives” for specific water sources; and define conditions of approval for drilling permits on existing leases near critical water sources, like remediation and water testing requirements. Along with other measures, these tools would give BLM a clearer picture of whether its planning decisions are providing their intended consequences and allow the agency to make informed leasing and permitting decisions to achieve its resource protection goals. Likewise, farmers and ranchers would be better informed of, and more confident in, the protections that apply to the water sources they depend on for their livelihoods.

An MLP could also directly plan for and more fully-consider the effects of oil and gas development on local farms, ranches and split-estate lands in the planning area. To begin with, BLM would have a new opportunity to work closely with farmers, ranchers, and split-estate landowners to identify

their specific concerns about proximate oil and gas development. Using this information, BLM could craft stipulations and conditions of approval designed specifically to address their concerns, including, for example, heightened standards for managing produced water, stronger consultation obligations for locating infrastructure, seasonal timing limitations related to planting and harvest, and stricter bonding and reclamation requirements for oil and gas wells. An MLP would also allow BLM to revisit its environmental impacts analysis to more fully-consider the effects of oil and gas development on farms, ranches and split-estate lands. For example, a more closely-focused look at the environmental impacts of oil and gas development could account for less traditional environmental effects important to farmers and ranchers, including potential impacts to crop quality and yield, reputational harms to farms and ranches, and conflicts between federal mineral lessees and surface owners of split estate lands. By considering these types of less traditional impacts, BLM could more fully-account for the effects of oil and gas development on local farms and ranches in devising and selecting a planning scheme for the TRFO.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the need for a Master Leasing Plan in the TRFO. We commend BLM for its willingness to revisit the planning decisions it adopted in its recent RMP, and we appreciate the Oil and Gas Sub-Group's efforts to resolve the challenging problems related to oil and gas planning in southwest Colorado. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Bill Midcap

Bill Midcap
Director, External Affairs
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
7900 E Union Ave., Suite 200
Denver CO 80237
303.752.5800



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mesa Verde National Park
PO Box 8
Mesa Verde, CO 81330



N-1625

April 8, 2016

Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, Colorado 81401

Dear Ms. Borders,

I am responding to the letter dated March 24, 2016 from John Reams to the members of the SWRAC Oil and Gas Subgroup within which George San Miguel represents me and Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE). I understand that Mr. Reams is requesting that each agency, organization, or interested member of the public complete their scoping communication with the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) of the BLM regarding the proposed Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan (MLP) by April 8, 2016. He also requested that we provide to TRFO, through you by that date, our suggestions and recommendations regarding the MLP, our reasons for them, and to identify specific locations where our suggestions and comments would apply.

As the MEVE superintendent, I have an affirmative responsibility to secure the social, cultural, and natural resources and values of the park from adverse influences regardless of the source. Through the public communications received to date by TRFO from letters, e-mails, and public meetings, I have learned a great deal about the many concerns about oil and gas exploration and production inherent to the southwestern Colorado region. However, I will restrict my official comments regarding the MLP to issues directly related to matters affecting MEVE.

As a Class I area under the Clean Air Act, MEVE requires the highest levels of protection from atmospheric pollutants. The Mesa Verde Wilderness is located on the escarpments facing north and east from the Mesa Verde cuesta and many of MEVE's premier scenic overlooks face in the same directions out over the Montezuma and Mancos valleys. Industrial development of oil and gas on the order seen today in the San Juan Basin in close proximity to MEVE would significantly degrade the park's air quality related values at a time when ongoing improvements at the power plants near Farmington, New Mexico should be resulting in reduced regional haze and ozone levels. An MLP can strengthen air quality protections from the development of federal oil and gas resources by ensuring that best management practices are not waived by discretionary or permissive language found in parts of the LRMP. The best standards in minimizing engine emissions, fugitive dust, and leaks of methane and other volatile organic compounds can become the expectation in the MEVE area with an MLP. Similarly, degradation of Wilderness values, scenic vistas, and dark night skies can be minimized by adopting the highest available best management practices regarding siting and consolidation of roads, drilling and production pads, power and pipe lines, night lighting, and flaring. MEVE is among the principal economic drivers in

southwest Colorado. Maintaining the quality of each visitor's experience is of major importance to the National Park Service and our neighboring communities.

There are many concerns related to water resources as well. The Mancos River already suffers from insufficient flows and concentrated contaminants resulting from existing diversions and other upstream uses. Further increasing the demand on this limited resource through oil and gas activities needs to be minimized while contamination of surface and ground waters in the Mancos River watershed must be prevented. Industrial chemicals, wastes, and spills are a threat to park resources. There are many phases in the oil and gas production, storage, and transportation processes where best management practices need to be made mandatory. Adoption of a MLP can be a logical mechanism for articulating these methods that are specific, detailed, unambiguous, and not open to discretion. Several ideas have been proposed through public participation regarding prohibiting certain practices, certifying pipeline construction and truck traffic safety, requiring the highest standards from companies, contractors, and subcontractors, and ensuring a rigorous inspection regimen.

Drinking water sources must require the highest level of assured protection. I bring your attention to Geographic Zone Map 3 (Mancos), parcel 62 at the north shore of Jackson Gulch Reservoir. This site appears to have federal mineral ownership under both Bureau of Reclamation and private surface ownership. The reservoir serves as one of MEVE's sources of drinking water. The No Surface Occupancy stipulation for 1,000 feet and Controlled Surface Use beyond that are not sufficient to ensure this water source is fully and permanently protected from spills or other kinds of accidents with contaminants. Federal minerals this close to MEVE's drinking water should be withdrawn from leasing. An MLP could identify other areas of high level concern like Jackson Lake.

Oil and Gas development around MEVE also will directly impact migratory park wildlife, cut migratory corridors, and fragment habitat. As the Colorado Parks and Wildlife has stated in its letter to TRFO, in an MLP, phasing developments over time and concentrating developments, roads, and pads in designated zones can be designed to minimize impacts to wildlife.

Among southwestern Colorado's greatest assets is the rich archeological story that spans the whole region over many centuries. This story is central to MEVE's purpose and significance, a story that is also inextricably interwoven with the lands outside the park. Many currently unrecorded archeological sites can be expected to be found among the thousands that have been recorded. The existing data demonstrates the high landscape-scale density and significance of this resource. An MLP would provide the opportunity for establishing a more detailed strategy that allows for coordinating development and clustering of impacts to minimize cumulative effects to the cultural resources.

Earthquakes have been associated with wastewater injecting in other parts of the country. Southwestern Colorado normally is seismically very quiet. Adding earthquakes to the area could put archeological resources at risk from shaking and being crushed from dislodged rocks falling in alcove sites. Seismic risks from injection wells are not addressed in the LRMP. This issue needs detailed study of the local geologic conditions before injecting can begin. Analysis of the study's results can be used to append an MLP with more specific guidance on mitigation measures such as safe distances from resources at risk.

During the public comment period for the MLP, among the most consistently raised concerns over the LRMP was the BLM's option of granting exceptions, modifications, and waivers to stipulations on oil and gas leases. Also, the LRMP contains language about stipulations and mitigations that falls short of decisive such as "may" or "should" instead of "shall" or "must." Examples of this are found on page R-6 in Appendix R of the LRMP. This issue is relevant because it reduces the public's confidence that all will be done to ensure adverse impacts from oil and gas activities are minimized. Addressing this issue in an MLP can ensure conditions of approval and best management practices are most often or at least more often met. Making stipulations and best management practices mandatory in an MLP would go a long way to solve this problem.

Operational action plans for oil and gas activities are evaluated in an Environmental Assessment for each drilling proposal tiered off the LRMP EIS. The 30-day review period under NEPA for the public, agencies, and tribes will be critical for addressing concerns on a project by project basis. Similarly, notifications of when a parcel is nominated for leasing could be communicated directly with the park before lease nominations are made. I recognize that BLM meets its public notification requirements very well. Even so, notification mechanisms could be improved or at least suggested in the development of an MLP.

Geographic Zone Map 3 (Mancos) and 4 (Cortez) depict large areas of BLM surface, mineral, and split estate near MEVE. These areas are within the proximate viewshed of the park. The map titled "Tres Rios Field Office Areas of Interest" also depicts leased parcels with lease expiration dates and the locations of plugged oil and gas wells. By far the largest of these is Parcel 51, which spans both Maps 3 and 4 in a broad sweep of areas east, north, and west of MEVE. The two wilderness study areas are withdrawn from leasing, so they are not a concern, but the other parts of 51 are available for development and some are already leased with 2016 and 2018 expiration dates. Much of parcel 51 adjoins or faces MEVE.

Other parcels nearby to MEVE or otherwise of concern to the NPS are numbered as follows:

- 63 (unleased)
- 64 (leased – 2018)
- 112 (leased – 2018)
- 71 (unleased),
- 72 (unleased and leased – 2017)
- 50 (unleased and leased – 2017)
- 47, 45, and 43 (all leased – 2017)
- 74 (unleased)
- 39 (mostly leased – 2018)
- 111 (leased – 2018)
- 66 (unable to determine the status of 66 from the maps)
- 69 and 42 (both leased – 2018)
- 73 (leased – 2018)
- 26 (unable to determine if 26 is leased due to the dense clustering of plugged wells on the map)
- 62 (I previously discussed parcel 62 at Jackson Gulch Dam.)

At this time I endorse the concept of an MLP that could address in greater detail the management of these parcels that lie in close proximity to MEVE with the expectation that social, cultural, and natural resources and values could be better protected from industrial development than is currently articulated in the LRMP. For example, stipulations could become mandatory and inspections and enforcement could be strengthened. MLP's are being used to protect other NPS areas in our region including Arches and Canyonlands National Parks and Dinosaur National Monument. The circumstances for MEVE are equally compelling and thus also merit an MLP level of planning and protections. Furthermore, the landscapes along the Old Spanish National Historic Trail need protection and we will be working within a partnership framework to promote the "Paths to Mesa Verde" recreational trail. An MLP would allow for smart planning to not conflict with these two other resources.

There is a proposed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) along the northern part of MEVE. I will be addressing the ACEC issue in a separate communication to TRFO, but coordinating the ACEC within an MLP also makes sense.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the SWRAC Oil and Gas Subgroup meetings for the proposed MLP.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact George San Miguel, Natural Resource Conservation Program manager, at (970) 529-5069 or george_san_miguel@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cliff Spencer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cliff Spencer
Superintendent



April 7, 2016

Shannon Borders
BLM, Public Affairs Specialist

email: sborders@blm.gov

RE: Comments regarding - BLM Master Leasing Plan

Dear Mrs. Borders:

I would like to state my opposition to the creation of a Master Leasing Plan for the Tres-Rios Field office. The concept of a Master Leasing Plan probably has some merit in certain instances. For example where Resource Management Plans are outdated or where there are significant and contiguous tracts of public lands where phasing and road plans may be of value.

In Montezuma and La Plata Counties however we have a brand new Resource Management Plan. This balanced plan already properly analyzed and legally allocated lands available for leasing as per federal law and BLM policy. In addition the plan provides very restrictive leasing stipulations for the majority of the lands in question and provides direction for the application of the most up-to-date best management practices available to protect other resources.

The creation of an MLP will be nothing but a redundant planning exercise, at significant expense to taxpayers, who already paid for a Resource Management Plan which already covers all of the issues we have heard about from the environmental community.

The MLP is nothing more than another chance for the environmental community to re-allocate lands available for leasing outside of the RMP. The excuses they are using to justify another layer of planning are largely unsubstantiated in any way. The RMP is very comprehensive in its resource protection role and the majority of the public concerns voiced do not reflect any understanding of the RMP, its regulatory role, or its relationship to surrounding non-federal lands.

We hear from the environmental community that the “public have to have a voice in oil and gas planning”. They did. It took 11 years to complete the RMP with 11 years’ worth of public input. They have another opportunity when parcels are leased and another yet opportunity at the APD level. Much of the BLM land base in Montezuma County is also under the Special Recreation Management Area which will also allow another opportunity for public comment during the Creation of a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP). But the environmental community needs a special opportunity to comment? In fairness every other issue in the RMP that someone disagrees with should also get another opportunity to “provide a community voice” and amend the RMP to fix the things the RMP did not adequately address like removing language in the plan that addresses the three species of fish in the lower Dolores, and maybe the expansion of motorized recreational opportunities.

The public who support the MLP have weighed in with concerns that are simply opposed oil and gas development in general, and many are supporting the MLP simply as a way to punish the oil and gas sector for their success. The creation of an MLP will not resolve any conflicts with oil and gas development that the RMP has not already addressed. All it will do is allow the environmental community another opportunity to lock up potential. Every single lease and APD will still be opposed by the environmental community. To hear them promote an MLP by stating that conflicts will be resolved ahead of time and litigations will be reduced is purely nonsense. They have a track record that proves otherwise. If the BLM moves forward with an MLP it is not because of any need for additional resource protection but it is simply a move to appease the radical environmental community.

We heard from the public that Oil and Gas make up less than 1% of the job base in Montezuma County which accounts for 13 jobs. These statistics are not valid. I can tell you as a business owner who provides safety services to the oil and gas industry that our business alone employed 26 people. The oil and gas sector is very important to the local economy and even if it is susceptible to boom bust cycles so is every other business out there. Recreation is no exception. Recreation only does well when the overall economy is doing well. Recreation is not an industry this community (or any other community) can hang its hat on. Furthermore recreational pursuits create demand for the very fossil fuels the fantasy environmentalist wants to keep in the ground. Lets' see Opsrey put their money where their mouth is and start building packs made of sticks and rawhide instead of fossil fuel.

The proposed MLP is waste of taxpayer money and will do nothing to satisfy the environmental community in the long run. After reading the public comments on the SWRAC website it is pretty obvious that most of the citizens who submitted comments have little to no understanding of what an RMP does or what an MLP amendment can really accomplish. Much of the lofty expectations for the MLP stated by concerned environmentalists cannot even be addressed by the BLM as they have no jurisdiction over the vast majority of the lands within the proposed MLP boundary. Most reasonable people would read the comments submitted to the BLM and conclude that they are simply angry with oil and gas in general and want the industry to be punished through any means possible and the MLP is one vehicle thy can use to accomplish this. The BLM does not need to participate in punishing any industry through a redundant planning effort like the MLP. This process has been divisive enough already, thanks to the BLM not standing up for their own planning and caving into the pressure of the environmental community.

If the BLM moves forward with this MLP you better plan to triple your projected cost, time and staff commitment to this effort because the real fight will just be beginning. You already know that the environmental contingency represents a minority of this community and they are about to waken a sleeping giant of backlash.

Thank you for receiving my comments,

Gloria Thorpe

To: Southwest RAC Oil & Gas Sub-Group
Tres Rios Field Office,
Bureau of Land Management

From: Ellis Richard
Park Rangers For Our Lands

Subject: Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the question of implementing a master leasing plan for the Tres Rios Field Office.

From our perspective a master leasing plan is simply a closer, more detailed analysis of possible impacts that oil and gas leasing could have on sensitive landscapes such as those embodied in and around Mesa Verde National Park. By contrast, BLM Resource Management Plans (RMPs) like the one completed for the Tres Rios Field Office in 2015, look at the landscape as if viewing it from about 40,000 feet. It captures the big features, and the overall lay of the land, but it misses detail, and potential issues that will be apparent to someone on the ground. An MLP looks at a smaller area within the RMP, as if it were about 500 feet above the ground. From there you can see trails, and ruins, gas wells and oil pads, long vistas that national park visitors might enjoy, and even glimpse the movement of deer and pronghorn. It is this kind of planning that we are urging the BLM to undertake as it makes plans for energy development on lands it manages near our national parks, including the public lands and minerals that surround Mesa Verde. How oil and gas is developed on BLM land could dramatically impact the experience of visitors to Mesa Verde National Park, as well as affect local communities, business, jobs, ranching, water resources and the diminishing clarity of night skies. It is an important decision.

We commend the BLM's decision to establish the Southwest Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Oil and Gas Sub-Group. The RAC sub-group deserves credit for holding four public meetings to solicit public feedback on the issue of an MLP. That feedback from the public as well as other key stakeholders found a high level of support for the development of a master leasing plan. That public support is a strong reason to go forward with an MLP.

The other good reason for the BLM to do an MLP in this part of the state is because the current Resource Management Plan fails to strike a balance between energy development and the protection of important scenic and recreation values and especially scenic values of Mesa Verde National Park. Specifically, the current RMP allows for oil and gas development adjacent to the park without necessary protections to the scenic values of the park and the surrounding lands. Protections like closing lands to leasing and no surface occupancy of oil and gas structures were included in the draft Moab MLP to specifically protect the viewshed of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks near Moab, Utah, but were

not evaluated for the Tres Rios RMP. Lands adjacent to the park could also be deferred from potential oil and gas leasing as was done in an MLP for lands near Dinosaur National Monument.

The current RMP also conducted no view shed analysis from key points within Mesa Verde National Park. The Utah BLM office took a different approach and used information from such a view shed analysis for the Moab Master Leasing Plan. Even more discouraging, the Tres Rios RMP doesn't even require the BLM to consult with the National Park Service when leases are proposed on the park boundary for oil and gas development. No consultation or notification of the NPS is required in the RMP and none is currently provided. I had hoped that we were becoming more comfortable with working with our neighbors and sister agencies in an attempt to connect our respective dots for the best possible picture of how to wisely develop our energy resources without damaging the other important values also present on or near these landscapes. Guess we still have a ways to go.

There are of course arguments against doing a master leasing plan. The usual ones are that the RMPs already address the issues that concern us and that developing an MLP would add another undue burden on BLM staffs and the businesses interested in developing oil and gas. It's pretty clear that the current RMP does not provide adequate protections for Mesa Verde and in fact shows little if any concern for the park's values in the current decision to develop oil and gas. As for the second argument, a master leasing plan need not be another complicated, lengthy planning process. Most of the relevant data has already been collected by the BLM. Conducting the additional work to analyze the view sheds, and consider the other resource values at stake should not take a great deal of time, nor should it be an additional complexity or burden on the staff. Everyone claims that oil and gas development, including fracking technologies can be done without damaging fragile, important values like those found in Mesa Verde. Wouldn't it then make sense to do the work up front to insure that there is a plan in place, backed up by detailed analysis that makes this claim possible?

We at Park Rangers For Our Lands would urge the Tres Rios Field Office to make the decision to do a master leasing plan. The public supports it, it gives us our best shot at energy development without destroying other important values, and it holds the potential of a productive partnership between federal agencies and the publics they serve.

Ellis Richard

Founding Member

Park Rangers For Our Lands

653 A St. SE

Washington, D.C. 20003

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TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

MLP comments in Montezuma County

1 message

tyler hoyt <tjhoyt7@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 8, 2016 at 10:56 AM

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tyler Hoyt and my fiance Kendra Mackenbach and I live at 41478 Highway 184 in Mancos, Colorado 81328.

We would like to express the need for a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) in Montezuma County for many reasons and to protect many special and important places. First, we feel that oil and gas development in Montezuma county has the ability to negatively impact our farm business Green Table Farm LLC. If pollutants or contamination from industry were to get into any of the water sources within the Mancos Valley, such as the many branches of the Mancos River, Chicken Creek, Mud Creek, and other tributaries, then our business would certainly be negatively impacted because our customers are very worried about clean water sources being used to grow their food. Second, we live on Highway 184, so any additional heavy traffic on that roadway would negatively impact our quality of life. We already see the traffic that goes by on a daily basis for the existing extraction industries in our county, and it is already too much. Third, we feel that agriculture in general has been entirely left out of the current resource development plan in our county, and that it ought to have a main spot in a MLP, to protect this very fragile industry that is gaining a sustainable foothold in this valley. Thank you for your time, effort, and consideration on this matter and we hope that you find it necessary to implement a MLP for future resource extraction in Montezuma County.

Sincerely,

Tyler Hoyt and Kendra Mackenbach

April 8, 2016

blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Re: Federal Oil and Gas Leasing and a Potential Master Leasing Plan in Western La Plata and Eastern Montezuma Counties

Please accept and fully consider these comments on behalf of The Wilderness Society, Conservation Colorado, National Parks Conservation Association, San Juan Citizens Alliance and Earthworks/Oil and Gas Accountability Project. The membership of these organizations includes hundreds of thousands of members and supporters in Colorado and around the country who care deeply about the management of our public lands. We appreciate this opportunity to comment and appreciate the Bureau of Land Management's commitment to addressing the resources and values related to management of the public lands within the Tres Rios Field Office. We look forward to participating throughout the Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan process.

I. Introduction

The Tres Rios Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD) were finalized in February 2015. The RMP identifies oil and gas planning decisions for the field office and establishes resource condition objectives and best management practices that will be utilized to accomplish these objectives in areas open to leasing. However, the RMP failed to fully address potential conflicts between oil and gas leasing and other resource values and, as a result, did not consider tools to manage these conflicts. Pursuant to BLM's Handbook H-1624-1: Planning for Fluid Mineral Resources, a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) "takes a more focused look at resource management plan (RMP) decisions pertaining to oil and gas leasing and post-leasing development of the area." Further, an MLP will set out "a guiding framework for the development of the area and provides a vision for how future development will proceed" and "will evaluate likely development scenarios and varying mitigation levels" H-1624-1.V.A. The Handbook sets out criteria for when preparation of an MLP is required and also provides for preparation of an MLP at the discretion of the BLM. H-1624-1.V.B. In completing the Tres Rios RMP, BLM declined to adopt or even thoroughly evaluate an MLP, even though the issue was repeatedly raised by a number of stakeholders.

We appreciate that the BLM, through the Southwest Resource Advisory Council's (SWRAC) Oil and Gas Sub-group, has initiated a new stakeholder engagement process and convened a Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Working Group made up of 14 members representing a variety of interests to collect public input on moving forward with an MLP. Since moving forward with this process, the public has shown an overwhelming level of engagement, submitting comments, attending public meetings and writing letters to the editor. This support is compounded by the variety of voices speaking out in favor of the MLP - from pipeline engineers to county commissioners, local farmers to local businesses, and a host of private citizens.

There is clearly a want and a need for an MLP, and we strongly support the BLM moving forward with the Southwest Colorado MLP, building on the significant amount of time and energy that has already been invested. We believe this process can be completed in an efficient manner, tiering to some of the analysis completed in the Tres Rios RMP to support completion of an MLP using an environmental assessment. This comment letter discusses the need for the MLP and specific recommendations for issues to be addressed in an MLP.

II. Need for the Southwest Colorado MLP

Approximately 323,297 acres fall within the potential MLP boundary, 80,022 of which are federal oil and gas estate. Currently only 6,220 acres within the boundary have been leased and the Tres Rios RMP only closed the 13,600 acres that BLM was required to close within the two Wilderness Study Areas. This leaves 66,422 acres open for oil and gas leasing, including 34,281 that are managed under a waivable no surface occupancy stipulation in the RMP.

The land that falls within the potential MLP boundary abuts Mesa Verde National Park and Yucca House and Canyons of the Ancients national monuments. It also contains some of the finest mountain biking in the country, an extensive network of hiking trails, essential habitat and migration corridors for numerous species, thousands of important ancestral Puebloan cultural sites, lands with wilderness characteristics and prolific agricultural lands. In short, many of the resources that are vital to the local and regional economy, necessary for wildlife, valued by residents and visitors, and in need of protection to ensure they retain their value.

As highlighted in BLM's guidance, an MLP is appropriate where:

Additional analysis is needed to address likely resource impacts (including cumulative impacts) if oil and gas development were to occur where there is a potential for:

- Multiple-use or natural/cultural resource conflicts; or
- Impacts to air quality; or
- Impacts on the resources or values of a unit of the National Park System, national wildlife refuge, or National Forest wilderness area, as determined after consultation or coordination with the National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), or Forest Service; or
- Impacts on other specially designated areas.

Further, this guidance also authorizes the BLM to prepare MLPs when "other circumstances" exist, such as the existence of unresolved conflicts with proposed leasing. Since the RMP left the vast majority of lands and minerals available for leasing and development, including in the potential MLP area, the MLP provides the opportunity to address the potential for ongoing conflicts.

This opportunity extends to both new and existing leases. BLM can develop stipulations that will be added to new leases and, importantly, also develop conditions of approval (COA) and best management practices (BMP) that will apply to permits to drill on new and existing leases. Given the numerous resources within this landscape, there is high potential for conflict with leasing and drilling. The impact additional oil and gas development in the area may have on these resources can and should be addressed in the MLP. This requires the identification of the resources present, an assessment of the potential impact of energy development, acknowledgement of the need for additional management and proposal of potential solutions that can be incorporated into an MLP. Through the MLP process, BLM, with stakeholder input can develop a detailed vision for management of this MLP area, incorporating a thoughtful, balanced approach to managing oil and gas leasing and development.

a. Resources at Risk and Potential Impacts

Of the many resource values present in the planning area, certain resources, highlighted below, face the greatest risk of harm or outright destruction from oil and gas development.

National Parks and Monuments:

Mesa Verde National Park, Yucca House National Monument and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument lie right outside of the proposed MLP boundary. Development of the lands directly adjacent to these areas would result in increased truck traffic and associated noise pollution. Heavy usage of primarily dirt roads would lead to the creation of fugitive dust which can contribute to hazy skies and negatively impact respiratory health for adjacent communities and park visitors. The need to operate these facilities at all hours of the day means that lights would need to be installed at the facilities, diminishing the quality of the night skies. Additionally, views from the park and monuments would be significantly impaired by the presence of necessary oil and gas infrastructure including storage tanks, enclosed flares, separators and pump jacks. Development of these lands will ultimately result in a diminished visitor experience and a potential decrease in annual visitation rates.

Recreation:

The MLP area has some of the best mountain biking in the country. Phil's World, containing 26.8 miles of single-track is ranked Number 1 in the Mesa Verde area by MTB Project and is the site of the 12 Hours of Mesa Verde Event.¹ Additionally, there are an abundance of opportunities for hiking especially around the towns of Cortez, Mancos and Dolores. For instance, Governor Hickenlooper has identified the proposed Paths to Mesa Verde (a multiple use trail connecting Cortez, Mesa Verde National Park and Mancos) as one of his most important trail projects for 2016.² As shown on the map attached as Appendix A, the potential MLP boundary overlaps this area. Oil and gas development could result in the closure or rerouting of existing hiking and biking trails. Additional development would result in the construction of new roads increasing truck traffic in areas that were once quiet and degrade the overall user experience on any nearby trails due to increased, odors, noise and viewshed impairment.

Wildlife:

Oil and gas development will have a significant impact on vital wildlife migration corridors and habitat contained within the MLP boundary. New road development and pipeline infrastructure leads to habitat fragmentation and can prohibit some species from using their traditional migration paths. Noise and increased human presence can displace species from their historic range or minimize the size of it. Limiting the range of certain species in particular larger ungulate can result in overgrazing of an area, further degrading the land. All of this places threatened, endangered and other special status species at even greater risk. It should be noted that development will also impact soil and vegetation in the immediate area and can directly contribute to habitat loss of at-risk species.

¹ See <http://www.12hoursofmesaverde.com/>

² See <http://www.durangoherald.com/article/20160123/NEWS01/160129792/Paths-to-Mesa-Verde-makes-Colorado-governor%E2%80%99s-priority-list>

Cultural Resources:

There are world-class cultural resources in Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, including more than 5,000 identified sites. In addition, areas outside Mesa Verde National Park, like the proposed Anasazi Culture Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), also contain significant archeological, religious and cultural resources. Excluding these protected areas, there are 364 recorded sites tied to various periods of ancestral Puebloan civilization within the MLP area west of Mancos in Montezuma County, about 35% of which has been surveyed. As new sites are frequently identified, an updated cultural resources inventory would better allow for careful planning to avoid impacts to known cultural and archaeological sites. Ongoing research into the area, including work conducted by the local Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, continues to show a high density of sites outside the park, supporting the need for both identification and protection of these sensitive resources before oil and gas leasing and development. For reference, we've attached a factsheet prepared by Crow Canyon as Appendix B to these comments.

An increased network of roads can make previously hard-to-access sites more accessible leading to increased vandalism or theft. In fact, this has been such an issue that BLM completed "A Survey of Vandalism to Archeological Resources" in 1981 specifically looking at Southwestern Colorado. This study found that oil and gas drilling access roads account for approximately 48% of access to the sites in the study area and that the extensive existing road network is rapidly expanding as development accelerates making it easier for artifact hunters and the like to access these sites. Additionally, significant cultural or spiritual sites may be impacted by the associated noise and light pollution of oil and gas development, again degrading what was once a unique experience.

Air Quality:

Air quality is significantly impacted by oil and gas development both on a local and global scale. At the local level development will result in an increase of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), such as benzene and n-hexane; known carcinogens. There is limited information on long-term exposure limits and impacts but the hazards associated with moderate exposure over the short term are well documented and significant. Leaking and venting associated with well production facilities also leads to the release of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), a criteria pollutant regulated by EPA that contributes to the formation of ground level ozone. Ground level ozone is a major component of urban smog and negatively impacts respiratory health, as well as the health of sensitive flora and fauna in the TRFO area. Portions of Colorado are already not in attainment with EPA's national ambient air quality standards (NAQMS) for ozone. Additional development will only contribute to this issue. While the area in question is in attainment with the current standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb), EPA recently proposed reducing the standards to 70ppb meaning that it would be even easier for new areas to fall into non-attainment. Mesa Verde National Park - designated as a Class I Airshed under the Clean Air Act, and thus afforded the highest protections under the law - has registered above these recommended levels in 3 of the last 10 years, and has hovered just below this threshold in all other years. In sum, air quality will be degraded and we will see an increase in smog, exposure to known carcinogens and respiratory issues, and compromised ecosystem health.

Visibility in the region would also be significantly impacted. This poses a unique threat to Mesa Verde National Park - where distant vistas are an important aspect of the visitor experience. Under natural conditions, visibility from Mesa Verde should be approximately 220 miles; but current conditions average only 174 miles. BLM data indicate that under a "medium" development scenario, Mesa Verde National Park could expect 265 days of significantly impaired visibility and 64 days of greatly

impaired visibility due to increased haze related to federal oil, gas and mining in the region. Under a “high” development scenario, still conceivable within the parameters of the RMP, the number of impacted days could increase to 312 and 105, respectively.

On a larger scale, the leaking and venting of methane - which is 34 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas in the short-term – will contribute to the continued increase in global atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations. The Four Corners region has been identified as having elevated methane levels, and additional oil and gas development will contribute to this concern.

Water Quality and Supply:

Oil and gas development has the potential to affect above and below ground water sources. Water is critical in the drilling and well completion process. It takes millions of gallons of fresh water to drill a well. That water is injected into the well bore while drilling, and a substantial percentage returns to the surface after the well is completed. This water is contaminated with salts, other minerals, heavy metals, fracking fluids (proppant) and entrained hydrocarbons. The water must be stored and removed for treatment. This contaminated water continues to surface throughout the life of the well as a byproduct of the oil and/or gas that is being produced. If not properly contained the “produced water” can spill and ruin adjacent land as well as contaminate subsurface groundwater. An oil spill can have just as devastating of an effect on local watersheds if it reaches nearby streams or rivers. Although rare, there is also the potential for groundwater contamination if the casing on a well ruptures or fails.³ Further, the sourcing of the significant volume of water needed for development is a concern, since local supplies are often already stressed or even over-allocated, such as the Mancos River.

Agriculture:

Agriculture is an important land use in both Montezuma County⁴ and La Plata County.⁵ According to the 2012 Census, the total value of agricultural products sold from Montezuma County was \$46.4 million and from La Plata County was \$25 million. The 2015 Agricultural Statistics provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service show that these counties make significant contributions to supplying winter wheat (9,000 acres planted), dry beans (7,700 acres planted in Montezuma County) and alfalfa and hay (32,000 acres planted in Montezuma County) and cattle.⁶

The greatest impact oil and gas development may have on agriculture has to do with the potential for a produced water spill outlined above. The extremely saline water is also contaminated with hydrocarbons and other heavy metals that can render once productive soil useless and prevent crops from taking root. Oil and gas development also utilizes incredible amount fresh water potentially impacting the amount available for irrigation (dependent on existing rights). On any split-estate the owner of the surface rights and the lessee of the federal mineral rights must come to terms on

³ Typically the actual fracturing of the well occurs well below the formation where aquifers exist, so that the hydraulic fracturing itself is not directly linked to groundwater contamination.

⁴ See, census data on agriculture in Montezuma County

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Colorado/cp08083.pdf

⁵ See, census data on agriculture in La Plata County

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Colorado/cp08067.pdf

⁶ http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Colorado/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/Bulletin2015.pdf

surface use issues; however this can and often does, result in a net loss of acreage available for agriculture if the current surface right owner uses that land for crops.

Additionally, the stigma of producing crops for human consumption near oil and gas development may deter consumers from purchasing that food. This could especially impact those involved in organic farming. Based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's list of certified organic producers, there are at least five certified organic operations within the MLP area of consideration and another eight in the surrounding area.⁷

Split-Estate:

When subsurface mineral rights are owned by the federal government they can be leased to oil and gas companies for future development regardless of who owns the surface rights. While companies are instructed to pursue good-faith efforts to reach an acceptable surface use agreement with the surface rights owner, the lessee of the mineral rights is always allowed to develop those minerals. In some instances this can result in unwanted infrastructure on private lands. This can expose the resident to increased air and light pollution as well as noise. If surface use is prohibited by a landowner the company can still develop those minerals. Typically this is done by drilling the well beyond the property line (on the nearest federal land) and using horizontal or directional drilling techniques to access the minerals below the private property. Although the above-ground infrastructure is not on private property it can still be close enough to negatively impact the private owner. These negative impacts include not only impacts to the residents' quality of life but also can include diminished property values, which in turn diminishes property tax revenues for local counties.

b. RMP Deficiencies and Potential Solutions

While the RMP addresses some of these resources, in many instances, the current management framework established by the RMP does not provide adequate protections. We have elaborated on the need for additional management resource value and provided potential solutions that could be pursued through the MLP process:

National Parks and Monuments:

The current RMP leaves certain lands directly adjacent to the park and monuments open to oil and gas leasing without any stipulations on development to specifically protect the park's values, including its viewshed, soundscape and night skies. For example, in the RMP, the BLM designated certain lands adjacent to the National Park as VRM Class I, a rating reserved for the most scenic lands managed by BLM and where "the objective...is to preserve the existing character of the landscape" and "[t]he level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low..."Yet, BLM opened those lands to leasing in the RMP and failed to require measures, such as a no surface occupancy stipulation, that would prevent future drilling and other harmful impacts to the park. Additionally, BLM does not provide any specific criteria for the waiver, exception and modification of any stipulations that have been included in the RMP for mineral development, such as requiring consultation with the National Park Service before stipulations are waived, excepted or modified (as BLM has done in other MLPs, discussed in further detail below). Instead BLM uses its general exception, waiver and modification language and final approval is left to the discretion of the Authorized Officer.

An MLP provides BLM with the opportunity to develop more specific lease stipulations for the lands adjacent to Mesa Verde, Yucca House and Canyons of the Ancients, where conflict is likely to occur. It

⁷ See, <https://apps.ams.usda.gov/integrity/>.

also provides an opportunity to develop conditions of approval (COA) and best management practices (BMP) that will apply to permits to drill on new and existing leases. Specific stipulations would include those to protect night skies, viewsheds and soundscapes in the parks. Similar stipulations have been proposed in other MLPs, including most recently being incorporated in the Dinosaur Trail MLP and in the draft Moab MLP (and are discussed in more detail below). Additionally, BLM can include more specific exemption, modification and waiver criteria to ensure the protections established by the stipulations achieve the desired outcome. Finally, during the MLP process, BLM can work with the National Park Service on establishing “key observation points” within Mesa Verde National Park and preparing a visual resource analysis for the park, which can be used to inform the development of stipulations, COAs and BMPs for the MLP.

Recreation:

Although the current RMP includes Phil’s World within its Cortez SRMA as part of the “Montezuma Triangle” the lands adjacent to this area as well as other lands open to mountain biking and hiking, are open to oil and gas leasing. Again, even where stipulations do exist, BLM does not provide any specific criteria for approval of a waiver, exception or modification. Instead BLM uses their general exception, waiver and modification language and final approval is left to the discretion of the Authorized Officer.

The MLP can help to ensure that existing hiking and biking areas, as well as the adjacent lands, are protected from the impacts of future energy development. The MLP process will allow the public to identify important areas and areas of potential conflict and allow BLM to craft more specific stipulations that protect the trail networks as well as the user experience. These stipulations could include closing the lands to development, prohibiting surface occupancy or establishing specific surface use restrictions; similar protections are already being incorporated in the Moab MLP. The MLP can also establish more specific exemption, modification and waiver criteria to ensure the protections established by the stipulations achieve the desired outcome. The Montezuma County Commissioners have proposed utilizing 1041 powers to protect Phil’s World from future energy development. However, Colorado state law granting local governments the authority to regulate on federal lands is limited to regulating environmental impacts of private use of public lands; a county cannot dictate the use of federal public lands. Therefore, while the County’s efforts can be supportive and show the importance of the area to the local community and economy, protective measures affecting oil and gas leases would have to come from a federal planning process - in this case the MLP - in order to adequately protect Phil’s World. An MLP would also allow BLM to develop additional COAs and BMPs that would apply to permits to drill on new and existing leases around important recreation areas.

Wildlife:

Although the current RMP does provide protective stipulations for a variety of wildlife in the planning area, once again, BLM has not created any specific waiver, modification or exemption criteria for the NSO, CSU or TL stipulations, even though the Colorado Department of Natural Resources specifically protested the RMP because the plan lacked such criteria. Instead BLM relies on the general language and final approval is left to the discretion of the Authorized Officer. Additionally, BLM did not evaluate in detail any phased leasing or phased/clustered development alternatives for the MLP area as a means of managing and limiting impacts on wildlife, in spite of repeated requests from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and others. In addition, CPW recently purchased a conservation easement to enhance habitat and hunting access on split-estate lands in western La Plata County on which BLM

proposed leases in 2013. Although BLM deferred those leases in response to CPW's concerns that those "values would be compromised by leasing and development", the RMP opened those lands to leasing and surface--disturbing activities. Finally, we would note CPW's February 10, 2016, comments to BLM highlighting ongoing concerns that have not yet been addressed in the Tres Rios RMP but could be addressed in this MLP, including through many of the measures we discuss in detail below. For easy reference, we have attached CPW's comment letter as Appendix C to these comments.

The MLP will allow BLM to more specifically identify important habitat and migration corridors and create detailed exemption modification and waiver criteria to ensure that the objectives of the wildlife stipulations are being achieved. The MLP also provides BLM with the opportunity to thoroughly assess cumulative impacts and effectiveness of the existing RMP mitigation measures for sage grouse as well as other wildlife – something they failed to do in the RMP.

Cultural Resources:

While BLM found that the proposed Anasazi Culture ACEC deserved protection, there aren't any protections in place for these resources. Additionally, the RMP does not provide any specific criteria for exceptions, modifications and waivers. Although the RMP identifies specific cultural sites and resources in the CSU and NSO stipulations, the survey used to inform the RMP is already outdated and, further, BLM relies on their general exception, modification and waiver language and final approval is left to the discretion of the Authorized Officer. Further, while the Forest Service adopted a lease stipulation that recognizes and attempts to avoid the impacts of oil and gas development on the viewshed, soundscape and night skies of Chimney Rock National Monument – actually prohibiting surface occupancy within the "[m]apped area of the Chimney Rock viewshed and night sky horizon, and within auditory range of the interpreted archaeological area"—BLM did not consider similar measures for Mesa Verde National Park or Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

The MLP will allow BLM, in consultation with interested pueblos and tribes, to look at additional protections that might be needed to limit the direct and indirect impacts of development on areas like the proposed Anasazi Cultural ACEC and create detailed exemption, modification and waiver criteria to ensure that the objectives of the cultural resource stipulations are being achieved. BLM could also take this opportunity to develop new COAs and BMPs that would apply to permits to drill on new as well as existing leases. Finally, BLM can evaluate new measures to protect the viewshed, night skies and soundscape of Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Air Quality:

While the RMP does specify air quality mitigation measures and set general objectives related to air quality and climate conditions, these measures and goals are neither comprehensive nor sufficiently enforceable to protect air quality in the region. Under the BLM's Colorado Air Resources Protocol (CARP), adopted in the RMP, discretion to enforce air quality mitigation lies with the permitting office, and exclusions or exemptions from mitigation are an option. In general air quality issues are cumulative in nature. However, under the RMP, BLM could approve exceptions from mitigation requirements on a per-well basis, reasoning that the emissions from a single well would not significantly impact air quality thresholds.

With an MLP, BLM can craft specific, enforceable air quality stipulations as well as BMPs and COAs related to oil and gas leasing. This has been done by other field offices in the Grand Junction

RMP/Shale Ridges MLP as well as the draft Moab MLP. An MLP would also allow BLM to develop specific lease terms for new leases, as well as COAs on drilling permits and other BMPs for existing leases that will protect air quality. In addition, an MLP can require project---level emissions inventory or mitigation plans prior to permit approval, as was included in the Dinosaur Trails MLP in the White River Field Office.

Water Quality:

The current RMP has fairly robust NSO and CSU stipulations for various water resources. However, the stipulations are extremely general in nature and BLM rarely identifies a particular water resource of concern; for instance a specific river, creek or wetland. More alarming however, is that BLM has not created any specific waiver, modification or exemption criteria for the NSO and CSU stipulations. Instead BLM relies on the general language and final approval is left to the discretion of the Authorized Officer. This puts all of the water resources within the MLP boundary at risk. Additionally, BLM has acknowledged that, “even with the implementation of BMPs”, oil and gas development in western La Plata County is “still likely to affect soil and water conditions” and that, in the Hesperus area, the “hazard of erosion and potential for surface runoff...is high to severe and approximately 36% of the slopes are >40%.” According the BLM, given those fragile watershed and soil conditions, development in this area “would degrade water quality conditions potentially to the point of not meeting water quality standards” and “could also increase the risk of slope failure.”

An MLP would allow BLM and the public to jointly identify specific water resources in the defined MLP area and create stipulations, BMPs and COAs tailored for those areas most at risk. Additionally, the MLP can establish more specific exemption, modification and waiver criteria to ensure the protections established by the stipulations achieve the desired outcome. The MLP would also allow BLM to develop additional BMPs and COAs for oil and gas development to help prevent produced water spills and/or well casing failures.

Agriculture:

The current RMP does not explicitly address potential conflicts with agricultural resources and does not provide any specific protective stipulations. Traditionally, agriculture is not one of the resource values identified in an MLP. The majority of the concerns associated with the intersection of oil and gas development and agriculture are typically addressed through stipulations for other resource values upon which agriculture depends. As stated above, important resources like air and water are not adequately protected under the current RMP. They lack specific stipulations and where stipulations do exist, they are subject to vaguely defined exception, modification and waiver criteria.

The MLP can improve protections for agriculture by strengthening the exception, modification and waiver criteria and by establishing more protective stipulations, BMPs and COAs under other relevant resource values. Additionally, the MLP could provide an opportunity to create specific lease stipulations and permit conditions to protect local agriculture, such as requiring setbacks from water sources and protection from infrastructure (discussed in more detail below).

Split-Estate:

The current RMP fails to acknowledge any potential for conflict on split---estate leases and therefore does not establish any protective stipulations for split---estate owners. The MLP will allow BLM to look at this issue in more detail, in consultation with farmers, ranchers and other surface estate owners, and draft specific land use stipulations for areas where there is the potential for such conflict

III. Tools for Designing and Implementing a Southwest Colorado MLP

We would like to take this opportunity to elaborate on the tools that can and should be used in the MLP – many of which have been referenced as proposed solutions to RMP deficiencies above. All of these tools are contemplated in BLM’s current guidance and have been used in other MLPs or planning processes. As stated in BLM’s Handbook :

Through the MLP process, the BLM may reconsider existing RMP decisions including areas designated in the RMP as open or closed to leasing and existing lease stipulations (e.g., timing limitations, controlled surface use, and no surface occupancy) and their associated exception, waiver, and modification criteria. The BLM may also adopt new management actions in the RMP by identifying specific conditions of approval necessary for achieving the MLP’s resource condition objectives. (H-1624-1.V.C.2)

We have identified those tools that we believe can be most effective in resolving outstanding issues from the RMP. We have provided brief examples of where and how those tools have been used in other MLPs as well as ways in which those tools can be utilized in this MLP.

a. Phased leasing

Phased leasing is carried out by limiting the number of parcels offered for sale in a given time period or otherwise leasing parcels in a strategic manner. BLM includes phased leasing as a “Resource Protection Measure” in its formal guidance on MLPs. H-1624-1.V.C.2.

Phased leasing has been effectively used in a number of MLP and other land-use planning decisions. The San Juan National Forest Orderly Leasing Strategy (prepared as a follow-on to the forest plan prepared alongside the BLM’s Tres Rios RMP) provides an example of how a phased leasing strategy can be used in this same area. The Forest Plan includes Desired Condition 2.19.6 which states, “Oil and gas leasing and development activity on the SJNF occurs in an orderly manner to minimize impacts to lands and resources and increases efficiency of operations.” This strategy provides the analytical framework to prioritize lease nominations and make recommendations by establishing prioritization phase factors. This approach could have been adopted by BLM in the Tres Rios RMP but was not.

We have also seen this tool used effectively in both the Dinosaur Trail MLP and Beaver Rim MLP. In Dinosaur Trail, BLM includes phased leasing as an approach to achieve the overall RMP objective:

Within the Dinosaur Trail MLP, the BLM will minimize impacts from oil and gas exploration and development to the area’s important natural resources and special areas including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Study Areas, and Dinosaur National Monument by managing leasing opportunities in a phased approach in order to take advantage of new information and the best available technology.

White River Field Office (WRFO) Approved RMP Amendment, p. 1-4. Under the phased approach, leasing will first proceed in that portion of the Dinosaur Trail planning area with the most accessible oil and gas resources and fewest potential resource conflicts, and later proceed to areas with lower development potential. In Beaver Rim, BLM included language stating that they would, “Make parcels in the Beaver Rim area available for lease starting in the CSU areas outside of crucial winter range.”

BLM can apply the concept of phased leasing in a variety of ways for the Southwest Colorado MLP. For example, BLM could prioritize the sale of leases based on high energy potential and industry interest in

low conflict areas, reserving areas of low energy potential and high conflict for sale at a later date if demand arises. Alternatively, BLM could phase leasing based on certain triggers being met. For example, certain areas with high potential for cultural resources would be deferred (i.e., not be made available) from leasing until a cultural resource inventory is updated or completed.

b. Phased Development

Phased development is used to manage the timing and location of oil and gas development in a given area. As stated by the BLM, phased development “refers to prescribing the sequence of drilling operations by geographic area to allow for the development of certain areas while restricting or temporarily restricting development of other areas. Subsequent development occurs as areas developed earlier are completed and reclaimed.” WRFO Approved RMP Amendment, pp. 5-6. Phased development can be applied in a variety of ways. It can be based on timing - developing one area, then completing reclamation before moving to another area. It can be based on location - delaying development in wildlife corridors. Phased development can also be used to limit the amount of surface disturbance on a lease at any given time (applying surface disturbance caps – in such as a percent of a lease or unit or using an acreage figure) and requiring successful restoration before permitting additional disturbance. This concept allows for development to proceed in a controlled manner. It also gives BLM the flexibility and time necessary to address any problems that may arise and develop a solution before the same issue arises somewhere else. Phased development is also included as a “Resource Protection Measure” to be used in MLPs in BLM’s Handbook.

Again, we have seen this concept used in a number of MLPs. Specifically, the Beaver Rim MLP utilizes a surface disturbance cap approach to phased development and provides that the BLM will:

Allow no more than 5 percent surface disturbance in the township in which the parcel is located until interim reclamation goals are achieved. Require co-location of new disturbance if technically feasible. If new disturbances cannot be co-located, they must be at least 1.2 miles from existing disturbance.

Lander Record of Decision and Approved RMP, Record No. 2028.

For the Southwest Colorado MLP, a percentage surface disturbance cap could be used over areas important for wildlife habitat or other uses affected by surface disturbance in the planning area. This type of measure can be effective for managing impacts when there are already existing leases and producing wells.

c. Deferring Leasing

Deferring leasing involves withholding parcels from inclusion in lease sales for a defined period of time. Leasing deferrals can be used as part of phased leasing, where BLM is not actually closing areas to leasing for the life of plan. Through the MLP, BLM can defer leasing in certain parts of or for the entirety of the MLP area.

In the Dinosaur Trail MLP, the White River Field Office deferred all leasing in greater sage-grouse habitat until the finalization of the sage grouse plans:

“In the interim, leasing in Greater Sage-Grouse habitat will continue to be deferred until a final decision has been made on the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Amendment.” (Notice

of Availability of Record of Decision for the White River Field Office Oil and Gas Development Resource Management Plan Amendment, Colorado)

Colorado BLM also has a policy requiring deferring leasing during preparation of MLPs. Instruction Memorandum CO-2014-019.

In the Southwest Colorado MLP, BLM could defer leasing around Mesa Verde National Park until potential sight or sound impacts are studied and mitigation or management measures fully defined. BLM could also defer leasing in a larger areas until necessary analyses and inventories are completed, such as new air quality analysis or cultural resource inventory that may be necessary to gauge potential conflicts with resources and inform future leasing and development decisions.

BLM can (and should, pursuant to IM CO-2014-019) also defer all leasing in the MLP boundary during the MLP process, as the agency has currently stated it is doing for now.

d. Master Development Plans

A Master Development Plan (MDP) is used by BLM to plan and manage larger-scale oil and gas projects. MDPs are typically submitted by a single operator for a specific area containing one or more. An MDP provides a more comprehensive planning approach by requiring the operator to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the entire “development area”. This allows for the cumulative impacts of the development to be assessed instead of relying on individual assessments prepared on a project by project or per Application for Permit to Drill (APD) basis. By requiring the submission of multi-well plans that include specifics on proposed locations, access points and ancillary facilities, BLM can gain a full picture view of the scope and scale of not just the development, but the impacts to surrounding resources and values. MDPs also provide an avenue for BLM to implement other strategies referenced above such as phased leasing and development and surface disturbance caps. This approach would also be consistent with state requirements for state-designated “sensitive wildlife habitat” (SWH). In the MLP evaluation area, there is significant amount of SWH (mainly for elk and mule deer), including along the northern boundary of Mesa Verde National Park. When development is proposed on SWH, including on state and private lands, operators must take steps to proactively limit impacts on wildlife, including by “consolidating” facilities and creating “seclusion” areas for wildlife.

The Dinosaur Trail MLP requires that: “Master Development Plans would be required for all oil and gas activities, including exploratory drilling, within the Dinosaur Trail MLP.” WRFO Approved RMP Amendment, p. 2-45. Notably, within the Dinosaur Trail MLP, “specific resource protection measures would be evaluated when an operator submits a Master Development Plan”; and those measures can include unitization, phased development, limitations on surface disturbance, multi-well pads, protections for scenic values and placing all linear disturbances (e.g., power lines, pipelines, roads) in common corridors and interim reclamation. *Id.* at p. 2-46. We understand that the Grand Junction Field Office will also be requiring preparation of MDPs prior to oil and gas development in the Shale Ridges MLP.

Through the Southwest Colorado MLP process, BLM could similarly require that all development in the MLP boundary require the submission of MDPs.

e. Criteria for waivers, exceptions and modifications:

Lease stipulations and conditions of approval may be subject to waivers (removal), modification (alteration) or exception (one-time waiver). These changes to the lease or permit terms may be based

on general or specific criteria. In the Tres Rios RMP, *all* CSU and NSO stipulations in the MLP area are subject to waiver, exception and modification based on standard general approval criteria. It is imperative that the process for approving exceptions, modifications and waivers is clearly defined and that the criteria are both specific and explicit. This ensures that operators, the Authorized Officer and the general public are not left with unreasonable expectations and that decisions are made in a consistent manner. Relying on the general standards jeopardizes the protections that have been established in the RMP for specific resources. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in its 2010 finding that the greater sage-grouse warranted listing under the Endangered Species Act, stated:

Stipulations commonly applied by BLM to oil and gas leases and permits do not adequately address the scope of negative influences of development on sage-grouse... In addition, BLM's ability to waive, modify, and allow exceptions to those stipulations without regard to sage-grouse persistence further limits the adequacy of those regulatory mechanisms in alleviating the negative impacts to the species associated with energy development.⁸

CPW has also specifically requested the adoption of waiver, modification and exception criteria through this MLP process. The MLP provides BLM the opportunity to refine the criteria for waivers, exceptions and modifications to ensure that resources in the planning area are adequately protected and the intent of the stipulations is fulfilled. Also, as noted above, BLM's Handbook specifically provides for an MLP to include new stipulations "and their associated exception, waiver, and modification criteria."

In Appendix H of the Tres Rios RMP, the stipulations applicable to leasing on Forest Service lands have very specific criteria for waiver, exception and modification. Similarly, in the Dinosaur Trail MLP and draft Moab MLP, certain stipulations are not subject to waiver, exception, modification or are only subject to a subset, and they have specific criteria that must be met to justify changes to these lease terms.

The Tres Rio RMP establishes a variety of no surface occupancy (NSO), controlled surface use (CSU) and timing limitation (TL) stipulations in an effort to protect various resource values throughout the planning area. However, these are all subject to waiver, exception and modification; and are generally left up to the discretion of the Authorized Officer (AO).

Through the MLP, BLM can refine and clearly define the criteria that must be met to gain approval for an exception, modification or waiver. For example, BLM could develop a stipulation to protect split-estate owners and state that no exceptions or waivers will be granted and that modifications will be granted only "if subsequent review and monitoring, including consultation with the owners of the Split Estate Lands, find that the Plan is insufficient and resulting in unacceptable impacts to the owner and/or residents of Split Estate Lands." BLM can also provide for public notice of proposed waivers, exceptions or modifications in connection with resources of high public interest. Limited and specific criteria for waivers, exceptions and modifications, as well as public notice, ensures that operators, the AO and the general public are not left with unreasonable expectations and that decisions are made in a consistent manner. It also helps to maintain the integrity of the stipulation and ensure that it is achieving the goal of protecting the resource as intended.

⁸ <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/FR03052010.pdf> (p. 68-69)

f. NSO, CSU, TL Stipulations and COAs

No surface occupancy (NSO), conditional surface use (CSU), timing limitation (TL) lease stipulations and conditions of approval (COA) direct how development will occur on specific leases and in connection with approval of permits to drill. BLM can and should develop additional NSO, CSU and TL stipulations for new leases as well as COAs to apply to existing leased through the MLP process to protect resources based on new information and high likelihood for potential conflict with energy development.

The Dinosaur Trail MLP and Draft Moab MLP incorporate stipulations and conditions of approval that were designed to protect the resources that were leading to potential conflicts with leasing and development.

In the Southwest Colorado MLP, BLM can create and implement new leasing stipulations (that will apply to new leases) and conditions of approval (that will apply to both new and existing leases) for the planning area. These can include existing formats as well as specific stipulations and conditions to protect resources like agriculture, split-estate lands and conservation easements that illustrate how BLM can and should protect certain resources that were not addressed in the RMP. Examples of an approach to stipulations and COAs for agriculture, split-estate and conservation easements are included in Appendix D (attached). We are also including (in Appendix D) a compilation of examples of language from the Dinosaur Trail MLP and Draft Moab MLP that apply to national parks, which could be used as the basis for developing stipulations and COAs to protect the resources and visitor experiences of Mesa Verde National Park

g. Consultation and Coordination

The MLP provides BLM an opportunity to engage the public, operators, local government, state agencies, other federal agencies and other experts to create a balanced and fair plan through collaboration. BLM can take this opportunity to cement this concept in the stipulations developed for the planning area by requiring coordination in the development of resource protection plans or by requiring conferral with affected parties prior to approving exceptions, modifications and waivers.

For example, in the Dinosaur Trail MLP, BLM required operators to develop and submit a site-specific Visual Resource Management and Noise Reduction Plan for leases adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument, and, for certain areas, operators are required to coordination with the National Park Service when developing the plan. WRFO, Approved RMP Amendment, Appendix 1-30.

BLM should build consultation and coordination into the stipulations developed for the MLP as was done in Dinosaur Trail. BLM could also develop a stipulation protecting water resources vital to agricultural and require coordination with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property and the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question before approving a waiver, modification or exception for that stipulation.

h. Close Areas to Leasing

As noted above, BLM's Handbook explicitly provides for BLM to consider decisions in the RMP regarding areas open to leasing, so BLM can and should close areas within an MLP to leasing based on taking a closer look through the MLP process. For example, the alternatives in the Draft Moab MLP include new closures of areas to leasing around Canyonlands and Arches National Parks.

Although BLM has indicated it does not want to change leasing availability in the MLP, the planning area is currently more than 90% open to leasing and an RMP amendment can be done efficiently through an environmental assessment (as the Tres Rios Field Office is currently doing to address ACECs). In the Southwest Colorado MLP, BLM could choose to close the areas adjacent to Canyons of the Ancients and Mesa Verde or around Phil's World, where the impacts of oil and gas development could significantly impair those landscapes and associated resource values. Similarly BLM could close certain areas to form a buffer around other sensitive resources like agricultural areas.

IV. Process

BLM initiated the current process and established the Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Working Group in order to gather additional input and information from the public on the need for an MLP. The last of those four public meetings was held on March 16th. According to information provided on the TRFO webpage, the Working Group members were selected by the county commissioners to help answer the following questions:

1. What are the key issues/needs for the communities and interested stakeholders within the MLP Area of Interest?
2. Are these key issues/needs adequately addressed by the "tools" currently available to the BLM (e.g. the TRFO Resource Management Plan, applicable laws and regulations, etc...)
3. If not, should the BLM consider preparing an MLP to address these issues/needs?
4. If preparation of an MLP is recommended, what is the recommended geographic area of interest?

The Working Group is to assist the SWRAC's Oil and Gas Sub-group in answering these questions by synthesizing the information received from the public. Note that many of the issues and potential solutions highlighted above are the same as those identified by the public and Working Group members at those meetings. Based on the public's and the Working Groups input, the sub-group will and provide a recommendation to the SWRAC who will then consider the input of the sub-group and determine whether to entertain a resolution for a vote on recommendations to the BLM.

Beyond the framework identified in the "Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Consideration Process Flow Chart"⁹ and the "Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Timeline"¹⁰ there was little to no guidance from BLM on how to achieve these broad objectives. We believe that it is imperative that BLM define the manner in which this process will move forward. BLM can do this by: (1) setting out detailed next steps; and (2) establishing a reasonable timeline for moving forward.

a. Next steps.

The public meeting and information gathering phase of this process has concluded. BLM must now establish achievable interim steps that will help move this process along to the point where the MLP process can be formally initiated. We propose BLM prioritize the following objectives:

- **Synthesize the data gathered from the public.** As stated earlier, a substantial amount of time and energy has already been invested in this process by community members, the Working

⁹http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/co/information/nepa/san_juan_public_lands/trfo_mlp.Par.33484.File.dat/2016-0125MLPPublicProcessFlowChart.pdf

¹⁰http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/co/information/nepa/san_juan_public_lands/trfo_mlp.Par.68472.File.dat/2016-0125Sub-group%20Timeline.pdf

Group and the oil and gas sub-group. The Working Group members must be provided an opportunity to take the information received, compile main takeaways, and use that to answer the questions posed by BLM to the Working Group (see above). Ideally, the Working Group would have a chance to meet and discuss as a group. If that can be achieved, BLM will need to provide notice in the Federal Register and should do this as soon as possible.

- **Present findings to the SWRAC sub-group.** After the Working Group has had the opportunity to form their own opinions and answers to BLMs questions based on public input, the Working Group should be given an opportunity to present their findings to the SWRAC oil and gas sub-group. This meeting will allow for an informal dialogue to take place between Working Group members and sub-group members. Working group members can discuss the reasoning behind their answers to the questions as well as other recommendations they have for BLM in regards to the MLP. This meeting could be combined with the Working Group discussion proposed above and could be noticed in the Federal Register at the same time.
- **Sub-group findings and recommendations presented to the SWRAC as soon as possible.** At the next SWRAC meeting – currently scheduled for April 25-27 – the oil and gas sub-group should reserve time to present their findings to the SWRAC and develop and vote on a resolution for the BLM regarding the amendment of Tres Rios RMP to formally initiate the MLP process.
- **BLM formally initiates the scoping process for the MLP.** BLM will review the advice and recommendations provided by the SWRAC. As BLM has already seen and heard at the ongoing meetings and as discussed in detail above, there is a genuine need for preparation of an MLP. We hope to see BLM publish a formal notice in the Federal Register initiating a scoping process and commencement of an environmental assessment to support the MLP. We believe that all the work that has already been done to gather public input will help to streamline the formal process once it is initiated.

b. Establish a reasonable timeline.

We believe the Southwest Colorado MLP can be prepared in an efficient manner, building on the environmental analysis completed as part of the Tres Rios RMP and the public input already received. Consequently, we recommend that BLM establish an appropriately efficient timeline to complete the key steps described above. Ideally, BLM will adhere to the following timeline:

- Late March 2016 - Synthesize the data gathered from the public.
- Early April 2016 - Present findings to the sub-group.
- April 25-27, 2016 (SWRAC Statewide Meeting) - Sub-group findings and recommendations presented to the SWRAC.
- June 2016 - BLM formally initiates the scoping process for the MLP.

By explicitly stating the interim objectives and establishing an appropriate timeline for the Working Group, sub-group and SWRAC, BLM will be able to capitalize on the work that has already been completed and ensure a successful and timely completion of the MLP.

V. ACEC Amendment

We note that BLM formally commenced preparation of an amendment to the Tres Rios RMP to address the protection of potential ACECs that were not addressed in the RMP. There are areas within the

current MLP boundary that are also existing or potential ACECs that will be evaluated in this amendment process: Both the Mesa Verde Entrance Proposed ACEC (nominated for rare plant species) and Anasazi Culture Proposed ACEC (nominated for significant cultural resources and rare plant species) are within the MLP.

Protections for these areas will likely be consistent with some of the resource protection goals that would be associated with the Southwest Colorado MLP and ACECs can certainly be incorporated into the MLP. However, this would be part but not all of the vision for the MLP. As discussed above, an MLP is needed to set out a vision for oil and gas development in the area and develop a detailed management framework. Nonetheless, to the extent that additional protections are added in ACECs within the MLP planning area, BLM can analyze how they support the goals of the MLP.

Further, since both of these processes are expected to involve preparation of environmental assessments and involve a relatively shortened timeline, we hope to see BLM continue progress on both efforts.

VI. MLP Boundary and Geographic Zones

We recommend that BLM continue to evaluate the appropriate boundary for the MLP, including expanding the current area of interest under consideration. For instance, BLM has already identified the need for more evaluation prior to leasing around McPhee Reservoir to take into account the risk associated with seismic activity and there are additional concerns regarding leasing in the Dolores River corridor until BLM evaluates risks to water resources. Different boundaries can also be explored as part of a range of alternatives evaluated for the Southwest Colorado MLP.

We appreciate the identification of general geographic zones for the MLP. We support incorporating all of the zones into the MLP boundary and also believe the zones could provide a tool for identifying application of the specific management measures discussed above, such as phased leasing or deferrals or phased development.

Thank you for your attention to our comments. We appreciate all the effort that the BLM has already put into this evaluation process and look forward to continuing to participate.

Sincerely,

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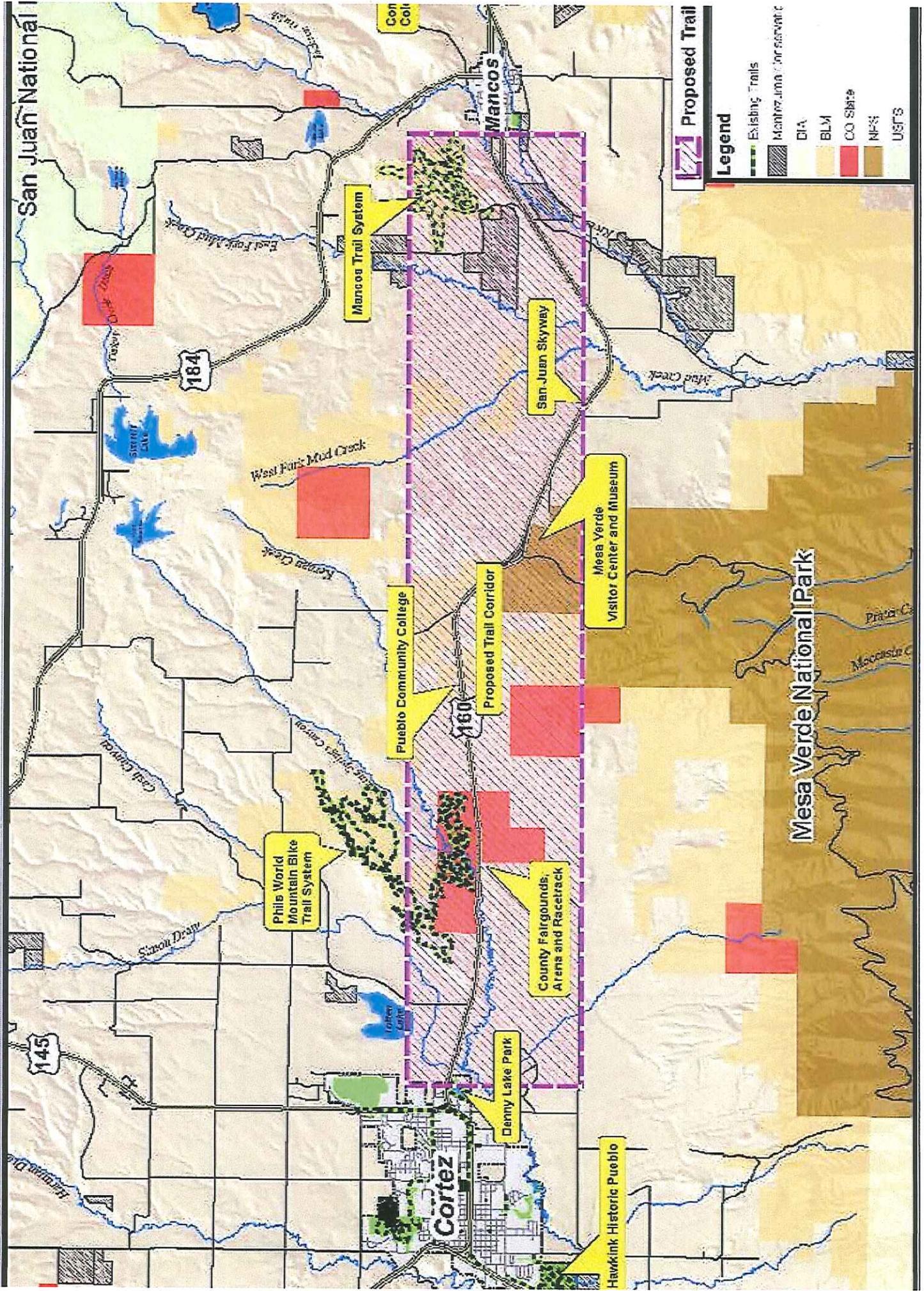
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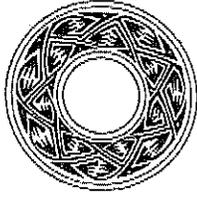
APPENDIX A

Proposed Paths to Mesa Verde Trail

7/11/2016



APPENDIX B



CROW CANYON ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER

Discover the Past, Share the Adventure

Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Factsheet on Cultural Resources

Background. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is considering developing a new management plan for the landscape adjacent to Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, an area archaeologists call the Mesa Verde region. Known as a “master leasing plan” or MLP, it is designed to achieve a balance between responsible oil and gas development and conserving important resources, like the views and night skies of Mesa Verde, and the cultural resources found throughout these lands.

The Mesa Verde region represents one of the richest and most intensively researched archaeological areas in the world. Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients have the highest density of recorded sites anywhere in United States, with over 100 sites per square mile in some areas. Because of the region’s arid climate, the sites exhibit remarkable preservation: buildings remain partially intact and artifacts are abundant. These artifacts are both artistic treasures and a treasure trove of information that can be used to reconstruct the lifeways of people who once called the region home. Using tree-ring analysis, the period when these sites were occupied can be dated with precision unheard of in other parts of the world, specifying the exact year when some buildings were constructed. Tree-ring analysis also provides a reconstruction of the past environment that is unrivaled elsewhere. As a result, the Mesa Verde region is one of the world’s most important areas for reconstructing the human past.

The area also holds great significance for the Native American tribal groups living throughout the Four Corners, which include tribes from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. These groups consider the Mesa Verde region of southwestern Colorado a part of their ancestral homeland and view the archaeological sites there as an important part of their cultural heritage. These sites are critical to their religious beliefs and to the preservation of their cultural identity because they provide a place where modern Native Americans can connect directly with their past and their ancestors. As such, they are deeply concerned about the preservation of these cultural resources.

The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center—a national research and education nonprofit organization—has conducted an assessment of the cultural resources in the southwestern Colorado MLP Area in order to share the information with the BLM, its citizens’ advisory groups, and the public. (See attached map.)

The Village Ecodynamics Project (VEP) was a long-term research project funded by the National Science Foundation that was concluded in 2015. Crow Canyon is one of several

academic and research-orientated partners who worked on the VEP. The VEP conducted in-depth research in and around the southwestern Colorado MLP area, collecting data on all previously recorded archaeological sites (about 18,000 sites) within the VEP study area. The VEP area does not include all of Montezuma County; for example, the eastern boundary of the

VEP study area ends about at the town of Mancos. Large areas east of Mancos within the study area are comprised of wilderness study areas that are not subject to mineral exploration, and relatively little of this area has been surveyed for archaeological sites.

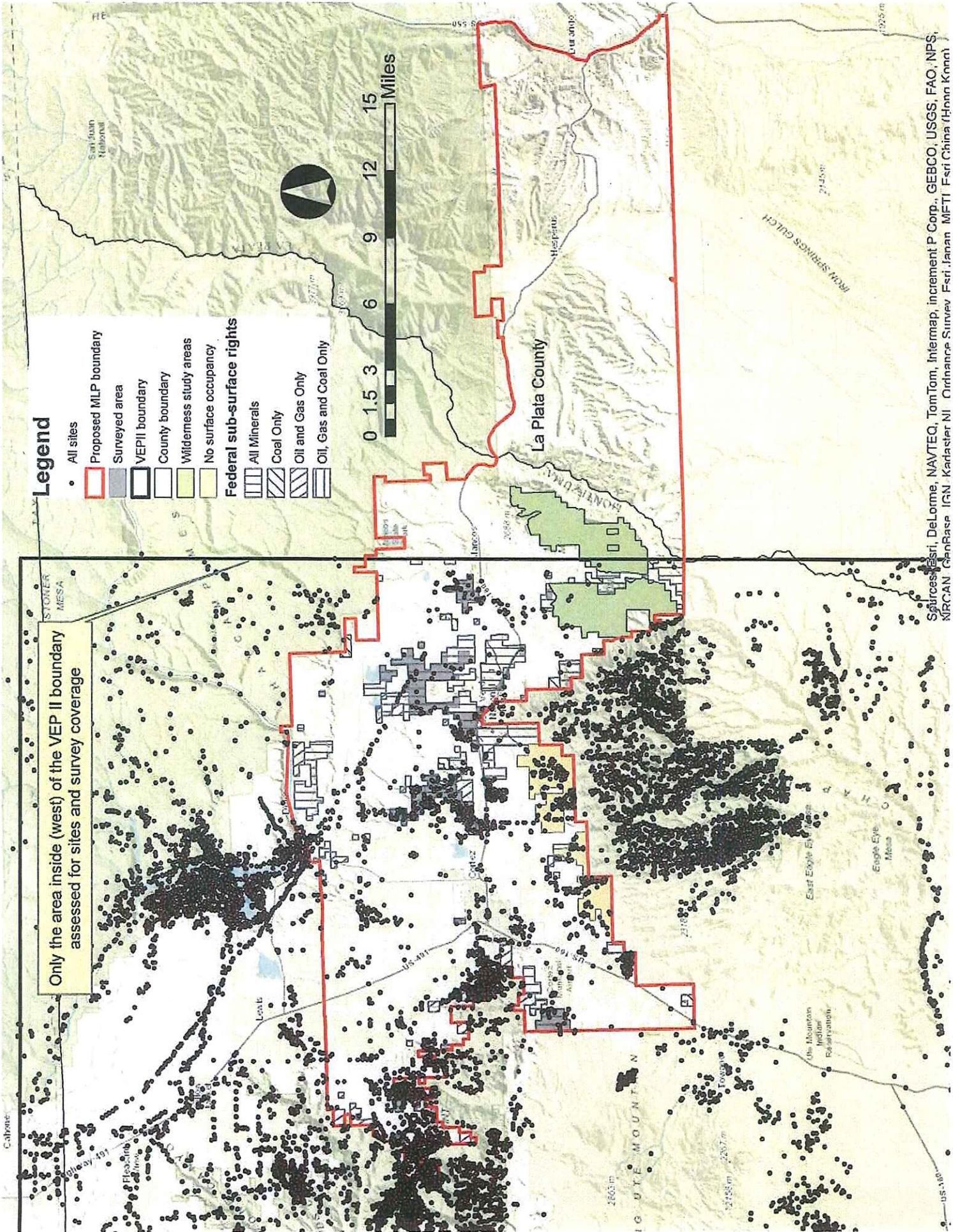
Area of the Southwestern Colorado MLP. The areas affected by this MLP are limited to those lands that are within Montezuma County, are BLM-managed or are lands with sub-surface federally-owned mineral rights.

Project Details. Within the southwestern Colorado MLP area west of Mancos (within the VEP II study area), there are about 27, 900 acres of lands with federal mineral rights (excluding the Wilderness Study Areas and the northern escarpment of Mesa Verde National Park).

Of this total area, about 9,760 acres have been surveyed for archaeological sites (about 35 percent of the total). In the surveyed portion, 364 sites have been recorded. Of these sites, 80 are habitation sites, or about 23 percent of the total number of sites. Habitations are the sites that contain buildings and the highest concentration of artifacts. This works out to about one site per 28.2 acres surveyed. Some places, like that just around Cortez, have a much higher density, but that figure should be close to the average across all lands with federal mineral rights that have been surveyed for archaeological sites.

Findings. About 35 percent of the existing relevant land has been surveyed. This is a relatively high percentage of survey, so we can be confident in what the sample from this area tells us. The site density is not as high as the most densely settled areas of the Mesa Verde region, for example Mesa Verde National Park or Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, but it is still a high site density by national standards.

Recommendations. Many sites could be expected to be found in the un-surveyed areas; likely at roughly the same density as documented in this sample. Some areas at lower elevations with good agricultural soils could have considerably higher site densities. By law these new sites would have to be documented and either avoided or mitigated if impacted. There are likely artifacts and features in between what archaeologists would designate as sites, and impacts to these artifacts and features would be unknown. For these reasons (and others) an MLP would provide a more detailed plan for leasing and conducting fluid mineral extraction than the current Resource Management Plan (RMP). The MLP can do this through measures that cluster the impacts in areas with the fewest cultural resources and minimize the cumulative effects that could occur if leasing and extraction proceeded on a case-by-case/well-pad-by-well-pad basis.



Legend

- All sites
- ▭ Proposed MLP boundary
- ▭ Surveyed area
- ▭ VEP II boundary
- ▭ County boundary
- ▭ Wilderness study areas
- ▭ No surface occupancy
- Federal sub-surface rights**
- ▨ All Minerals
- ▨ Coal Only
- ▨ Oil and Gas Only
- ▨ Oil, Gas and Coal Only

Only the area inside (west) of the VEP II boundary assessed for sites and survey coverage

Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, MRCAN, GenRase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri, Japan, MFTI, Esri China (Hong Kong)

APPENDIX C

- Tres Rios Proposed Stipulations/Conditions of Approval:

Split Estate Lands

Definitions:

Split Estate Lands: Lands where the surface rights are in non-federal ownership and the rights to development of the mineral resources are publicly held and managed by the Federal government.

Split Estate Water Resource: Any private well, municipal or private water system, and other waterways used for drinking water, irrigation or other purposes for owners of Split Estate Lands, including any dam, ditch, irrigation intake, canal or other water conveyance.

Stipulation/Condition of Approval: The following will be applied as a lease stipulation and, for existing leases, as conditions of approval on Split Estate Lands.

Type of Stipulation/COA	Protected Resource	RMP Acres Affected (Approx.)	Stipulation/Condition of Approval (COA) Description
CSU	Split Estate		<p><u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> Prior to any surface disturbing activities on Split Estate Lands, a site-specific Visual Resources Management and Noise Reduction Plan must be submitted to the BLM and the owner of the surface estate. The Plan must be submitted as a component of an Application for Permit to Drill or Sundry Notice. The operator shall not initiate surface disturbing activities unless the BLM Authorized Officer has approved the Plan (with conditions, as appropriate), following consultation with the owner of the surface estate.</p> <p>The Plan must demonstrate to the BLM Authorized Officer's satisfaction, in consultation with the owner of the surface estate, as to how the operator will meet the following performance standards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All energy development and related activities will be located, designed, constructed, operated and reclaimed in order to retain the existing character of the landscape to the maximum extent possible, using environmental best management practices so that the development meets BLM VRM Class II objectives (used here as a standard to which actions can be held, not a land use classification) as a minimum within 1 year from initiation of construction. Development, production and drilling operations lasting more than one year at a location will be designated so that they are integrated into the surrounding landscape

NSO	Split Estate		<p>and minimize visual contrast to meet VRM Class II standards at a minimum.</p> <p>2) Noise will be minimized using the best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital-grade sound reducing mufflers and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from residences and outbuildings. The goal for the minimum level of acceptable change will be a 10 db(A) or less increase from ambient background levels. However, at no time should operations exceed Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission 800 Series Rules regarding maximum permissible noise levels at residential/agricultural/rural zones.</p> <p>3) Lighting will be minimized to the maximum extent feasible consistent with safe and secure operation of facilities. The lighting component of the Plan should specify the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of lights and lumen output; b. Alternatives to lighting – using alternatives to permanent lighting where feasible; c. Fixture design – minimizing light spill. <p>4) A process for promptly addressing and mitigating complaints about visual, sound and light impacts.</p> <p><u>PURPOSE:</u> To protect surface estate owners and residents of Split Estate Lands from unnecessary and avoidable impacts to their quality of life and livelihoods.</p> <p><u>EXCEPTION:</u> None.</p> <p><u>MODIFICATION:</u> The AO may modify this stipulation/COA if subsequent review and monitoring, including consultation with the owners of the Split Estate Lands, find that the Plan is insufficient and resulting in unacceptable impacts to the owner and/or residents of Split Estate Lands.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> None</p> <p><u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> No surface disturbing activities within 0.25 mile of a Split Estate Water Resource.</p> <p><u>PURPOSE:</u> To protect water sources relied upon by owners and residents of Split Estate Lands from spills, releases, and other impacts associated with oil and gas development.</p> <p><u>EXCEPTION:</u> None</p>
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Varies			<p><u>MODIFICATION:</u> The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including the area subject to the stipulation/COA) if the factors leading to the inclusion of this stipulation/COA in the lease have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation/COA unnecessary OR if the proposed operation would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the owner of the Split Estate Lands, as well as the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water resource in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review and comment period. <p>The AO may also modify this stipulation/COA by increasing the NSO area if subsequent review and monitoring find that the proposed buffer is insufficient and could result in unacceptable impacts to the resource value.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> None.</p>
	Split Estate		<p><u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> On Split Estate Lands within the Planning Area, the operator would comply with the lease stipulations applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface. Provided, however, that if stipulations/COAs applied through the Visual Resource Management and Noise Reduction Plan or to protect Split Estate Water Resources are more protective than those applicable to other surrounding lands, the more protective prescriptions will apply.</p> <p><u>PURPOSE:</u> To reduce potential surface use conflicts.</p> <p><u>EXCEPTION:</u> The Authorized Officer would apply the same lease exceptions as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.</p> <p><u>MODIFICATION:</u> The Authorized Officer would apply the same modifications as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> The Authorized Officer would apply the same waivers as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.</p>

Conservation Easements

Definitions:

Conservation Easements: Legal document purchased or donated by a third parties to protect the surface estate interest for agricultural, wildlife habitat, recreational values and other conservation or preservation purposes per Colorado Revised Statutes Sec. 38-30.5-101, et seq.

Easement Values: Values/resources described within the Conservation Easement that it was conveyed to protect.

Stipulation/Condition of Approval: The following will be applied as a lease stipulation and, for existing leases, as conditions of approval to lands subject to Conservation Easements.

Type of Stipulation/COA	Protected Resource	RMP Acres Affected (Approx.)	Stipulation/Condition of Approval (COA) Description
CSU	Conservation Easements		<p>STIPULATION/COA: Prior to any surface disturbing activities on any lands with Conservation Easements, a site-specific Conservation Values Protection Plan must be submitted to the BLM and the holder of the Conservation Easement. The Plan must be submitted as a component of an Application for Permit to Drill or Sundry Notice. The operator shall not initiate surface disturbing activities unless the BLM Authorized Officer has approved the Plan (with conditions, as appropriate), following consultation with the easement holder.</p> <p>The Plan must demonstrate to the BLM Authorized Officer's satisfaction, in consultation with the holder of the Conservation Easement, as to how the operator will meet the following performance standards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All energy development and related activities will be located, designed, constructed, operated and reclaimed in order to protect and/or enhance the Easement Values. 2) To the extent there will be impacts to the Easement Values, the Plan will provide a mechanism for showing why the impacts are unavoidable, the manner in which harm to the Easement Values will be minimized in terms of length and severity, how impacts will be reclaimed or restored. Where minimization and restoration are insufficient to

			<p>address unavoidable impacts, the Plan will incorporate compensatory mitigation for those impacts.</p> <p><u>PURPOSE:</u> To protect private property owners and holders of Conservation Easements from impacts of oil and gas development harming the values that Conservation Easements were granted to protect.</p> <p><u>EXCEPTION:</u> None.</p> <p><u>MODIFICATION:</u> The AO may modify this stipulation/COA if subsequent review and monitoring, including consultation with the Conservation Easement holder, find that the proposed Plan is insufficient and could result in unacceptable impacts to the Easement Values. Modifications may include further limitations or prohibitions on surface disturbance and/or occupancy.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> None</p>
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Agriculture

Definitions:

Agricultural Area: Any Prime and Unique farmlands (as defined by USDA), livestock operations, any organic or conventional farm or orchard.

Agricultural Water Resource: Any private well, municipal or private water system, and other waterways used for irrigation purposes including any dam, ditch, irrigation intake, canal or other water conveyance.

Stipulation/Condition of Approval: The following will be applied as a lease stipulation and, for existing leases, as conditions of approval to agricultural areas.

Type of Stipulation/COA	Protected Resource	RMP Acres Affected (Approx.)	Stipulation/Condition of Approval (COA) Description
NSO	Agriculture		STIPULATION/COA: No surface disturbing activities within 0.25 mile of a defined agricultural area or agricultural water resource.

CSU	Agriculture		<p>Purpose: To protect agricultural resources and essential water resources, including those that are adjacent or nearby to the lease, from spills, releases, and other impacts associated with oil and gas development.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: None</p> <p>MODIFICATION: The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including the area subject to the stipulation/COA) if the factors leading to the inclusion of this stipulation/COA in the lease have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation/COA unnecessary OR if the proposed operation would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property as well as the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review and comment period. <p>The AO may also modify this stipulation/COA by increasing the NSO area if subsequent review and monitoring find that the proposed buffer is insufficient and could result or is resulting in unacceptable impacts to the resource value.</p> <p>WAIVER: None</p> <p>STIPULATION/COA: All oil and gas operations located within 1 mile of a defined agricultural area and/or agricultural water resource are subject to the following operational requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berms or other secondary containment devices shall be constructed around crude oil, condensate, and produced water storage tanks and shall enclose an area sufficient to contain and provide secondary containment for one-hundred fifty percent (150%) of the total volume of all tanks on site. Berms or other secondary containment devices shall be sufficiently impervious to contain any spilled or released material. • All well completion operations are required to use "green completion" practices as outlined in 40 CFR 60, Subpart OOOOa. • Use of non-toxic fracturing fluids only. • VOC emissions from all storage tanks must be controlled by at least 95%, dehydrator flash tank and reboiler emissions must be controlled by at least 98%. • Operators must prepare and implement leak detection and repair (LDAR) program using
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			<p>optical gas imaging technology pursuant to 43 CFR 3179.301-305.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators must prepare a Fugitive Dust Control Plan. • Operators are subject to any additional BMPs developed and included as a Condition of Approval. <p>Purpose: To protect agricultural resources from potential water and air contamination associated with oil and gas activities.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: None</p> <p>MODIFICATION: The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including adding or removing operational requirement conditions) if the factors leading to the inclusion of the condition in the stipulation/COA have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the condition unnecessary OR if the removal of a condition would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property as well as the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review period. <p>The AO may also modify this stipulation/COA if subsequent review and monitoring find that the proposed buffer is insufficient and could result or is resulting in unacceptable impacts to the resource value.</p> <p>WAIVER: None</p>
TL	Agriculture		<p>STIPULATION/COA: Oil and gas related surface disturbing activities are prohibited from pre-planting ground preparation activities through completion of harvest and end-of-season ground treatment activities within 0.25 mile of a defined agricultural area or agricultural water resource.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect agricultural resources during sensitive planting and harvesting seasons.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: None</p> <p>MODIFICATION: The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including the area</p>

			<p>subject to the stipulation/COA) if the factors leading to the inclusion of this stipulation/COA in the lease have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation/COA unnecessary OR if the proposed operation would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property and the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review and comment period. <p>WAIVER: None</p>
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National Park-related MLP Stipulation Examples

The BLM has completed or is close to completing two Master Leasing Plans adjacent to national parks: the Dinosaur Trail MLP in Colorado and the Moab MLP in Utah.

- Finalized in August 2015, the Dinosaur Trail Master Leasing Plan¹ covers 357,800 acres of federal minerals in northwestern Colorado. The northern MLP boundary lies adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument, a stunning network of canyons at the confluence of the Green and Yampa Rivers.
- The Moab Master Leasing Plan (draft)² covers the area between Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park in east-central Utah. An important center for tourism and outdoor recreation, the residents of Moab have been active participants in the Moab MLP process, which is expected to be finalized in summer 2016.

Both of these national park-adjacent MLPs contain a number of stipulations designed to protect the resources important to the national parks. In order to protect the national park visitor experience, and thus protect reliable national park-derived economies, the Dinosaur Trail and Moab MLPs included stipulations related to national park vistas, water quality, night skies, soundscapes and other resources. Examples of these stipulations are below.

National Park Visual Resources – Viewsheds

From Moab MLP (Note: multiple stipulations for the same area reflect different draft Alternatives):

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
No Surface Occupancy (NSO)	Viewsheds of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (166,380 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRM Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park.</p> <p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRI Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park.</p> <p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRM Class II area along the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park.</p> <p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRM Class II area along the eastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect visual resources on BLM lands as well as National Park viewsheds. Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
Closed	Viewsheds of	VRM Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park would be

¹ BLM Colorado White River Field Office Resource Management Plan Amendment and Dinosaur Trail Master Leasing Plan: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/land_use_planning/rmp/white_river.html

² BLM Utah Moab Field Office Draft Master Leasing Plan and Resource Management Plan Amendment: <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/MLP/deis.html>

	Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (188,154 acres)	<p>closed to mineral leasing. VRI Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park would be closed to mineral leasing.</p> <p>VRM Class II areas on the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park would be closed to mineral leasing.</p> <p>BLM lands along the entire eastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park to a distance of 3 miles from the Park boundary would be closed to mineral leasing.</p>
NSO	Viewsheds of Arches National Park (34,243 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within the viewshed from the northern side of Arches National Park that is outside the VRI Class II areas.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect visual resources on BLM lands, as well as the Arches National Park viewshed.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Viewsheds of Canyonlands National Parks (3,800 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within the viewshed from the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park that is outside the VRM Class II area.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect Canyonlands National Park viewsheds.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>

From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	VRM Class II Areas	<p>Site-specific Visual Resources Management and Noise Reduction Plan must be submitted to the BLM by the operator as a component of the APD or Sundry Notice – Surface Use Plan of Operations. The operator shall not initiate surface disturbing activities unless the BLM Authorized Office has approved the Plan (with conditions, as appropriate).</p> <p>Purpose: To manage lands in a manner to protect view sheds, night skies, and soundscapes within the Dinosaur Trail MLP, with emphasis on those areas in the proximity of Dinosaur National Monument (including the Visitor's Center/Headquarters and Harpers Corner Road).</p> <p>Exception: The BLM Authorized Officer may grant an exception if it is determined that the action as proposed in the Surface Use Plan of Operation or Master Development Plan would not result in a</p>

		<p>failure to meet the performance standards above; or, a BLM evaluation, in consultation with the National Park Service, determines that the area is not visible, cannot be heard, and night skies would not be affected as observed from key observation points on the National Monument, including along Harpers Corner Road and near the Visitor Center.</p> <p>Modification: The stipulation and performance standards identified above may be modified based on negative or positive monitoring results from similar actions on similar sites or increased national, state, or field office performance standards.</p> <p>Waiver: The BLM Authorized Officer, in consultation with the National Park Service, determines that operations (visual, noise, light) on the entire lease area would not be detectable from Dinosaur National Monument.</p>
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National Park Visual Resources – Night Skies

From the Moab MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	Planning Area	<p>Operators are required to comply with the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimize flaring of gas 2. Limit the use of artificial lighting during nighttime operations to only those that are determined necessary for safety 3. Utilize shielding and aiming techniques, as well as limiting the height of light poles to reduce glare and avoid light shining above horizons 4. Direct lights downward onto the task area. The bottom surface of the light fixture should be level, or if unable to be fully level, pointed as close to straight down as possible or shielded to avoid light being projected horizontally 5. Use motion sensors, timers, or manual switching for areas that require illumination but are seldom occupied 6. Reduce lamp brightness and select lights that are not broad spectrum or bluish in color. <p>Purpose: To protect night skies. Exception: The Authorized Officer may grant an exception if actions are necessary for human health and safety. The Authorized Officer could also grant an exception if it could be demonstrated that other options could produce similar reduction in night sky light pollution to those listed above. Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>

From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds</u>	See above: National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds
CSU	50 acres	<p>Minimize noise and light pollution within VRM Class III areas adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument (DNM) headquarters using the best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital-grade sound reducing mufflers, and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from DNM. Additionally, there will be a requirement to reduce light pollution by using methods such as limiting height of light poles, timing of lighting operations (meaning limiting lighting to times of darkness associated with drilling and work over or maintenance operations), limiting wattage intensity, and constructing light shields. However, this requirement is not applicable if it affects human health and safety. Movement of operations to mitigate sound and light impacts will be required to be at least 660 feet from the DNM headquarters.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect night skies and soundscapes in the proximity of Dinosaur National Monument headquarters area that falls within VRM Class III areas. (Note: this area is not included in CSU-37.)</p> <p>Exception: An exception may be granted if a determination is made that natural barriers or view sheds will meet these mitigation objectives or if human health and safety were adversely affected.</p> <p>Modification: None.</p> <p>Waiver: None.</p>

National Park Natural Soundscapes

From Moab MLP (Note: multiple stipulations for the same area reflect different draft Alternatives):

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (369,519 acres)	<p>Operators are required to comply with the following within 6.1 miles (9,800 meters) of National Parks:</p> <p>Noise mitigation efforts would be implemented with a maximum decibel level of 51 decibels for production equipment</p>

		<p>(measured from the direction of the Park at a distance of 350 feet from source). These sound levels could be achieved by replacement diesel engine exhaust silencers (mufflers) noise barriers, and other noise control measures.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect the soundscapes of the National Parks. Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. (148,432 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within 2.5 miles of National Park boundaries.</p> <p>Purpose: To reduce auditory impacts from mineral operations to backcountry portions of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (166,099 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within 2.8 miles of National Park boundaries.</p> <p>Purpose: To further reduce auditory impacts from mineral operations to backcountry portions of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (148,432 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within 2.5 miles of National Park boundaries.</p> <p>Purpose: To reduce auditory impacts from mineral operations to backcountry portions of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Exception: The Authorized Officer may grant an exception if it could be demonstrated that the project would not impact National Park soundscapes. Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>

From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
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CSU	See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds</u>	Site-specific Visual Resources Management and Noise Reduction Plan See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds</u>
CSU	See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources – Night Skies</u>	Minimization requirement See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources – Night Skies</u>

National Park Water Quality

From Moab MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
NSO	Courthouse Wash and Salt Wash Watersheds (113,715 acres)	No surface occupancy would be allowed within the Courthouse Wash and Salt Wash Watersheds. Where horizontal and directional drilling is conducted from areas adjacent to these watersheds, drilling operations would not penetrate the associated groundwater. Purpose: To protect the Courthouse Wash watershed (an important recharge area for the unique ecological system within Arches National Park) and the Salt Wash watershed (an important watershed which drains through Arches National Park). Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.

National Park-adjacent Cultural Resources

From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
NSO	360 acres near the Mellen Hill Sites	No surface occupancy or disturbance will be allowed within and adjacent to the Mellen Hill Sites (5RB227, 5RB279, 5RB489, etc.) Purpose: To preserve and protect examples of cultural and historic resources to ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations. Exception: None. Modification: None. Waiver: A waiver may be granted if the destruction of all the physical characteristics of a district, site, building, structure, object, traditional cultural property, historic landscape, or discrete group of thematically related properties, that represents American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture (BLM Manual 8110.32 E) results in these locations no longer possessing integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to qualify them for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places described by Criteria (a) – (d)

		within 36 CFR 60.4.
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APPENDIX D



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southwest Region Office
415 Turner Drive
Durango, CO 81303
P 970.375.6702 | F 970.375.6705

Ms. Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave
Montrose, CO 81401
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

10 February 2016

RE: Oil and Gas Leasing and Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Evaluation for Tres Rios Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata Counties, Colorado

Dear Ms. Borders:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata counties, Colorado. CPW's mission is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. Montezuma and La Plata counties receive combined economic benefits of approximately \$64.1 million annually from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 700 jobs (BBC Research and Consulting 2008). Hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing diversify and enhance the economy of these rural counties. These economic benefits are a sustainable annual source of economic benefit for these counties only if wildlife populations are maintained and quality hunting and fishing opportunities continue to exist.

CPW has a long history of working cooperatively with BLM to evaluate nominated lease parcels for potential conflicts with wildlife and park resources. On December 17, 2012, CPW submitted to BLM's State Office a protest letter requesting deferral of many parcels nominated for the February 2013 Quarterly Lease Sale that are within the current MLP Area of Interest in Montezuma and La Plata counties (see Exhibit 1).

CPW's recommendation to defer these parcels at that time (under the previous Resource Management Plan) was based primarily on the inadequacy of existing lease stipulations to adequately protect wildlife resources. BLM remedied many of our concerns with the RMP update completed in 2015. There are, however, a number of issues raised in our previous lease sale comments that have not been addressed in the updated RMP. Several of these issues are identified in BLM IM 2010-17 and BLM Manual H-1624-1 as potential MLP decisions:

- 1) **Surface facility density limits or caps on surface disturbance** - There is a growing body of evidence that Timing Limitation Stipulations on oil and gas development activities are not adequate to protect crucial winter habitats and migratory corridors for big game, and that limits on the density of surface facilities may be necessary to maintain big game populations (Sawyer et al. 2006, 2009, Sawyer and Neilsen 2010, Northrup et al. 2015);

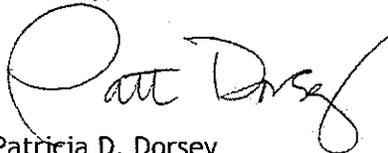


- 2) **Implementation of site-specific best management practices (BMPs)** - In this case, BMPs that promote the use of existing infrastructure to limit additional surface disturbance, such as the use of combined utility corridors, multiple well pads and liquids gathering systems could be appropriate. Phased development that focuses the most intense development activities in specific geographic areas may also reduce widespread impacts to wildlife;
- 3) **Implementation of site-specific lease stipulations to protect land conservation values** - A number of split estate fee surface/federal mineral properties in this area have conservation easements purchased by CPW and others to protect the surface estate for wildlife habitat and wildlife-related recreational values (see Exhibit 1). These values are potential jeopardized by unrestricted mineral development (in terms of facility placement and density). BLM could use the MLP process to develop an additional stipulation for these properties to allow mineral extraction with minimal impacts to the conservation values that they contain;
- 4) **Implementation of mitigation to address residual adverse wildlife impacts from mineral development** - Where mineral development requires surface facility densities exceeding one well pad/mile² in big game crucial winter ranges and migration corridors, CPW recommends requiring compensatory mitigation to offset the impacts to big game populations. In this context, compensatory mitigation to offset impacts to big game from development should focus on replacing the impacted habitat (through conservation of similar habitats) or improving adjacent habitats to the extent necessary to maintain existing big game populations in the lease area. BLM could use the MLP process to promote mineral extraction while offsetting residual adverse impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat;
- 5) **Defining site-specific lease exception, waiver, and modification criteria**- The Final San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) Land and Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement does not include explicit criteria outlining when and how exceptions, modifications, and waivers may be granted on BLM lands. This makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of these stipulations for protecting wildlife resources during development on. BLM could use the MLP process clarify lease stipulation exception, waiver, and modification criteria to avoid confusing oil and gas operators, resource agencies, and the public.

Conclusion

CPW appreciates BLM's solicitation of public input for its evaluation of a MLP for the Area of Interest identified in Montezuma and La Plata counties, Colorado. CPW values this opportunity to provide BLM with the best available information regarding protection of wildlife resources during oil and gas development. If you have any questions, please contact Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison, at (970) 759-9588.

Sincerely,



Patricia D. Dorsey
SW Region Manager

xc: CPW - M. Thorpe, Area 15 Wildlife Manager; Brian Magee, SW Region Land Use Coordinator; Scott Wait, SW Region Senior Terrestrial Biologist; John Alves, SW Region Senior Aquatic Biologist

Literature Cited

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COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

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 wildlife.state.co.us • parks.state.co.us

December 17, 2012

Helen Hankins, State Director
 BLM Colorado State Office
 2850 Youngfield Street
 Lakewood, CO 80215
 FAX: (303) 239-3799

RE: February 2013 Quarterly Lease Sale

Dear Ms. Hankins:

Helen

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Notice of Competitive Lease Sale for the February 2013 quarterly lease sale, and the Environmental Assessments (EAs) completed by the BLM Field Offices involved in this sale. CPW has provided input on the parcels nominated for lease through correspondence with the appropriate BLM Field Offices statewide. CPW appreciates the opportunity to coordinate with BLM Field Office staff early in the review process for upcoming lease sales in order to provide the best available information regarding the protection of wildlife resources during oil and gas development.

Background

In 2010, BLM's State Office hosted a series of meetings between our agencies to coordinate a more consistent approach regarding management of wildlife resources during oil and gas development. Integral to those discussions was the desire to incorporate up-to-date wildlife protections in quarterly lease sales and Resource Management Plan (RMP) revisions. At your request, CPW provided BLM's State Office recommendations for oil and gas lease stipulations relevant to RMP revisions and quarterly lease sales in Colorado (see **Attachment 1 - "Lease Recommendations"**).

We derived an understanding from BLM during those meetings that it is extremely difficult to modify the terms of an oil and gas lease once it is issued. Our understanding in 2010 was that BLM intended to use CPW's Lease Recommendations for conducting Plan Maintenance to update lease stipulations in existing RMPs, for possible inclusion in a Statewide RMP amendment for oil and gas, and/or for incorporating updated lease stipulations into RMP revisions – with a goal of including up-to-date stipulations on newly issued leases.

STATE OF COLORADO

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor • Mike King, Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources
 Rick D. Cables, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 Parks and Wildlife Commission: Robert W. Bray • Chris Castilian • Jeanne Horne
 Bill Kane, Vice-Chair • Gaspar Perricone • James Pribyl • John Singletary, Chair
 Mark Smith, Secretary • James Vigil • Dean Wingfield • Michelle Zimmerman
 Ex Officio Members: Mike King and John Salazar

Since 2010, CPW has continued to coordinate with BLM's Field Office staff on quarterly lease sales. CPW generally reviews quarterly sale proposals for wildlife concerns, and where existing stipulations are inadequate to conserve the wildlife resource and/or do not reflect the best available information, CPW recommends that BLM incorporate the stipulations contained in our Lease Recommendations or defer the parcels until such time that appropriate wildlife protections can be attached to the affected leases.

In some cases, BLM Field Offices have deferred specific parcels associated with particularly problematic issues (such as sage grouse) until further analysis can be completed or until an out-of-date RMP is updated with the best available information. We appreciate BLM's responsiveness in those instances, and urge the BLM to take more comprehensive steps to address our Lease Recommendations Statewide in quarterly lease sales and RMP revisions.

February 2013 Lease Sale

On several occasions in the past, CPW has communicated our concerns associated with the February 2013 lease sale with the appropriate BLM Field Offices. For parcels located in Gunnison and Delta Counties, CPW provided scoping comments to the BLM Field Office in February 2012 (Attachment 2) and comments on the original Draft EA in April 2012 (Attachment 3). For parcels located in Montezuma County, CPW provided scoping comments to the appropriate BLM Field Office in September 2012 (Attachment 4).

The concerns outlined in our previous comments to each BLM Field Office remain the basis for this letter. We have outlined below the concerns that are not addressed in the EAs prepared by your Field Offices. These concerns and those stated in our previous correspondence comprise our **Statement of Reasons** for objecting to the sale of the parcels listed in **Attachment 5** until the wildlife issues associated with those parcels can be resolved.

1) Economic concerns raised by CPW have not been addressed

As described in our correspondence to your Field Offices, Delta and Gunnison counties received combined economic benefits of approximately \$80.9 million in 2007 from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 912 jobs. Similarly, Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Miguel counties received combined economic benefits of approximately \$103.3 million in 2007 from hunting and fishing activities that support an estimated 1157 jobs.

The economic benefits from hunting and fishing recreational activities are a sustainable annual source of economic benefit for these counties only if wildlife populations are maintained and quality hunting and fishing opportunities continue to exist. As described in our previous correspondence, CPW anticipates that oil and gas development on the

parcels identified in Attachment 5 will decrease population levels of big game and result in lower quality and fewer hunting and fishing recreational opportunities in the affected counties, decreasing sustainable revenues from these activities. No BLM Field Offices addressed this issue in their EAs for the February 2013 sale.

2) Potential impacts to big game winter habitats and migratory corridors have not been adequately addressed

BLM's existing RMPs generally contain a Timing Limitation (TL) stipulation for crucial deer and elk winter ranges, but do not contain a TL or other stipulations to protect migration corridors. We also note that they do not address the impacts of road and well density on the effectiveness of critical deer and elk winter ranges and migration corridors. There is a growing body of evidence that TL stipulations on oil and gas development activities are not adequate to protect critical winter habitats and migratory corridors for big game. Additional limitations on the density of surface facilities in these habitats, which comprise approximately 22 percent of Colorado, may be necessary to maintain big game population levels.

To address this issue, CPW currently recommends limiting the density of surface facilities in these habitats to one well pad (or less)/mile² to maintain existing big game populations (see Attachment 1 - Lease Recommendations). This recommendation is consistent with recommendations made by other state fish and game agencies in the Rocky Mountain Region. If the well pad density on the nominated parcels cannot be limited to one pad/mile² through appropriate lease stipulations or some other planning mechanism, we recommend that BLM defer these parcels until the applicable RMPs can be amended to address this well pad and road density issue with respect to these big game habitats. We urge all BLM Field Offices to address this issue in their EAs for this lease sale.

3) Potential impacts to raptor nest sites, including bald and golden eagle nest sites, have not been adequately addressed

Some BLM Colorado RMPs contain No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations to protect raptor nest sites; other BLM Colorado RMPs do not. As a result, protections are not being applied consistently to nesting raptors across the State. Field Offices without NSO stipulations in existing RMPs are relying on dated seasonal TL stipulations and Lease Notices (LN) to protect raptor nest sites. These mechanisms are not sufficiently protective of raptor nest sites that may be used year-after-year because both TL stipulations and LNs allow permanent production facilities to be built in very close proximity to active nest sites. Once an oil or gas facility is built in close proximity to a nest site (even outside the breeding season), ongoing operation and maintenance activities are required for the life of the facility and these activities may occur at any time during the breeding season.

As described in previous comments, repeated human-caused disturbance in close proximity to raptor nest sites during the incubation or nestling phase increases the probability of nest failure due to increased adult flushing frequency and time away from the nest, which increases the probability of egg incubation failure and predation on the eggs or nestlings. Even if the nest does not completely fail, human activities and habitat alteration that encroach upon active raptor nest sites, including those associated with oil and gas activities, change raptor behavior and may reduce nest productivity (i.e., numbers of chicks fledged), potentially resulting in local or regional population declines. We believe this issue can be better addressed in the EAs prepared by BLM Field Offices for the February 2013 lease sale.

4) Potential impacts to aquatic habitat and CPW mapped Recovery and Conservation Waters have not been adequately addressed

CPW maps Recovery and Conservation Waters for a variety of aquatic species. In order to avoid impacts to these habitats, CPW recommends a 300-foot NSO buffer. In addition, CPW recommends that a TL stipulation be implemented for any temporary stream crossings or other in-stream work to protect spawning activities for these species (see attached Lease Recommendations).

Several of the existing RMPs and Field Office EAs address the desired buffer around these habitats with Controlled Surface Use (CSU) stipulations or LNs. These stipulations may be adequate to address the 300-foot buffer recommended by CPW, but they are not adequate to address our TL recommendation for in-stream work. We don't believe this issue can be addressed site-specifically with Conditions of Approval on individual APDs because in some cases the recommended exclusion period exceeds 60 days (see 43 CFR 3101.1-2). If these protections cannot be added under the existing RMP or EAs, CPW recommends deferring these parcels until such time that these protections are incorporated into the RMPs and corresponding lease stipulations are included in quarterly lease sales.

Of particular concern is parcel 6619 (COC75860) that saddles Deep Creek. Deep Creek upstream from this parcel contains a conservation population of cutthroats. While most of the population occurs upstream, fish do occur on the parcel and we are part of a partnership that has been working for several years to extend the available habitat downstream. Together with the USFS, BLM, and the private landowner, several large projects have been completed on the stream including rebuilding and screening and irrigation diversion and building a large fish migration barrier below the proposed parcel. Partners have spent over \$185,000 on these projects with the aim of removing the brook trout between the two projects and then extending the cutthroat population downstream through it. The planned reclamation project is to occur in 2013 and 2014, so we expect the conservation population to be extended through the parcel this year or next.

5) Potential impacts to property interests purchased by CPW specifically for wildlife conservation values have not been adequately addressed

CPW continues to provide BLM Field Offices with information regarding State Wildlife Areas and other property interests that CPW has purchased specifically for wildlife habitat conservation. In most cases, CPW also provides information on the extent to which BLM oil and gas leasing and development without specific density limitations on surface facilities is incompatible with the conservation values for which these properties were purchased.

Parcels 6450 (COC75903), 6451 (COC75904), and 6452 (COC75905) in the February 2013 Lease Sale contain minerals beneath large portions of a 2,520 acre property on which CPW is purchasing a conservation easement (CE) to protect wildlife habitat at a cost of \$582,800. This CE is being purchased specifically to preserve a large block of unfragmented habitat and to provide remote recreational hunting opportunities in this area. These values would be compromised by leasing and development of this property for oil and gas. While CPW understands that the mineral estate is dominant regardless of a CE on the surface, we encourage BLM to only lease these parcels with an NSO stipulation to protect the conservation values of the CE. We believe that impacts to CPW's investment in this property and the associated wildlife values should receive additional consideration in the EAs prepared for the February 2013 lease sale.

Conclusion

CPW applauds BLM's leasing reform efforts, and in particular, your efforts to evaluate upcoming lease sales for potential surface conflicts and to resolve those conflicts prior to leasing. CPW is also encouraged by the close working relationships that our field staff have with BLM Field Office staff. BLM Field Office staff understand CPW's concerns, and in many cases, they have relied on information and references that CPW provided to draft portions of the effects analysis for the individual EAs that were prepared for the February 2013 lease sale.

BLM's Field Office EAs generally state that the act of leasing itself has no direct or indirect effects on wildlife. When viewed narrowly, we agree. However, given the investment backed expectation of the lessee, the property right that the lease conveys, and the extreme difficulty in modifying lease terms after they are issued, we feel we must plan as though leased parcels will eventually be developed to their fullest potential under the terms of the lease when it is issued. We will not have another opportunity to affect the terms of the lease that dictate the character of the development and associated impacts, so we should incorporate into the lease the best available information to address potential impacts when the lease is sold.

The wildlife stipulations attached to parcels nominated for lease in the February 2013 sale are limited to those contained in existing outdated RMPs and additional LNs that will not be effective for issues that warrant NSO protection or other density limits on surface facilities. Without specific NSO stipulations or other density limits on surface facilities outlined in the lease, we understand that the BLM is limited by its own regulations to relocating proposed operations no more than 200 meters or avoiding surface disturbing activities for a maximum of 60 days per year (43 CFR 3101.1-2). We advocate for additional flexibility to address the wildlife concerns raised for the parcels included in the February 2013 sale.

We are concerned that BLM Field Office staff may not have the planning tools necessary to incorporate up-to-date stipulations for wildlife resources in quarterly lease sales. With the limitations outlined in 43 CFR 3101.1-2 in mind, we recommend that the parcels identified in Attachment 5 be deferred until such time that the lease stipulations can be updated in BLM's planning documents to reflect the best available information.

CPW looks forward to continuing to work with BLM staff on leasing reform and efforts to revise existing RMPs to reflect the best available information on wildlife resources. If there are other avenues to address our concerns in the interim – until the RMP revisions are completed – we welcome the opportunity to discuss those options with you. Our hope is that implementation of consistent stipulations in RMPs and quarterly lease sales will streamline appropriate oil and gas development while also providing for the long-term conservation of wildlife resources across the State of Colorado.

If you have any questions, please contact Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison, at (970) 759-9588.

Sincerely,



Rick D. Cables
Director

xc: CPW – A. Gurzick, Acting SW Region Manager; P. Dorsey, Area 15 Wildlife Manager; J. Wenum, Area 16 Wildlife Manager; Jon Holst, SW Region Energy Liaison; Scott Wait, SW Region Senior Terrestrial Biologist; John Alves, SW Region Senior Aquatic Biologist

Attachments 1 – 4

Omitted Intentionally [contact CPW for information]

ATTACHMENT 5 - Parcels Without Adequate Stipulations

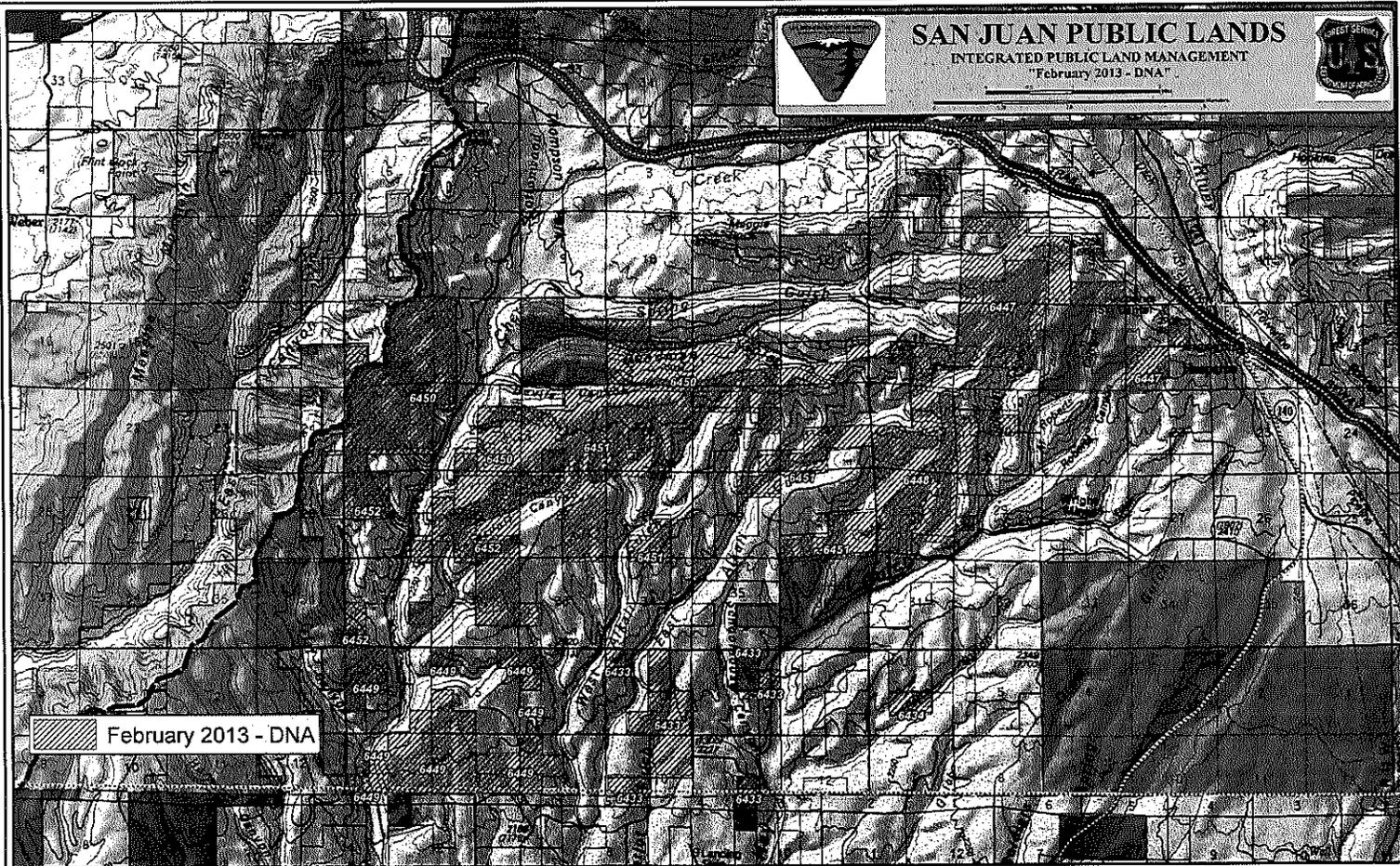
<u>BLM Serial #</u>	<u>Parcel ID</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED BY BLM</u>
COC75910	6401	ARCHULETA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75906	6433	LA PLATA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75907	6449	LA PLATA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75903	6450	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts
COC75904	6451	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts
COC75905	6452	LA PLATA	Incompatible Use with CPW Property Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75865	6604	GUNNISON	Elk Migration Corridor Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75869	6605	DELTA	Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75870	6606	DELTA & GUNNISON	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75875	6607	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range

COC75876	6608	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75871	6609	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75877	6610	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75872	6611	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75878	6612	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75878	6613	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75879	6614	DELTA	Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75880	6615	DELTA	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Elk Migration Corridor Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range
COC75866	6616	DELTA	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75867	6617	DELTA & GUNNISON	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range

			Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75863	6618	GUNNISON	Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters In-Stream work
COC75860	6619	GUNNISON	Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density In-Stream work Aquatic Habitat Recov. and Conserv. Waters Cutthroat Trout Designated Critical Habitat Elk Winter Concentration Area
COC75726	6621	DELTA	Elk Winter Concentration Area Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75864	6623	GUNNISON	Golden Eagle Active Nest Sites Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lack of NSO for Rapor Nest Sites Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density
COC75868	6624	DELTA	Golden Eagle Active Nest Sites Mule Deer Critical Winter Range Lack of NSO for Rapor Nest Sites Lost Hunting Opportunity Economic Impacts Surface Facility Density



SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS
 INTEGRATED PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT
 "February 2013 - DNA"



San Juan Public Lands - Legend

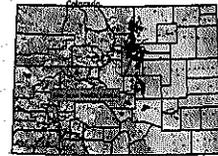
Surface Ownership

- | | |
|--|---|
| National Forest | Wilderness |
| Bureau of Land Management | Major Waterways |
| National Park Service and Other Federal Land | Cities |
| Indian Reservation | USFS/BLM - Ranger Districts / Field Office Boundary |
| Private Land | San Juan Forest Boundary |
| State Public Use Land | County Boundary |
| State Land Subject to Leasing | State & Federal Highways |



NAD 83 UTM Zone 13N
 MAY 9, 2010

The USFS attempts to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USFS reserves the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.





April 8, 2016

Connie Clementson
Tres Rios Field Office Field Manager
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Re: Federal Oil and Gas Leasing and a Potential Master Leasing Plan in Western La Plata and Eastern Montezuma Counties

These comments are submitted on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and the Colorado Wildlife Federation (CWF). We appreciate this opportunity to share our input with the Bureau of Land Management and the Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas Subgroup Members on the preparation of a Master Leasing and Development Plan (MLP) for the Tres Rios area of southwestern Colorado.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) currently is reviewing the way it develops and updates its Resource Management Plans (RMPs). In September 2014, NWF and CWF shared their early input on what the agency has termed "Planning 2.0." In those comments, we emphasized the importance of MLPs as a tool in planning proactively for oil and gas development. We continue to believe that oil and gas leasing decisions are one area that deserves special consideration within an adaptive planning framework. As oil and gas development technologies evolve, the areas of interest to industry likewise evolve. Moreover, the studies addressing the impacts associated with oil and gas development on fish and wildlife populations continue to broaden our base of knowledge that should inform management decisions. For these reasons, the irretrievable commitment that a lease may represent makes it critical that BLM go beyond the analysis that has historically been contemplated in its RMPs and take a more focused look at likely development scenarios and the mitigation levels necessary to achieve plan goals and objectives.

MLPs should be the rule not the exception for areas with oil and gas potential. By scaling-down fluid minerals planning, BLM, industry and the public have the opportunity to envision, propose and analyze appropriate development scenarios prior to leasing, allowing BLM to develop effective lease terms that provide the agency with the latitude to restrict development based upon scenarios actually analyzed and approved in an MLP. We encourage BLM to embrace this tiered approach with general oil and gas suitability determinations made at broad scale in an eco-

regional plan which then directs that finer scale planning documents, such as MLPs, will include final decisions to open (or close) particular lands to leasing, as well as site-specific resource use levels and leasing restrictions. In this way, as we noted in our scoping comments on Planning 2.0, focused leasing decisions – such as those made through an MLP – can be a “bridge” between RMP decisions and on-the-ground implementation, including the issuance of leases and drill permits.¹

The Tres Rios Approved RMP and Record of Decision (ROD) were finalized in February 2015. The RMP identifies oil and gas planning decisions for the Resource Area and establishes resource condition objectives and best management practices that will be utilized to accomplish these objectives in areas open to leasing. However, the RMP fails to address fully potential conflicts between oil and gas leasing and other resource values and no MLPs were proposed for lands within the Resource Area with oil and gas potential. We, therefore, appreciate that BLM, through the Southwest Resource Advisory Council’s (SWRAC) Oil and Gas Sub-group, has nevertheless convened a working group made up of 14 members representing a variety of interests to collect public input on moving forward with an MLP within the Tres Rios Resource Area. Thus far this process has demonstrated that there is strong support among a broad group of stakeholders for preparation of the Southwest Colorado MLP. Because the land that falls within the potential MLP boundary contains essential habitat and migration corridors for numerous species that will be impacted by oil and gas development, NWF and CWF are among the most passionate supporters. By tiering to some of the analysis completed in the Tres Rios RMP, we believe an MLP can be prepared effectively using an environmental assessment. This comment letter discusses the need for the MLP and specific recommendations for issues to be addressed in an MLP.

Approximately 323,297 acres fall within the potential MLP boundary², 80,022 of which are federal oil and gas estate. Currently only 6,220 acres within the boundary have been leased. The Tres Rios RMP closed only the 13,600 acres within two Wilderness Study Areas. This leaves 66,422 acres open for oil and gas leasing, including 34,281 that are managed under a waivable No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation in the RMP.

Oil and gas development will have a significant impact on vital wildlife migration corridors and habitat contained within the MLP boundary. According to Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) GIS data, the area includes essential summer and winter ranges, including thousands of acres of severe winter range and winter concentration areas, as well as migration corridors for

¹ Appendix C of the current Planning Handbook states that a “plan-level decision to open the lands to leasing represents BLM’s determination...that it is appropriate to allow development of the parcel consistent with the terms of the lease, laws, regulations, and orders, and subject to reasonable conditions of approval.” It is our experience, however, that, in many cases, RMP-level decisions are not sufficient to support a determination that “it is appropriate to allow development of the parcel” and/or specific lease terms regarding necessary mitigation of impacts to fish and wildlife values. This has led to numerous disputes and the MLP concept was introduced to address the recognized need for oil and gas planning at a finer scale.

² We encourage BLM to continue to evaluate the appropriate boundary for the MLP, including expanding the current area under consideration. For instance, there are continuing concerns regarding leasing in the Dolores River corridor. Different boundaries should also be explored as part of a range of alternatives evaluated for the Southwest Colorado MLP.

both elk and mule deer. In addition, a number of other species have a significant presence within the MLP boundary, including the bald eagle, Mexican spotted owl and American peregrine falcon.

New road development and pipeline infrastructure leads to habitat fragmentation and can prohibit some species from using their traditional migration paths. Noise and increased human presence can displace species from their historic range or minimize the size of it. Limiting the range of certain species, in particular larger ungulates, can result in overgrazing of an area. Development will also impact soil and vegetation in the immediate area and can directly contribute to habitat loss of at-risk species. Reductions in food, water and other resources can result in a sharp decline in survivorship of more established (older) cohorts and limit reproduction potential.

While the RMP acknowledges that wildlife resources within the Resource Area could be damaged by oil and gas development and the plan includes standard measures intended to provide some mitigation of those impacts, none of these measures are geared to the specific habitat values on lands within the boundary of the potential MLP. Many of these deficiencies were noted at the time. For example, the Tres Rios RMP includes lease stipulations intended to protect a variety of wildlife in the planning area, however, no specific waiver, modification or exemption criteria are provided, even though the Colorado Department of Natural Resources specifically protested the RMP because the plan lacked such standards.³ BLM also did not evaluate in detail any phased leasing or phased/clustered development alternatives for the MLP area as a means of managing and limiting impacts on wildlife, in spite of repeated requests from CPW and others. CPW recently purchased a conservation easement to enhance habitat and hunting access on split-estate lands in western La Plata County on which BLM proposed leases in 2013. Although BLM deferred those leases in response to CPW's concerns that those "values would be compromised by leasing and development", the RMP opened those lands to leasing and surface-disturbing activities.

Completion of an MLP will allow BLM to identify more specifically important habitat and migration corridors and create detailed exemption, modification and waiver criteria to ensure that the objectives of any wildlife stipulations are being achieved.⁴ The MLP also provides BLM with the opportunity to assess more thoroughly cumulative impacts and the effectiveness of the existing RMP mitigation measures for sage-grouse as well as other wildlife – something the RMP fails to do.⁵

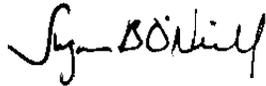
³ Waivers, modifications or exceptions to a NSO stipulations, for example, should only be authorized where allowing surface occupancy at a specific site within the lease parcel would better achieve the goals and objectives of the RMP than siting surface occupancy elsewhere and would secure an enduring net conservation gain to priority wildlife habitat. They should be granted only after consultation with CPW. Any approved waivers, modifications and exceptions should be made publicly available at least quarterly.

⁴ BLM's Handbook specifically provides for an MLP to include new stipulations "and their associated exception, waiver, and modification criteria."

⁵ In its 2010 finding that Greater sage-grouse warranted listing under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated:

BLM should now determine next steps and establish a timeline for moving forward. We thank you for your attention to our comments and look forward to continuing to participate.

Sincerely,



Suzanne B. O'Neill
Executive Director
Colorado Wildlife Federation
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Denver Colorado 80203
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cwfed@coloradowildlife.org



Kathleen C. Zimmerman
Policy Director – Public Lands
National Wildlife Federation
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(303) 441-5159
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Stipulations commonly applied by BLM to oil and gas leases and permits do not adequately address the scope of negative influences of development on sage-grouse... In addition, BLM's ability to waive, modify, and allow exceptions to those stipulations without regard to sage-grouse persistence further limits the adequacy of those regulatory mechanisms in alleviating the negative impacts to the species associated with energy development.

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/FR03052010.pdf> (pp. 68-69).

Chris Eastin
1812 Rampart
Cortez, CO 81321
970 739-7702
chriseastin@mac.com

April 8, 2016

Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401
sborders@blm.gov

Dear Ms Borders:

Following are comments on the Proposed Tres Rios Field Office Master Lease Plan. The numbered references apply to lands with existing or potential federal oil and gas leasing activity as shown on the BLM Tres Rios Field Office Area of Interest Surface Ownership Stipulation Overlay Map

1. Intersection of US 160 and Montezuma County Road 34 (west of Mesa Verde National Park.) Also Montezuma County Roads 34, M, and 33 to the north, adjacent to BLM and split estate lands.

Access for development of the BLM oil and gas reserves that are adjacent to these county roads would create vastly increased traffic including oversized loads of drilling equipment. The intersection of US 160 and Road 34 could require extensive new construction to comply with Colorado Department of Transportation highway access requirements. The county roads to the north are not adequate for oil field related traffic.

BLM and split estate lands in this locale are currently subject to NSO or CSU stipulations. BLM should include more detailed stipulations for any leases in this area to require proactive management of impacts on residents and other road users such as dust, noise, and night time traffic.

Stipulations should also be applied to minimize the harm wildlife and livestock in this remote area from impacts due to oil field traffic and drilling operations. Examples include wildlife/vehicle collision and noise and light pollution from drilling activities.

BLM needs to assure that Montezuma County will not be required to pay for a new highway intersection at US 160 and CR 34, due to increased traffic and

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April 8, 2016

Colorado Department of Transportation requirements. BLM also needs to assure that major improvements to the affected county roads will be paid for by the drilling operators.

The southern end of Road 34 is routed very closely to two rural residential subdivisions. Stipulations should be created to minimize road noise, dust, traffic and other impacts on homeowners due to drilling and production on BLM leases to the north of their properties.

2. Cedar Mesa Estates.

This rural subdivision lies just to the north of the US 160 interchange for the Mesa Verde National Park (MVNP) entrance. There are homes located on scattered lots throughout the subdivision which are accessed by private roads. BLM oil and gas resources, including split estate, nearly surround the subdivision.

The only existing road access to the BLM oil and gas parcels is via the subdivision's private roads. Controlled Surface Use stipulations are currently in place for these parcels under the Resource Management Plan. BLM must require that road access to drill rigs and other worksites not use the private subdivision roads. The subdivision residents would be severely affected by noise, light, traffic, and other impacts from drilling even though a general CSU stipulation is in place. An MLP should contain detailed stipulations to address residents' concerns about drilling impacts on their property values and quality of life.

There is a known geologic fault nearby, lying just south of the BLM lands. Re-injection of drilling related fluids could create a risk of seismic activity that might affect the homes in Cedar Mesa subdivision and other rural residences in this area. This prospect should be evaluated and appropriate stipulations or withdrawals established by BLM.

3. Mesa Verde Park Entrance

The Mesa Verde National Park Visitors center is near the geologic fault mentioned in comment 2, above. Nearby lands include mix of BLM and split estate subject to drilling and production activity. The US Highway 160/MVNP entrance road interchange is a major piece of public infrastructure. BLM should

formally analyze the risks of seismic activity created by drilling on these parcels, including the potential for property damage.

Stipulations should be created for these parcels to address any seismic risks that are identified. Impacts of previous drilling nearby should also be reviewed.

Oil field traffic accessing BLM and split estate lands on both the north and south sides of US 160 near the park entrance would have to use the ramps and bridges of the interchange. BLM should develop stipulations requiring that drilling lease holders enter into formal agreements with Colorado DOT, Mesa Verde National Park, Montezuma County, and private property owners for use of these facilities including specific measures to address infrastructure damages from oil field traffic, disturbance of park operations, and effects on local businesses.

3. Town of Mancos

BLM lands lie just to the northwest of the town of Mancos. Drilling and production related seismic activity could damage the town's infrastructure. Private property could also be impacted. Round the clock drilling activity would create noise and light pollution. BLM should work with the town to create location specific stipulations within the current CSU stipulation that now applies to this area.

4. Summit and Puett Reservoirs and their associated ditch systems abutting split estate lands lying just south of Colorado Highway 184.

These parcels are designated under the BLM RMP as NSO or CSU.

The reservoirs and ditch systems were constructed in the early 20th century. It seems unlikely they were designed and built with the prospect of nearby oil and gas drilling in mind. Drilling related activities, including injection of fluids, might cause seismic activity that could damage the dams or ditches. Consequences could include flooding, loss of storage capacity, personal safety, property damage, and loss of recreational use. Users of irrigation water could lose their supply, seriously affecting the local agricultural economy.

A formal assessment of the risks of oil and gas drilling near the Puett and Summit dams and water delivery systems should be performed by BLM and appropriate detailed stipulations adopted through the Master Lease Plan. Serious consideration should be given to withdrawal of these parcels from leasing.

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3. Mesa Verde Escarpment lands west of the MVNP park entrance.

The BLM lands in this area are currently subject to the NSO stipulation. Split estate lands are classified as CSU. These general stipulations do not adequately protect the escarpment and viewshed. The escarpment lands should be withdrawn from leasing, perhaps through an ACEC designation.

Views of Mesa Verde from the north are vital to our local economy. The escarpment lands are pristine. They provide an undisturbed border for the park that helps attract tourists, residents, and businesses to Montezuma County. Although the NSO stipulations would presumably prevent drilling and production activities from taking place on BLM land, they would not preclude surface operations on nearby private property just to the north. Directional drilling or surface infrastructure used to exploit BLM leases would still be located in the view shed, albeit on private land. The sight of drilling and production operations round the clock could hurt our tourism economy and ruin the local scenic vista.

Another concern is seismic activity related to injection of produced water from the parcels within the escarpment. In terms of linear distance these parcels are quite near to MVNP's cultural resources. Withdrawal of the escarpment lands from leasing would help ensure that Mesa Verde's irreplaceable resources are not harmed by oil and gas operations.

4. Expansion of the MLP area north to incorporate McPhee Dam and other facilities of the federal Dolores Project. This expansion should also include more of the Gothic Shale Play in the MLP.

The Dolores Project infrastructure is crucial to the economy of Montezuma and Dolores counties. It also a major part of the overall Colorado River drainage and vital to downstream water users throughout the southwestern US.

Following is a description of the Dolores Project, prepared by US Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation (USBR:)

"The Dolores Project, located in the San Juan and Dolores River basins of the Upper Colorado River Basin in southwestern Colorado, extends through portions of Montezuma and Dolores counties. The Dolores Project includes one dam, a dike, and nearly two hundred miles of canals, tunnels, pipelines, and laterals.

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McPhee Dam and the Great Cut Dike, in a saddle on the Dolores-San Juan Divide just west of the town of Dolores, Colorado, form McPhee Reservoir which serves as the primary storage for all river flows.

The reservoir covers 4,470 acres and extends approximately ten miles up (north) the Dolores River Valley.

Dove Creek Canal extends 39.5 miles from the Dike to Monument Creek Reservoir. The South Canal begins on the Dove Creek Canal and extends 7.6 miles to the southwest.

Dolores Tunnel, drilled through the Dolores-San Juan Divide two miles west of Dolores, carries water 1.3 miles. Dolores Canal heads on the outlet of the tunnel and extends 1.3 miles to the southeast.

Towaoc Canal begins on the Dolores Canal 1.1 miles below the outlet of Dolores Tunnel and carries water 45.4 miles southward to the Towaoc area. The Towaoc-Cortez Pipeline, built by the state of Colorado, heads just above the terminus of the Dolores Canal and extends 19.5 miles southward to near Towaoc. In addition, 84.7 miles of laterals deliver water to the Dove Creek and Towaoc areas.

The McPhee and Towaoc Powerplants, at McPhee Dam and southwest of the Dolores Canal, respectively, generate hydroelectric power. Six pumping plants throughout the project facilitate the flow of water."

A USBR project history completed in the early 2000's put the total Dolores Project cost at \$565 million. Today, the project and its component parts are irreplaceable.

I include this detailed history to illustrate the magnitude of the Dolores Project, which includes lands just north of the proposed MLP boundary and includes major public infrastructure throughout western end of the proposed MLP area.

The project also provides irrigation water to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. The tribe has invested heavily in its farm enterprise, which is totally dependent on Dolores Project supplied water.

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Near McPhee Reservoir is the Montezuma County Valley Irrigation Company's Naraguinnep Lake, which receives water Dolores Project for supply to local farmers and property owners.

Within the MLP area, private farmers in the western part of the county utilize Dolores Project supplied water. The City of Cortez and the town of Dolores depends on the Dolores project for potable water.

It can truly be said that the economy of Montezuma County depends on the Dolores Project and its water storage and delivery infrastructure.

In late 2015 the Montezuma Board of County Commissioners raised concerns about BLM's plans for leasing of a parcel near McPhee Dam. The county cited nearby subsurface faulting and asked "the Bureau of Land Management to conduct thorough geologic studies to ensure that proposed oil-an-gas drilling near McPhee Dam is safe." (Cortez Journal September 9, 2015.) The BLM deferred the proposed lease sale in response to the county's request.

The Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation operates the Paradox Valley Unit Saltwater Injection Project in Southwest Colorado. A deep injection well is used to dispose of large volumes of recovered saltwater from a treatment project aimed at reducing salinity reaching the Dolores River. Continual earthquake activity occurs in this remote area due to the fluid injection. I cite this as a regional example of the tangible effects of drilling related seismic activity, not as something imminent for the Tres Rios MLP area.

I do not know whether potential seismic effects of intensive nearby oil and gas drilling and production activities were considered in the Bureau of Reclamation's design of the Dolores Project. There is certainly evidence of recent drilling related seismic activity mounting in the US. New engineering studies are needed to assure that McPhee dam will be safe in the future.

The BLM must expand the Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan Boundaries to incorporate the Dolores Project facilities and any other irrigation related storage and distribution infrastructure located in Montezuma and Dolores Counties. An in-depth risk assessment of drilling impacts on water supply and distribution infrastructure should be performed by the two Department of the Interior agencies.

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From this risk assessment, detailed stipulations should be developed for incorporation into an MLP. Development of these stipulations must include participation of concerned entities such as Dolores Water Conservancy District, Montezuma County, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the private ditch companies, the regional municipalities, and representatives of agricultural interests.

Expansion of the MLP area will also provide better planning tools for future drilling and production activities northward in the Gothic Shale Play.

5. Canyon of the Ancients National Monument.

An MLP that recognizes the presence of this BLM managed resource should be adopted. The BLM's mapping for the MLP shows federal oil and gas resources on parcels near the monument boundary. Risks from nearby oil and gas activities to the monument should be assessed. If the stipulations from the current Resource Management Plan are not adequate, new measures should be adopted in an MLP.

6. Ute Mountain Ute Reservation.

There are BLM oil and gas resources that appear to abut the northeast corner of the Ute Mountain Ute reservation. The BLM should identify concerns held by the tribe about drilling and production activity and include needed stipulations in the MLP.

Conclusion

I have been a resident of Montezuma County for nearly forty years. My career includes construction experience with the Dolores Project and other important regional water related infrastructure. Through my involvement in many energy and minerals related construction projects I understand the need to develop our natural resources. As a private citizen I have served on local land use planning boards and committees. My civic involvement has included local economic development groups and chambers of commerce.

Southwest Colorado has an excellent future with improving local prosperity for all our residents. However, we can not risk permanent damage to our environment, public health, agricultural markets, and quality of life through unmanaged oil and gas development on local public lands.

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April 8, 2016

Although the development of an MLP may be contentious--and certainly will be hard work--such a document can contain important protections for our local economy and the unique quality of life we enjoy in southwest Colorado.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely yours,

/original signed by Chris Eastin/
Chris Eastin

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April 8, 2016

Comments about the Master Leasing Plan

On March 17th this year I had the privilege to fly with EcoFlight over the proposed Master Leasing Plan area in Montezuma County. I was stunned by the incredibly wild and unmarred landscape that constitutes the escarpment of Mesa Verde National Park. Gosh, it's filled with steep little arroyos, heavy pinon-juniper forest, rocky outcroppings, and a gradually rising sagebrush slope that meets the steeper flanks of the mesa.

I grew up here; I've been to Mesa Verde countless times. In fact, on Dec. 25, 1961 Chuck and I parked at the San Juan Overlook on the road into the Park and he proposed marriage and gave me a ring. I've often stopped here both in the daytime and at night and have marveled over and over that the near, mid, and far view just hasn't changed much. It surely has not been disfigured by the infrastructure that oil and gas development brings – well pads, roads, pipelines, compressor stations, booster stations, etc.

Unlike all my other comments to this group during this process, my comment here is not about technicalities. It's simply about keeping this viewshed from being messed up. The argument that oil and gas development activity morphs into unobtrusive, unnoticeable spots simply is not true. This has become “in your face” evident as our EcoFlight trajectory led to the east, north and back west. The land from the northwestern horizon in a southeasterly direction showed the scars of various pipelines. Some of those pipeline easements are more than 60 years old and still the path is visible. Chuck and I have been married 54 years and it's remarkable that the view from this popular turn-out on the road into the Park has stayed quite undisturbed and has been that way for centuries.

I would like to see all leases in the Mesa Verde escarpment be permanently withdrawn from any future oil and gas development. This can be accomplished by a Master Leasing Plan. In addition, an MLP can regulate how, where and when oil and gas development might evolve on private land in regard to directional drilling.

I urge you to recommend to the sub-RAC that an MLP be implemented; I urge the sub-RAC to recommend the same thing to the SWRAC and from there I believe the Colorado office and the national office of the Bureau of Land Management will realize the egregious error of not including an MLP in the new, but not so shiny, Resource Management Plan.

Thank you for your work and consideration of all comments.



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: Comment on BLM MLP for the Tres Rios Area

1 message

Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Mon, Apr 11, 2016 at 11:24 AM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Schuenemeyer** <jackswsc@q.com>

Date: Fri, Apr 8, 2016 at 12:36 PM

Subject: Comment on BLM MLP for the Tres Rios Area

To: Shannon Borders <sborders@blm.gov>

Dear Ms. Borders,

My wife and I strongly support the proposed BLM MLP for Tres Rios area of interest. We have been residents of Cortez, Colorado for the past 16 years and I own and operate a small business. Our community depends heavily on tourists. In addition, we have seen an increase in young retirees moving into our community. Quality of life, economic growth and protection of the environment are not inconsistent. We need, and with proper planning, can have all three. In addition we have many archeological treasures in this region that deserve our protection. We further recognize that oil and gas are an important part of our near term economy and their extraction can occur in certain regions with appropriate safe guards, however, once land desecrated, it is next to impossible to reclaim it.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you.

—
John H (Jack) Schuenemeyer & Judith A Schuenemeyer
960 Sligo St.
Cortez CO 81321

—
Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401
970-240-5399



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Strike a balance for Southwestern Colorado lands.

1 message

gkiritz@gmail.com <gkiritz@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 3, 2016 at 12:21 PM

Reply-To: gkiritz@gmail.com

To: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Dear Tres Rios Field Office:

Thank you for providing opportunities for local residents to weigh in on the Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan. I appreciate knowing that my voice will be heard in these long-term decisions.

We need to strike a balance for Southwestern Colorado, work together, and create a plan for the future that benefits the diversity of interests in our region. I want a Master Leasing Plan to protect our public land gems, wildlife habitat, ensure protections for our air and water quality, and create smart-from-the-start planning regarding any additional roads or industry development in and around our community.

Unfortunately, the recently-completed Tres Rios Resource Management Plan (RMP) does not address this need for balance, or set out guidelines to protect our public lands or natural and economic resources in Southwestern Colorado. Please develop a Master Leasing Plan that fills in the gaps and protects our landscapes for uses besides just oil and gas development.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Kiritz
605 W 5th Ave #202
Denver, CO 80204-5104

Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas Sub-group Minutes

Mar. 16 (Morning Session), 2016 @ Cortez, CO

Southwest Colorado RAC oil and gas sub-committee members present: Gwen Lachelt, Jimbo Buickerood, Dale Davidson, Gregg Dubit, Pet Eschallier, Carla Hoehn, Chris Lopez, Rod Oliver, George San Miguel, Travis Ward, Christi Zeller, Matt Thorpe, James Dietrich, Eric Sanford

BLM staff present: Connie Clementson (Tres Rios Field Office Manager), Justin Abernathy (Tres Rios Assistant Field Manager), Ryan Joyner (BLM Physical Scientist), Barb Sharrow (Acting Southwest District Manager), Shannon Borders (Southwest District public affairs specialist), Matt Azhocar, Greg Shoop (BLM Colorado Associate State Director) and Ruth Welch (BLM Colorado State Director)

Eric Sanford called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Eric explained the mapping exercise. The maps are available [online](#). Zones 4 & 5 cover Montezuma County, and that will be the focus for the morning meeting.

The sub-group members introduced themselves. Eric further explained the purpose of the sub-group is to gather information to offer to the Southwest Resource Advisory Council in order for those members to determine if a resolution is needed to provide advice to the BLM.

Comment Summary

Eric Sanford reviewed the comment summary (see information at the end of minutes). Jimbo Buickerood suggested adding seismic activity around McPhee to the summary.

Map Exercise

[Map #1](#) (the area of interest overview map) was shown and Eric Sanford explained the types of designations within the legend.

[Map #4](#)

Eric Sanford said within zones 1, 4 and 5 there are existing leases that expire in 2018, and he would like to know how those areas will fit into a Master Leasing Plan (MLP). George San Miguel asked about the setbacks for drinking water. Christi Zeller showed [Resource Management Plan](#) tables 1.1.1 (No Surface Occupancy) and 1.1.2 (Controlled Surface Use) to explain the protective measures as well as table H.2 to show the proper functioning water bodies for the protection aquatic habitat.

Dale Davidson asked whether or not NSO can be extended to split estate parcels. Ryan Joyner said the BLM scopes the projects on split areas, and then the land owners can apply stipulations at their discretion. Eric explained NSO is put into place for specific reasons such as endangered species or steep slopes. If it's fee ownership, the BLM does not have jurisdiction over private surface.

Jimbo Buickerood said that Waivers, Exceptions and Modification means the BLM can remove stipulations, so he wants NSO a guaranteed situation including the Mesa Verde Escarpment. This area is

culturally and biologically important as well as the Anasazi Culture Area. He also proposed stipulations with conditions of approval to adequately protect agriculture, split estate and conservation easement lands. He submitted the attached document for consideration.

Eric asked what is the process to have a stipulation waived and how often does that happen. Justin Abernathy explained the process to waive a stipulation requires the conditions for the stipulation no longer exists. The RMP requires the BLM to analyze through NEPA the request to determine that the current circumstances have changed and thereby the Waiver, Exemption or Modification can be approved.

Bruce Baizel asked if a split estate owner would have a role in the process. The BLM works with the property owner and the operator which is a requirement in the Onshore Orders.

Christi Zeller said the challenge with Jimbo's proposal is that it contradicts private property rights.

Chris Lopez said he appreciated Jimbo's documents to give the sub-group a chance to look at specific ideas. He suggested considering where additional stipulations are appropriate and he suggests looking at a local level. He acknowledged Phil's World is important, and Montezuma County is looking at stipulations for that area.

Rod Oliver said he didn't need NSO on any agricultural land as a private property owner.

Jimbo Buickerood suggested reviewing the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union flyer (attached).

Pete Eschallier said Phil's World has NSO and CSU stipulations in the area. He said the deficiencies are within this area. A MLP could make this area NSO to protect the single tract trails as well as protecting economic development. Additionally, split estate is highly controversial, so the group should focus on federal surface. He would like to see additional trails built, and the MLP could look at these opportunities in balance with oil and gas development.

Greg Dubbit holds a special use permit for dog sledding. He said there are areas of oil and gas development that impact recreation. He said it's a moot point to do this exercise, because there's so much private land. He asked if the RMP adequately addresses recreational uses verses oil and gas development. Recreation is a dominate use and a big economic driver, and he's not sure the RMP addresses the economic value of recreation.

[Map #5](#)

Greg Dubbit said he would like the same protections for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. He asked if there are protections on parcel 31, and asked why parcel 49 doesn't have NSO. Eric said the difference is between private and federal parcels. Companies generally lease on private first, and these parcels are not controlled by the MLP process.

Pete Eschallier asked whether counties get severance taxes from mineral extraction on private. James Dietrich said the county does benefit from this tax. The taxable value on those minerals is 87.5%. Minerals carry a large portion, over 60 percent, of the county tax base.

Next Steps

If the sub-group has further map requests, they should turn those in by next Monday. Eric explained the next RAC meeting is on March 18, and the SW RAC members will receive an update. Shannon Borders provided an explanation on RAC voting. Gwen Lachelt asked if other offices have been through this process, and how can it be expedited. Ruth Welch said she hasn't been in through this process, but due to public interest the BLM created a sub-group to gather information so it is process focused. She appreciates the public comments and she appreciates everyone's time and interest in a MLP.

Public Comments

Phyllis Manes- see attached written comments

Ellen Foster- see attached written comments

MB McAfee-see attached written comments

Dan Simplicio-He is from the Zuni Pueblo and Crow Canyon Archeological Center, and he is concerned about the lack of information and interest in cultural resources. He indicated there are no native people serving on the sub-group. He encouraged the group to review the maps in light of the cultural values within the area of interest.

BettyAnn Kolner- see attached

Bill Divorak-He is an outfitter that operates on the Dolores and the Arkansas Rivers. He's also on the Front Range RAC and works for the Colorado Wildlife Federation. He said it's important to put an MLP in place in conjunction with the existing RMP. South Park is their example, and information and maps are available online

Chris Eastin- see attached written comments

Rob Bowdurant- see attached written comments

Jack Scott- On Map 2, there are small isolated tracts that are adjacent to the Hesperus Ski Area that need to be designated NSO. Also the Highway 160 corridor should be designated as scenic to preserve the view sheds.

Eric Wegner- He wants the sub-group to consider the economic impacts to wildlife resources. He said those are being challenged especially in the winter.

Isaac Murphy- see attached written comments

Philip Ayers- see attached written comments

Ami McAlpine- see attached written comments

Barbara Lynch-She wants the MLP to include good protections for public health including air. Any development should take into consideration and require strict controls over air and water pollution. She suffers from allergies from air pollution, and her quality of life depends on strict controls of CO² and methane. Public health should be a part of the MLP.

Ricky Lightfoot- see attached written comments

Lew Matis- The federal lands in this community are a priceless resource, and he would like maximum protections for resources, and a MLP is the best route for achieving that. He lends his support to an MLP.

Steven Barnes-He was a part of creating Phil's World. Phil's World has made this a vibrant outdoor town. This area is amazing for bringing people in, is an economic driver in the area and he supports NSO for Phil's World.

Geof Byerly-He works for Montezuma Early Childhood Council in Cortez would like to speak on behalf of an under represented population. He works is to ensure the children have a quality environment to learn. He said there is an economic benefit to the MLP.

Chuck McAfee-He said the repetition of comments should be taken into consideration.

Oil & Gas Sub-group Comment Summary

March 16, 2016

The following information is a summary of the comments the Bureau of Land Management's SWRAC Oil and Gas Sub-group has received regarding the potential Master Leasing Plan within the Tres Rios Field Office. This summary reflects input that has been provided to the sub-group, to date. It is not a comprehensive list of all submitted comments. All comments are provided for public review at [\(put webpage address here\)](#). Many of the commenters appreciated the BLM's willingness to consider a MLP, and they understood the magnitude of the task the sub-group was undertaking. After reviewing the maps, the public asked how the current boundary was determined and if this boundary was appropriate when considering resource impacts. They suggested an acre-by-acre analysis to determine where recreation is appropriate and where oil and development is needed. They also suggested balancing the needs of recreation and oil and gas development to maintain the local economic benefits.

The sub-group was also challenged to determine whether or not the RMP has the tools to manage oil and gas development including the placement of roads, pads and pipelines to protect sensitive landscapes, wildlife, cultural resources and watersheds. Some indicated the general language in the RMP will not provide resource protections, and the MLP can avoid and/or mitigate resource and user conflicts. Therefore, a moratorium on fluid mineral leasing should be imposed by the BLM during the MLP process. The MLP should consider traffic, noise, visual impacts, air pollution, property values and big game winter range.

They would also like the MLP to consider quality of life in balance with multiple uses. They also understand if the federal agencies' create an environment where development doesn't occur, then the development moves to private land. Some asked what considerations are made for the existing wells outside of these boundaries. One suggestion was to apply federal minerals stipulations to private minerals.

Within the process, water quality baselines must be established and the BLM should do everything possible to prevent the deterioration of water quality. The sub-group should consider spills or surface contamination that could contaminate aquifers.

Additionally, air quality baselines must be established and monitoring must occur throughout the region. The BLM also needs to determine the cumulative health effects to exposure of chemicals that are emitted by operations and consider the Four Corners Methane Hot Spot. Climate change is the most crucial aspect of stopping mineral extraction.

Ensuring wildlife is protected is a priority in this area. This includes ensuring resource protections for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing are maintained to enhance the economy of these rural counties.

A Health Impact Assessment is also needed to ensure the public's health and safety are secure.

While the RMP allows development within the Phil's World trail system and Mesa Verde National Park, many commenters suggested closing these areas to leasing. These areas are culturally rich with considerable view sheds; therefore, noise and light pollution must be considered. Additional areas that should be protected include Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, the Old Spanish Trail corridor and the McPhee Reservoir.

The public understands the scale of development depends on profitability for the operator. Furthermore, the oil and gas industry is subject to boom and bust cycles; therefore, this industry should be replaced with more reliable and diversified job opportunities.

Each operator should be required to perform dust mitigation due to the increase in traffic, drainage needs to be a priority to reduce erosion, pipelines need to be buried and pipeline construction must follow industry standards.

Inspections should be done by qualified personnel. Don't award contracts to the lowest bidder, and be sure contractors are knowledgeable and reputable. Any damages done by operators or contractors should have consequences, and mineral royalties should be used in the area for monitoring.

Some suggested reviewing IM 2010-117 and determining if the four mandatory criteria are met. This analysis should determine whether or not the BLM should not move forward with a MLP. Others said there will not be adequate analysis of cumulative impacts without an MLP, and an Application for Permit to Drill analysis is too little and too late for cumulative impacts of 3,000 new wells. The public also has concerns about how the application of waivers, exceptions and modifications could exempt operators from stipulations. Additional commenters suggested preventing all mineral leasing and extraction while others suggested limiting the number of wells.

Public involvement is a critical part of the process, and the public expects more time to comment. They would like a better understanding of how public information and comments on the MLP will be compiled, considered and how a final recommendation will be made.

Proposed Stipulations/Conditions of Approval for Tres Rios Field Office

- Split Estate Lands (Pages 1-4)
- Conservation Easement (Pages 4-5)
- Agriculture (Pages 6-8)

NSO = No Surface Occupancy

CSU = Controlled Surface Use

TL – Timing Limitations

Split Estate Lands

Definitions:

Split Estate Lands: Lands where the surface rights are in non-federal ownership and the rights to development of the mineral resources are publicly held and managed by the Federal government.

Split Estate Water Resource: Any private well, municipal or private water system, and other waterways used for drinking water, irrigation or other purposes for owners of Split Estate Lands, including any dam, ditch, irrigation intake, canal or other water conveyance.

Stipulation/Condition of Approval: The following will be applied as a lease stipulation and, for existing leases, as conditions of approval on Split Estate Lands.

Type of Stipulation/COA	Protected Resource	RMP Acres Affected (Approx.)	Stipulation/Condition of Approval (COA) Description
CSU	Split Estate		<u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> Prior to any surface disturbing activities on Split Estate Lands, a site-specific Visual Resources Management and Noise Reduction Plan must be submitted to the BLM and the owner of the surface estate. The Plan must be submitted as a component of an Application for Permit to Drill or Sundry Notice. The operator shall not initiate surface disturbing activities unless the BLM Authorized Officer has approved the Plan (with conditions, as appropriate), following

consultation with the owner of the surface estate.

The Plan must demonstrate to the BLM Authorized Officer's satisfaction, in consultation with the owner of the surface estate, as to how the operator will meet the following performance standards:

- 1) All energy development and related activities will be located, designed, constructed, operated and reclaimed in order to retain the existing character of the landscape to the maximum extent possible, using environmental best management practices so that the development meets BLM VRM Class II objectives (used here as a standard to which actions can be held, not a land use classification) as a minimum within 1 year from initiation of construction. Development, production and drilling operations lasting more than one year at a location will be designated so that they are integrated into the surrounding landscape and minimize visual contrast to meet VRM Class II standards at a minimum.
- 2) Noise will be minimized using the best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital-grade sound reducing mufflers and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from residences and outbuildings. The goal for the minimum level of acceptable change will be a 10 db(A) or less increase from ambient background levels. However, at no time should operations exceed Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission 800 Series Rules regarding maximum permissible noise levels at residential/agricultural/rural zones.
- 3) Lighting will be minimized to the maximum extent feasible consistent with safe and secure operation of facilities. The lighting component of the Plan should specify the following:
 - a. Number of lights and lumen output;
 - b. Alternatives to lighting – using alternatives to permanent lighting where feasible;
 - c. Fixture design – minimizing light spill.
- 4) A process for promptly addressing and mitigating complaints about visual, sound and light impacts.

PURPOSE: To protect surface estate owners and residents of Split Estate Lands from unnecessary and avoidable impacts to their quality of life and livelihoods.

EXCEPTION: None.

MODIFICATION: The AO may modify this stipulation/COA if subsequent review and monitoring,

			<p>including consultation with the owners of the Split Estate Lands, find that the Plan is insufficient and resulting in unacceptable impacts to the owner and/or residents of Split Estate Lands.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> None</p>
NSO	Split Estate		<p><u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> No surface disturbing activities within 0.25 mile of a Split Estate Water Resource.</p> <p><u>PURPOSE:</u> To protect water sources relied upon by owners and residents of Split Estate Lands from spills, releases, and other impacts associated with oil and gas development.</p> <p><u>EXCEPTION:</u> None</p> <p><u>MODIFICATION:</u> The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including the area subject to the stipulation/COA) if the factors leading to the inclusion of this stipulation/COA in the lease have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation/COA unnecessary OR if the proposed operation would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the owner of the Split Estate Lands, as well as the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water resource in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review and comment period. <p>The AO may also modify this stipulation/COA by increasing the NSO area if subsequent review and monitoring find that the proposed buffer is insufficient and could result in unacceptable impacts to the resource value.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> None.</p>
Varies	Split Estate		<p><u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> On Split Estate Lands within the Planning Area, the operator would comply with the lease stipulations applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface. Provided, however, that if stipulations/COAs applied through the Visual Resource Management and Noise Reduction Plan or to protect Split Estate Water Resources are more protective than those applicable to other surrounding lands, the more protective prescriptions will apply.</p>

			<p><u>PURPOSE:</u> To reduce potential surface use conflicts.</p> <p><u>EXCEPTION:</u> The Authorized Officer would apply the same lease exceptions as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.</p> <p><u>MODIFICATION:</u> The Authorized Officer would apply the same modifications as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.</p> <p><u>WAIVER:</u> The Authorized Officer would apply the same waivers as those applied to surrounding lands with Federal surface.</p>
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Conservation Easements

Definitions:

Conservation Easements: Legal document purchased or donated by a third party to protect the surface estate interest for agricultural, wildlife habitat, recreational values and other conservation or preservation purposes per Colorado Revised Statutes Sec. 38-30.5-101, et seq.

Easement Values: Values/resources described within the Conservation Easement that it was conveyed to protect.

Stipulation/Condition of Approval: The following will be applied as a lease stipulation and, for existing leases, as conditions of approval to lands subject to Conservation Easements.

Type of Stipulation/COA	Protected Resource	RMP Acres Affected (Approx.)	Stipulation/Condition of Approval (COA) Description
CSU	Conservation Easements		<u>STIPULATION/COA:</u> Prior to any surface disturbing activities on any lands with Conservation Easements, a site-specific Conservation Values Protection Plan must be submitted to the BLM and the landowner with the Conservation Easement. The Plan must be submitted as a component of an

Application for Permit to Drill or Sundry Notice. The operator shall not initiate surface disturbing activities unless the BLM Authorized Officer has approved the Plan (with conditions, as appropriate), following consultation with the landowner.

The Plan must demonstrate to the BLM Authorized Officer's satisfaction, in consultation with the holder of the Conservation Easement, as to how the operator will meet the following performance standards:

- 1) All energy development and related activities will be located, designed, constructed, operated and reclaimed in order to protect the Easement Values.
- 2) To the extent there will be impacts to the Easement Values, the Plan will provide a mechanism for showing why the impacts are unavoidable, the manner in which harm to the Easement Values will be minimized in terms of length and severity, how impacts will be reclaimed or restored. Where minimization and restoration are insufficient to address unavoidable impacts, the Plan will incorporate compensatory mitigation for those impacts.

PURPOSE: To protect private property owners and holders of Conservation Easements from impacts of oil and gas development harming the values that Conservation Easements were granted to protect.

EXCEPTION: None.

MODIFICATION: The AO may modify this stipulation/COA if subsequent review and monitoring, including consultation with the Conservation Easement holder, find that the proposed Plan is insufficient and could result in unacceptable impacts to the Easement Values. Modifications may include further limitations or prohibitions on surface disturbance and/or occupancy.

WAIVER: None

Agriculture

Definitions:

Agricultural Area: Any Prime and Unique farmlands (as defined by USDA), livestock operations, any organic or conventional farm or orchard.

Agricultural Water Resource: Any private well, municipal or private water system, and other waterways used for irrigation purposes including any dam, ditch, irrigation intake, canal or other water conveyance.

Stipulation/Condition of Approval: The following will be applied as a lease stipulation and, for existing leases, as conditions of approval to agricultural areas.

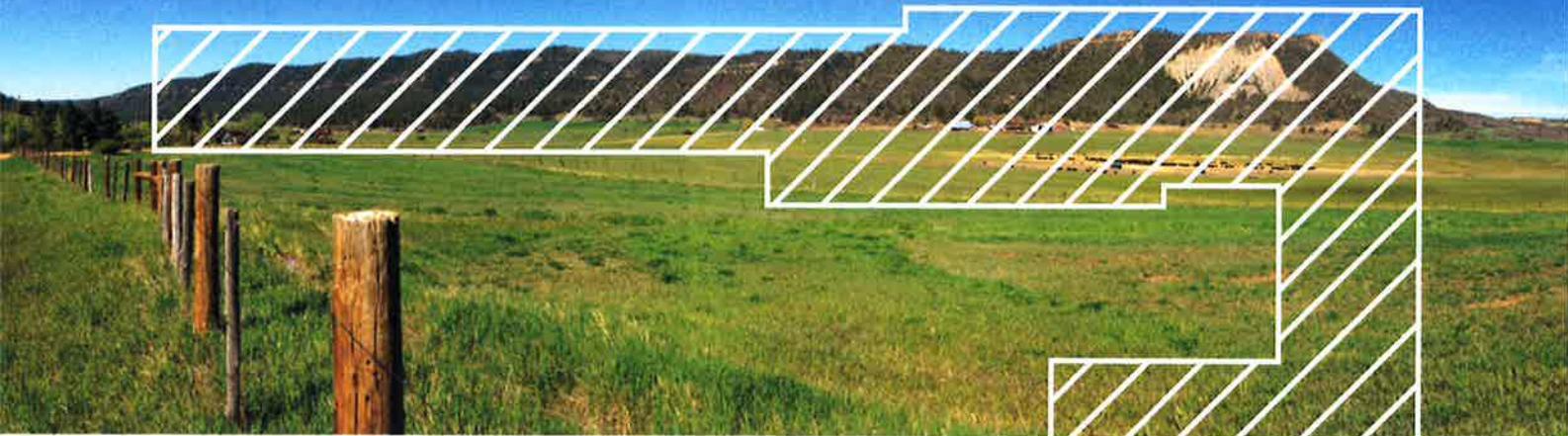
Type of Stipulation/COA	Protected Resource	RMP Acres Affected (Approx.)	Stipulation/Condition of Approval (COA) Description
NSO	Agriculture		<p>STIPULATION/COA: No surface disturbing activities within 0.25 mile of a defined agricultural area or agricultural water resource.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect agricultural resources and essential water resources, including those that are adjacent or nearby to the lease, from spills, releases, and other impacts associated with oil and gas development.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: None</p> <p>MODIFICATION: The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including the area subject to the stipulation/COA) if the factors leading to the inclusion of this stipulation/COA in the lease have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation/COA unnecessary OR if the proposed operation would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property as well as the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review and comment period. <p>The AO may also modify this stipulation/COA by increasing the NSO area if subsequent review and</p>

CSU	Agriculture		<p>monitoring find that the proposed buffer is insufficient and could result or is resulting in unacceptable impacts to the resource value.</p> <p>WAIVER: None</p> <p>STIPULATION/COA: All oil and gas operations located within 1 mile of a defined agricultural area and/or agricultural water resource are subject to the following operational requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berms or other secondary containment devices shall be constructed around crude oil, condensate, and produced water storage tanks and shall enclose an area sufficient to contain and provide secondary containment for one-hundred fifty percent (150%) of the total volume of all tanks on site. Berms or other secondary containment devices shall be sufficiently impervious to contain any spilled or released material. • All well completion operations are required to use “green completion” practices as outlined in 40 CFR 60, Subpart OOOOa. • Use of non-toxic fracturing fluids only. • VOC emissions from all storage tanks must be controlled by at least 95%, dehydrator flash tank and reboiler emissions must be controlled by at least 98%. • Operators must prepare and implement leak detection and repair (LDAR) program using optical gas imaging technology pursuant to 43 CFR 3179.301-305. • Operators must prepare a Fugitive Dust Control Plan. • Operators are subject to any additional BMPs developed and included as a Condition of Approval. <p>Purpose: To protect agricultural resources from potential water and air contamination associated with oil and gas activities.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: None</p> <p>MODIFICATION: The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including adding or removing operational requirement conditions) if the factors leading to the inclusion of the condition in the stipulation/COA have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the condition unnecessary OR if the removal of a condition would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property as well as the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review period. <p>The AO may also modify this stipulation/COA if subsequent review and monitoring find that the proposed buffer is insufficient and could result or is resulting in unacceptable impacts to the resource value.</p> <p>WAIVER: None</p>
TL	Agriculture	<p>STIPULATION/COA: Oil and gas related surface disturbing activities are prohibited from pre-planting ground preparation activities through completion of harvest and end-of-season ground treatment activities within 0.25 mile of a defined agricultural area or agricultural water resource.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect agricultural resources during sensitive planting and harvesting seasons.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: None</p> <p>MODIFICATION: The Authorized Officer may modify this stipulation/COA (including the area subject to the stipulation/COA) if the factors leading to the inclusion of this stipulation/COA in the lease have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation/COA unnecessary OR if the proposed operation would not cause unacceptable impacts. Such a determination can only be made after the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM must coordinate and confer with other state and federal agencies as well as the proprietor of the potentially affected property and the person or agency that has jurisdiction over the water system in question. • BLM must prepare appropriate NEPA analysis if the existing NEPA analysis requires supplementation. • BLM must provide for a 30-day public review and comment period. <p>WAIVER: None</p>

STRIKING A BALANCE:

THE COLORADO BLM'S SMART FROM THE START PLANNING FOR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION



OVERVIEW

In Colorado, the Bureau of Land Management is leading the way to ensure a balanced approach to energy development on public lands. BLM is doing this with an innovative planning tool known as a master leasing plan that looks across the landscape, involves local stakeholders, and avoids conflicts before they start.

By identifying the right places to drill along with the values we need to protect — such as clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and farm and ranchland — we can ensure that our lands are working in a balanced way for the benefit of everyone.

In fact, a balanced approach will strengthen Colorado's economy, especially in rural areas with public lands. The recent downturn in oil and gas prices has fueled another bust in oil and gas development, emphasizing the need for economic diversity. By turning away from a winner-take-all approach, we can allow for responsible energy development while also providing for growth in other industries, such as tourism and recreation.

The BLM's Colorado State Office deserves praise for working to strike that balance by adopting three master leasing plans in the northwestern part of the state. These plans provide a road map to ensure future development is done right. Colorado BLM also has a fourth plan underway for the South Park Basin. A fifth plan proposed for lands adjacent to Mesa Verde National Park holds strong promise to protect one of the nation's most iconic parks, safeguard water resources for nearby agricultural lands, and bolster local recreation resources. Colorado BLM should use this opportunity to work with stakeholders and develop a bottom-up approach that strikes the right balance for the local community.

"We believe that there are places on BLM lands where it makes sense to develop energy from oil and gas. Our nation needs energy development. It also needs to conserve the values of our western landscapes. With thoughtful and careful planning we can have both."

-Ellis Richard, founder, Park Rangers for Our Lands

DINOSAUR TRAIL

COMPLETED AUGUST 2015

This master leasing plan, for the area just south of Dinosaur National Monument, balances the needs of developers with protections for big game, night skies, natural quiet, and scenic views of the national monument. The monument is the centerpiece of a stunning landscape that includes surrounding public lands managed by BLM, and is home to red-rock canyons, mountains and mesas that house the confluence of the Green and Yampa rivers, tributaries to the Colorado River. The monument attracts a quarter-million visitors annually, contributing over \$17 million annually to the local economy and supporting hundreds of jobs in the region.



Top: Map of the Dinosaur Trail MLP.
Bottom: A view of Dinosaur National Monument and Dinosaur Trail MLP area.

NORTH PARK

COMPLETED JULY 2015.

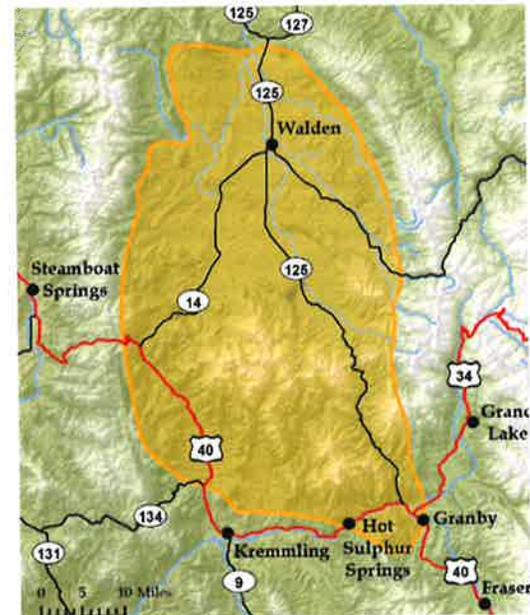
North Park is known as a "sportsman's paradise" and has some of the finest fishing and hunting in all of Colorado, which is a key component for local economies. In Jackson County, for example, hunting and fishing generates \$3.75 million in annual revenue and supports 17.3 percent of all jobs.

The master leasing plan includes strong protections for the gold medal fishery and riparian areas along the North Platte River, while also directing development away from critical winter range and other important habitats for big game.



"Well, any time there's visual and other impacts to nature, it just takes away from what I'm selling. When I sell river trips to back-country areas, having industrial zones don't work very well."

-Tom Kleinschnitz, owner, Adventure Bound River Expeditions



Top left: North Park is an important winter refuge for pronghorn.
Above: Map of the North Park MLP.



SHALE RIDGES AND CANYONS

COMPLETED AUGUST 2015.

Shale Ridges and Canyons offers an array of year-round recreation activities — ranging from hiking and camping, to hunting and fishing, to the popular North Fruita Desert mountain bike trails — to residents of the nearby Grand Valley, as well as hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. An entire recreation industry, centered in Grand Junction, thrives because of the health and beauty of these natural resources. Businesses large and small are bringing high-wage jobs to the West Slope because of these abundant recreation opportunities.



Shale Ridges also includes important wildlife habitat — for greater sage-grouse, as well as mule deer migration corridors and critical winter and production habitat for mule deer and elk. Coldwater fisheries are also found in Shale Ridges, including for Colorado River cutthroat trout and several populations of endangered fish (razorback sucker, humpback chub, roundtail chub and Colorado pikeminnow).

Top: Mountain biking is one of many recreation uses in Shale Ridges and Canyons.
Bottom: Map of the Shale Ridges and Canyons MLP.

SOUTH PARK

SCOPING COMPLETED DECEMBER 2015. PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES DUE SUMMER 2016.

South Park is an outdoor playground for Front Range residents, from Pueblo to Denver to Fort Collins—drawing tens of thousands of visitors annually to hunt, fish and enjoy wildlife. It's a world-renowned fishing destination, housing the "Dream Stream" on the South Platte River, along with popular fisheries in Antero and Spinney Mountain reservoirs.



By attracting thousands of visitors annually, public lands in South Park — and the fisheries and big game populations they support — pump millions of dollars into the local economy, sustain businesses, and create jobs.

The South Park Basin is also the headwaters of the South Platte River and a crucial drinking water source for the Front Range. More than 2.1 million residents in the Denver Metro Area depend on the South Platte watershed for their drinking water, as well as 4,000 local residents in Park County.

Above: South Park is home to Gold Medal trout waters.
Right: A map of the South Park MLP.



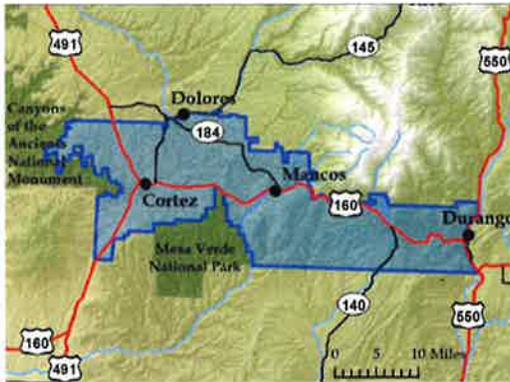
"A master leasing plan is a great mechanism for protecting the resources of Park County. The fact that we're looking at the cumulative effects of development is a new way of looking at the leasing of minerals."

-Park County Commissioner Mark Dowaliby

SOUTHWEST COLORADO



Above: View of the proposed Southwest Colorado MLP from Mesa Verde National Park.
Right: Preliminary map of the proposed Southwest Colorado MLP.



DECISION TO COMMENCE PLANNING PROCESS DUE SUMMER 2016.

Farming and ranching, Mesa Verde National Park, outdoor recreation, manufacturing, tourism, hunting and fishing, and energy development all make up important aspects of Southwest Colorado's local economy and way of life. These activities also depend on protecting the landscape. A smart from the start approach, where development is balanced with the needs of wildlife, recreation, national parks and farming and ranching, is desperately needed in a region where most of the public lands are now open for oil and gas development.

A master leasing plan will provide this balance, along with opportunities for meaningful stakeholder input. This will allow the BLM to develop a shared, community vision for oil and gas development in an area where there are many important interests at stake, including tourism and recreation, wildlife, farming and ranching, Mesa Verde National Park and quality of life for landowners.

A master leasing plan can provide the necessary balance for Southwest Colorado by:

- protecting landowners with surface protections that are strong and can only be waived in very specific circumstances and after stakeholder involvement;
- directing oil and gas development to areas of least conflict and, where possible, limiting surface impacts from energy development;
- using innovative approaches to management, such as phased leasing and development, which helps to limit land and water impacts at any given time and ensures proper reclamation occurs;
- providing a comprehensive assessment of how local rural transportation infrastructure would be affected so local governments can anticipate costs and work with BLM to minimize impacts;
- recognizing the world-class cultural, scenic and night sky values of Mesa Verde National Park and requiring measures to limit the impacts of nearby development on the those values;
- requiring best management to protect water supplies; and
- ensure important recreation resources like the world class mountain bike trails at Phil's World are not adversely affected by development.

Southwest Colorado residents, local officials, landowners, business owners, and recreation advocates have spoken in overwhelming support for a master leasing plan. Colorado BLM should apply the lessons learned from the successful completion of other master leasing plans and move forward with a balanced plan for the area.

CONTACTS:

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Suzanne O'Neill
cwfed@coloradowildlife.org

**PARK RANGERS
FOR OUR LANDS**

PLS
PUBLIC LAND
SOLUTIONS



**Rocky Mountain
Farmers Union**

Maps created with data from: Bureau of Land Management, Esri, National Park Service, US Geologic Society and Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance. Photo Credits: North Park: Suzanne O'Neill, © 2011; Shale Ridges: Anne Keller; South Park: Tyler Baskfield

My name is Phyllis Mains and I live at 4980 Rd 21, Cortez.

I support a Master Leasing Plan that addresses water supply in our area where hay and cattle compete with fracking fluid that is typically 98% freshwater. Water is so precious rain can't be captured in barrels for gardens because of severe drought trends here. In NM, hair testing of sick cattle that grazed near well pads found petroleum residues in 54 of 56 animals. (Nov 29, 2012) The fracking fluid, typically 1-2% chemical additives (many toxic to humans and animals), function as friction reducers, biocides, and scale inhibitors. These toxins can enter the water table. Will there be adequate testing of surface and ground water around wells proposed in the Master Leasing Plan?

The fracking process does impact local air quality and contributes to atmospheric greenhouse gas. The EPA has already determined coal-fired plants and oil and gas fields in NM have pushed ozone levels up to the highest allowable at 75 parts per billion. I volunteer at the Ute Tribal Animal Shelter in Towaoc where smog and haze from NM is visible. Will the projected well pollution be considered before any wells are approved?

Locally, large numbers of diesel trucks will clog the roads of our community as they transport equipment, millions of gallons of water, and thousands of gallons of chemicals to the fracking site. Diesel fumes from trucks, combined with diesel powered drilling rigs will add to the already toxic air in the proposed leasing plan area. Fracking rigs release large amounts of greenhouse gas from escaped and intentionally vented methane—venting must be prohibited in the new rules.

The largest methane leak in US history, Aliso Canyon, CA was the result of oil and gas companies failing to monitor and maintain aging infrastructure. Stricter EPA rules must be implemented and enforced on BLM land. Please consider the cumulative effects of the already abandoned 35,000 wells in CO, many leaking methane into the atmosphere.

My husband and I retired here to hike in the beautiful canyons of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (80 % already with wells) and San Juan Mountains. People flock here from all over the world to experience an area rich in ancient Pueblo history and natural beauty. The many sustainable jobs in Montezuma County include agriculture with great water needs, and a booming tourist industry that attracts people globally. Cumulative air and water pollution must be considered before any new well is approved.

Phyllis Mains, 4980 Rd 21, Cortez, CO 81321 970-565-2137

TRES RIOS FIELD OFFICE, MASTER LEASING PLAN, MARCH 16, 2016

Public Comments by Ellen Foster, 25314 County Road T, Dolores, CO 81323 (970-261-3524)

While I appreciate your efforts to consider each piece of BLM land individually, and to apply stipulations that address concerns specific to that parcel, we must also consider the interconnectedness of the whole county.

Montezuma County, the City of Cortez, and the Town of Mancos are partners on the Paths to Mesa Verde bike trail. They're investing a significant amount of effort and money to develop this trail. The long-term vision is to connect it to bike trails around Mancos; the Cortez Special Recreation Management Area, which includes Phil's World, Chutes and Ladders, Summit, and Aqueduct; and then the Fairgrounds and Denny Lake. It would be over 20 miles long.

People come from all over the United States to ride Phil's World. Hundreds of truckloads of gravel a day, drilling rigs, pipelines, and related oil and gas infrastructure will certainly ruin the outdoor biking experience envisioned for the bike path. These areas, including the Proposed Trail Corridor for the Paths to Mesa Verde, should be protected by closing them – and their viewsheds -- to oil and gas development. They should be designated "Closed to Oil & Gas and Not Available for Lease" with "No Exceptions, Modifications, or Waivers".

The RMP does not include any stipulations to protect the scenic vistas, night skies or soundscapes of Mesa Verde National Park. Visitors from all over the world are thrilled by 360 degree views from Park Point. On a clear day, you can see Shiprock 50 miles to the south. Visitors can step out of the car at a roadside stop and see mountains 100 miles to the north. They come to immerse themselves in nature, to feel the breeze coming up the canyon, to hear the birds, to smell the sage and pinyons and juniper, and to imagine what life might have been like 1,000 years ago. We've all come to love it as part of our everyday lives. People who come to Mesa Verde for the first time are just blown-away.

Visual and Audio Resource Management stipulations have been used in the MLPs for Chaco Canyon, Arches, Canyonlands, and Dinosaur National Monument. They should also be designed to protect the unique qualities of Mesa Verde National Park and the Escarpment. Thousands of acres were CLOSED to Oil & Gas in the Moab MLP to "preserve scenic vistas".

So with all sincerity, I propose that all land that you can see with the naked eye from atop Mesa Verde National Park should be designated "Closed to Oil & Gas and Not Available for Lease" with "No Exceptions, Modifications, or Waivers".

My full comments are included in my written statement.

I'm also concerned about:

1. **Water resources** and the replenishing of aquifers. Stipulations similar to those in the Moab MLP are needed. See Atmospheric Deposition: http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ut/moab_fo/mlp_2015_documents/draft_rmp_amendment.Par.63788.File.dat/Moab%20MLP_Chapter-3_Web_508.pdf
Base line testing and periodic monitoring should be required.

2. **Air quality** – Four Corners methane hot spot, and VOCs such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes. Establish base lines NOW.

Monitors for all of these substances should be placed in multiple locations on the BLM, the San Juan National Forest, surrounding McPhee and Narraguinnep Reservoirs, and around Montezuma County to get an accurate picture of concentrations during different wind patterns.

Stipulations requiring containment of toxic and hazardous air pollutants must be included in the MLP. Venting unwanted gases into the air is like throwing your garbage in the ocean!

3. **Human Health** – There are no stipulations in Appendix H concerning human health or long-term cumulative effects of exposure to air pollutants. The BLM must determine the cumulative health effects of people's exposure to the cocktail of chemicals in the air that are emitted by Kinder Morgan's CO2 unit, the Helium plant and Argon production in Dove Creek, the San Juan Power Plant, and the Four Corners Methane Hot Spot. Stipulations must prevent human exposure to air pollutants.
4. **Climate change** – CO2 and methane are greenhouse gases and should not be allowed to escape into the air.
5. **Agriculture** – Farmers need clean air, water and soil. There are no stipulations in the RMP regarding agriculture. Organic farmers need protection.
6. **Property values** - Private land owners are being required to sacrifice a disproportionate amount of their land value for the benefit of oil and gas extraction. Any realtor will tell you that property with a beautiful view – and without oil and gas infrastructure on it -- is more valuable.
7. **Monitoring & Enforcement** – Stipulations are meaningless if there's no monitoring and enforcement. No new permits should be issued until the BLM has the staff and equipment to monitor existing wells and infrastructure. This is especially important during economic down-turns, when companies are pressured "to do more with less" and cut corners to save money.

8. **Private Surface/BLM minerals** – The same stipulations that apply to Federal Surface/Federal Minerals should also apply to Private Surface/Federal Minerals.

The Minutes of the Feb. 11, 2016 O&G working group meeting report that Ryan Joyner said “The BLM applies Stipulations to federal surface lands and for split-estate lands where there are federal minerals but the surface is private or state lands or any kind of non-federal land, the BLM talks to the landowner about the stipulations that could be applied to the non-federal surface lands and it applies the stipulations if landowner wants it.”

And

“James Dietrich indicated that under split estate a private land owner can request the same protections that were analyzed on federal surface.” If that’s true, why aren’t private surface owners told it’s an option and how to do it?

9. **Quality of Life** - Montezuma County has endured our fair share of oil and gas extraction over the last 50 years. This should not condemn us to it for eternity. The possibility of 1800 new wells in the Gothic Shale Play sometime in the future is heartbreaking. The Montezuma County Commissioners are moving toward a recreation and tourism based economy. And a lot of residents support renewable energy.

This community identifies itself as a farming and ranching area. It was very productive before oil and gas development arrived. If we are to survive economically – and physically – we need to develop strategies that don’t include oil and gas extraction.

Mesa Verde Trail Feasibility Study Fact Sheet

Feasibility analysis for the regional coordination and evaluation of a potential trail corridor and network connecting the City of Cortez and Town of Mancos to Mesa Verde National Park.

The Mesa Verde Trail Feasibility Study is designed to assess the feasibility of developing a coordinated approach to trail development, management and advocacy in the City of Cortez the Town of Mancos and Montezuma County.

The project is intended to bring together local, state, federal and private landowners together with business leaders and recreation advocates to discuss possible alignments and implementation strategies.

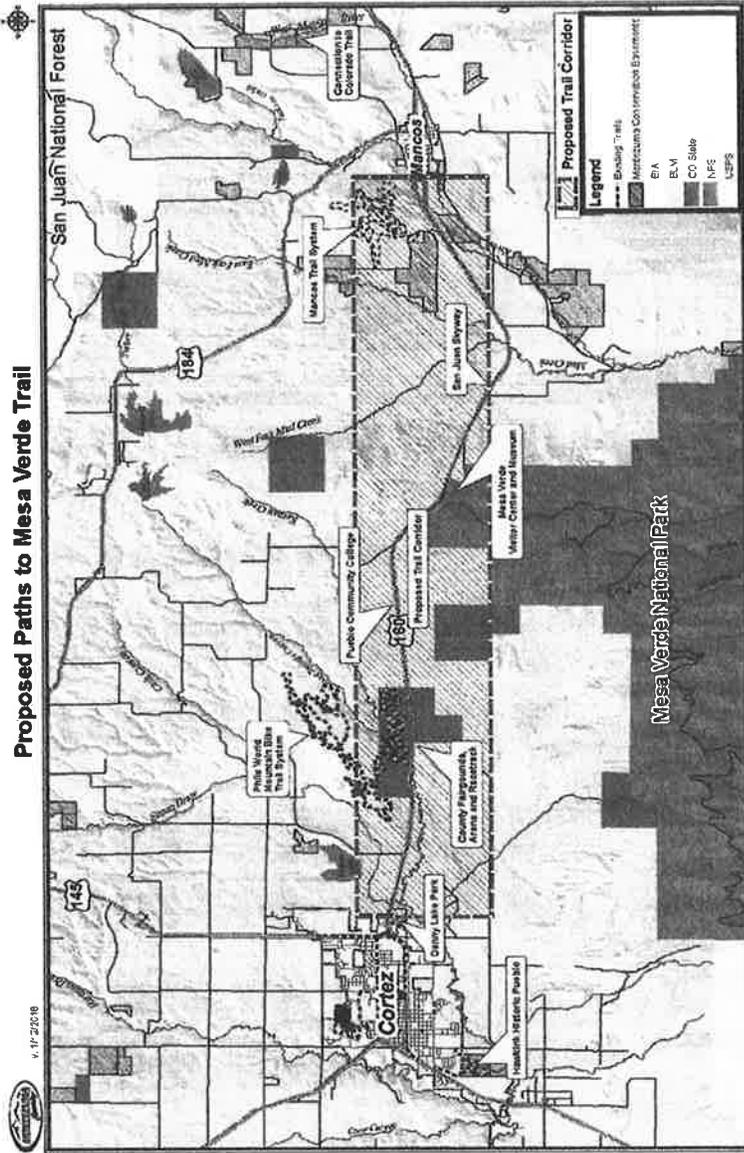
The current concept would include a main trail route between Cortez and Mancos which networks with a chain of other existing community assets such as Phil's World, the Montezuma County Fairgrounds, The Mesa Verde visitors center, the proposed Mancos Trail Park and other community amenities.

The trail and the network of linkages would support a regional identity and provide an interconnected recreational hub having a long term impact on economic development, public health, community engagement, and the quality of life in Montezuma County.

If completed the Mesa Verde Trail would be a regional recreational asset and economic development tool keeping Montezuma County competitive with neighboring communities.

Current Facts

- The trail has been in concept for 15+ years
- The proposed trail has been selected by Governor Hickenlooper to be in the top 16 priority for Colorado trails
- Amenity migration is a leading factor in the county's changing demography and outdoor recreation is an expanding economic sector



- To remain economically viable Montezuma County must stay competitive with other neighboring communities that provide similar amenities
- A feasibility study has been commissioned to determine if the trail is a viable option
- 80% of the feasibility study is funded by the Federal Highways Administration. The remaining 20% is funded by a three way partnership between Cortez, Mancos and Montezuma County. Cortez and Montezuma County have contributed 40K each and Mancos has contributed 20K
- Ideally the study will identify a viable trail route, provide cost estimates, ROW plans, construction bid packages, funding strategies, maintenance strategies
- Many Federal and State grants are available for implementation.
- Phased construction is very likely
- The historic Bedrock bridge has been donated by CDOT for this project.
- A selection process for qualified consulting firms is underway

Comments to the Master Leasing Plan Working Group, March 16, 2016
M.B. McAfee, 22277 Road 20, PO Box 7 Lewis CO 81327
970-562-4477, mbmcafee@fone.net

I have two comments to make. First, I want to set the record straight regarding Christy Zeller's statement at the first MLP meeting on November 19th last year. She indicated that, "Only one well had been fracked in Montezuma County." The COGCC website (<http://cogcc.state.co.us/data.html#/cogis>) will illustrate that from June through September, 2009, there were six wells that were fracked – hydraulic, high pressure fracturing. The operator was Bill Barrett Corporation and the wells were all in close proximity of Roads X and 23. Additionally, this website confirms that all these wells were plugged and abandoned in August, 2015.

Second, I will comment how the Master Leasing Plan can address split estates. At the February 11th MLP meeting in Mancos both Ryan Joyner and James Dietrich indicated that private landowners can request the same protections for their private surface as are stipulated for federal surfaces. There is general recognition that future gas and oil activity in the MLP area will take place on private surface as drilling is done horizontally to access federal minerals. Property values will drop, as will property values of neighboring lands, when drilling operations occur on private land. It takes energy and confidence, in fact perhaps legal representation, in the face of powerful oil and gas developers to negotiate surface owner's rights.

There must be a process whereby standards are followed for all split estate areas to bring consistency and predictability when oil and gas development occurs on split estate land. Therefore, leases and permits to drill on split estate lands must carry these stipulations:

1. BLM must meet with the split estate landowner *before* locating a wellsite or any oil and gas infrastructure on private surfaces.
2. The landowner or owner representative, the oil and gas developer and BLM must walk the land together before a surface use agreement is signed in order to have a common frame of reference for decisions about the environmental impact on the private surface owner's land.
3. Interaction among BLM, the landowner, and the developer must be thoroughly documented and recorded.

I urge the use of mandatory language and I am confident that other stipulations about split estate lands can be developed to create a seamless process.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Betty Ann Kolner

Address: 17001 Rd 24 Dolores

Phone: _____

Email: bettyannkolner@gmail.com

Comments: Moab ^{RMP} private land use codes same as Fed. restrictions

Protected measures for water in RMP contain exceptions, waivers & modifications.

NSO's in Oklahoma? What's causing earthquakes? What if we start having earthquakes?

All RMP measures are waivable, allow exceptions & modifications!

I support Jimbo's specific requests for protective measures.

Impacts into the future? What if an area is excepted, exempted etc. in one year but consequences make an impact later. MLP can more adequately address future consequences?

Waiver requests may be rare but what about leaking sites, polluted water & VOC's in the air? Something's not right, research happens after "Accidents". MLP is an opportunity to address future economic needs!

If an MLP addresses future concerns & can provide stricter provisions for protecting air resources w/out waivers exemptions or modifications I support it.

Too many "Accidents" (earthquakes, spills, VOC's, polluted water)

March 16, 2016

Chris Eastin
1812 Rampart St.
Cortez, CO 81321

US BLM Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
c/o Tres Rios Field Office
Dolores, CO

Subject: Master Leasing Plan Evaluation

Dear Working Group Members:

In late August of 2015, the Montezuma Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) requested that the Bureau of Land Management analyze possible geological hazards on a proposed lease sale of an oil and gas parcel located near McPhee Dam. As the attached Cortez Journal article dated September 10, 2015 details, the BOCC was concerned about the "operation and integrity of the McPhee Dam."

In response, BLM deferred the proposed lease sale.

The proposed boundaries of the BLM's Tres Rios Master Lease Plan (MLP) do not include McPhee Dam and other important elements of the Dolores Project. These local federal water facilities are key components of the US Bureau of Reclamation's massive Upper Colorado River Basin program.

The Dolores Project is vital to the economy of southwest Colorado. Montezuma County is literally dependent on the project to deliver water for agriculture and domestic use.

It is certainly conceivable that use of fracking technology and injection of fluids could create seismic effects on McPhee Dam. These effects could compromise the embankment and require draining of McPhee Lake. In addition to impacts on local irrigation, there could be implications for the operations of the federal dams and power facilities on the Colorado River system. Although the federal dams and related infrastructure were robustly designed, fracking technologies did not exist when they were engineered and constructed.

March 16, 2016

There are other elements of the Dolores Project which are located in the proposed boundaries of the Tres Rios MLP, including water delivery systems and power plants in the Montezuma Valley. Water delivery to the Ute Mountain Reservation is essential to the tribe's farming operations. Seismic damage from oil and gas activities could damage the irreplaceable assets. The possibility may seem remote, but these kinds of impacts are now being seen in Oklahoma and other states.

An MLP could provide a process to evaluate what risks, if any, to our agricultural economy could arise from seismic effects due to oil and and drilling and production on federal leases. As a federal matter, information from this local MLP might help identify safety concerns from oil and gas drilling activity in proximity to the Colorado River downstream.

Another reason the Tres Rios MLP boundary should be extended northward is to include the rest of our area's Gothic Shale Play. As oil and gas prices rebound to their long term trends, the Gothic Shale Play will be a prime target for drilling and production. The Tres Rios MLP could help BLM—and state and local governments—plan for and effectively manage renewed activity in southwest Colorado.

I note that the issues raised above are not addressed sufficiently in the Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,



Chris Eastin

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To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Sep 10, 2015

County seeks drilling study

Commissioners want assurance wells don't threaten dam

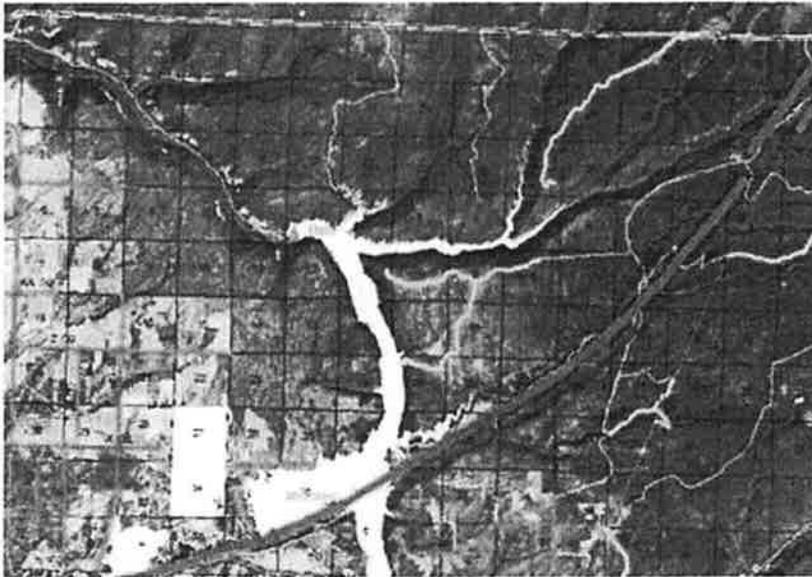


Photo by: Courtesy USGS

The pink line represents a fault line under McPhee Reservoir and Narraguinep Dam. Montezuma County commissioners are asking the Bureau of Land Management to conduct thorough geologic studies to ensure that proposed oil-and-gas drilling near McPhee Dam is safe.

By **Jim Mimiaga** Journal staff writer

Care is needed to protect McPhee Dam if a proposed oil-and-gas lease is developed nearby, according to Montezuma County commissioners.

In a comment letter to the Bureau of Land Management, the commissioners stated that they supported oil-and-gas development, but they expressed concerns about potential geologic hazards on proposed lease Parcel 7393 west of McPhee Reservoir.

"The BLM should analyze the impacts the proposed lease sale would have on the operation and integrity of the McPhee Dam," the Aug. 31 letter stated.

"Since the proposed lease sale will occur within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the dam, we believe that the potential for seismic activity due to drilling should be thoroughly evaluated."

The proposed lease pertains to a split estate where the surface is privately owned, and federally owned subsurface minerals are leased to energy companies.

A U.S. Geological Survey map of fault lines in the area does not show one near the McPhee dam or parcel 7393.

However, the lake itself sits on a fault line that runs under House Creek, under a portion of the reservoir, and under the dam for Narraquinnep Reservoir.

"The weight of the lake on top of the fault could be an earthquake risk," said James Dietrich, federal lands coordinator for the county.

Local resident Ellen Foster recently pointed out the proximity of the proposed lease to the dam to county staff, and those concerns were added into the county comment letter.

"Drilling so close to the dam is too risky and threatens our entire economy," she said.

Horizontal drilling can travel for up to two miles from the wellhead. But if the lease were sold and wells were drilled, the company could not drill outside the unit boundary, Dietrich said.

Whether the practice of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, will be used at the parcel near the dam will not be known until the parcel is leased for development and an drill application is submitted to the BLM.

Fracking is the process of injecting wells with up to millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals at very high pressure. The process creates fractures in deeply buried rocks to allow the flow of oil and gas into the well bore.

The USGS says fracking has rarely created earthquakes, but USGS scientists have linked underground injection wells – used to dispose water produced from drilling – to more common minor quakes.

The injected fluids are salt water left over from ancient seas that is drawn up during drilling. When injected back underground 6,000 to 8,000 feet deep, it can lubricate unstable fault lines and trigger earthquakes.

According to a county map, three injection wells in the western part of the county are used by the local oil-and-gas industry, including the Kinder Morgan CO2 Co. Well MWD is on Road 18, north of County Road T; Well HWD-1 is at County Roads AA and 12; and Well YWD-1 is in the Yellow Jacket area in between Roads X and Y. Whether they are near fault lines is unknown.

Oil-and-gas development within the county requires a High Impact Permit and Special Use Permit which will further evaluate site specific conditions, and may impose additional mitigation measures.

jmimiaga@cortezjournal.com



March 16, 2016

State Director Ruth Welch
BLM Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215
rwelch@blm.gov

Field Manager Connie Clementson
Tres Rios Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
29211 Hwy. 184
Dolores, CO 81323
cclementson@blm.gov

Re: Southwest Colorado Master Leasing Plan Process

Dear Director Welch and Field Manager Clementson:

We at Osprey Packs, ~~the individuals and businesses listed below~~ are very interested and invested in land management decisions that affect our community in southwest Colorado. Our business and the culture of Osprey is built on the responsible use, access and protection of our natural resources and as such we have a vested interest in what is happening in our backyard. As a growing economic engine in this region we want to be involved in the process and have a voice during the discussion. We value the amazing outdoor recreation opportunities afforded to us, including true gems like the trail system at Phil's World and the recent announcement of the proposed Paths to Mesa Verde — a multimodal trail connecting Cortez, Mesa Verde National Park and Mancos. With Osprey's investment in a new Cortez facility it is our intention to more actively host partners and guests from all over the world and ~~proudly engage them~~ and celebrate the unrivaled cultural and natural resources Montezuma County has to offer.

That's why we want to thank the Bureau of Land Management at both the state and local level ~~for moving~~ *moving* forward with a Master Leasing Plan ~~process~~. A Master Leasing Plan (MLP) *in general* for southwestern Colorado will truly enhance our region by ensuring any future oil and gas development will be balanced with other important resources and interests such as our recreation opportunities, access, and economy. As a company and as individual community members in the region, we at Osprey Packs support the creation of a Master Leasing Plan because it is the best way to protect the places and natural resources that make southwest Colorado such an amazing place to live and grow our business.

We also want to acknowledge that many members of our community are volunteering their time to gather public input and participate in the MLP process. In order to make sure that our time and theirs is adequately valued, we respectfully request that the BLM defer any future oil and gas leasing in the proposed MLP area until a final decision on the plan is determined and the full planning process is

78 EMPLOYEES

-24 1/3

122 CONSIDERING

concluded. We understand the agency has deferred leasing while other master leasing plans, like Dinosaur Trails, were considered and southwest Colorado is worthy of the same treatment.

Moreover, since many of our staff members are eager to participate in the public process around the MLP, we want to better understand how this process will work. Unfortunately, beyond when and where the upcoming public meetings will take place, there is a dearth of information on how public information and comments on the MLP will be compiled, considered, and how a final recommendation will be made. Any efforts to provide clarity to our community at large would be greatly appreciated.

In summary, this issue is of the utmost importance to Osprey's growing business and our vibrant outdoor culture and we feel strongly that having a seat at the table to express our interests and concerns is important because in the end, if you are not at the table, you are on it. This home we have chosen both for business and personal reasons has far more to offer than oil and gas and we would like to see it managed in a way that carefully considers all uses, including the vast potential for exemplary outdoor recreation.

Thank you for the consideration of these issues and we look forward to working with you on this process.

Sincerely,

Osprey Packs Inc. and the following concerned individuals and businesses

- Kenny Ballard, Chief Operations Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Tom Barney, Chief Executive Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Michael Henderson, Chief Financial Officer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Diane Wren, Owner, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Mike Pfothenauer, Owner/Founder, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Mychal McCormick, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Matthew Walker, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Rob BonDurant, Director of Marketing, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Geoff Peck, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Courtney Hart, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Bill Chandler, Outdoor Sales Manager, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Jeff Busic, International Sales Director, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Scott Robertson, Copywriter, Osprey Packs Inc.
- David Dunn, Operations Management, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Kimberly Mendenhall, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Emily Mason, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Rich Pierce, Dealer Services, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Sam Mix, Conduit of Corporate Outreach, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Katie Koppenhafer, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Joel Kablau, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Jeff Belliston, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Jennie Wong, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Julie Nadolske, Osprey Packs Inc.
- Southwest Colorado Cycling Association, Jeff Fox, President

- Kristin Carpenter Ogden, Owner/Founder, Verde Brand Communications
- Anna Peterson, Communications Specialist, Verde Brand Communications
- Pete Eschallier, Owner, Kokopelli Bike and Board
- Kathy Hands, Owner, Mancos Brewing Company
- Kristin Ruger, Concerned citizen
- Ginny Chandler, Concerned Citizen

March 16, 2016

Comment to the RAC working group regarding SW Colorado MLP

I would like to recommend that the working group recommend to the sub RAC recommend to the RAC recommend to the BLM to make a true case study of the Aztec area: it is a great example of the effects of oil and gas development; economically, environmentally, socially. It would be valuable to study the development to see how it could be done better with an MLP.

Sincerely,

Isaac Murphy
Mancos, CO



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Philip Ayers
Address: 15652 Road 35, Mancos, CO 81328
Phone: 970.560.5659
Email: payers99@msn.com

Comments:

In our water resource scarce area, where would the water for gas & oil well drilling, development, and especially fracking come from, and ~~where~~ what existing uses would be sacrificed. Would an MLP be a good tool for analyzing this?

(This supplements my previously emailed comments)



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Ami McAlpin - City of Cortez

Address: 908 E. Main St. Cortez, CO 81321

Phone: 970-564-4096

Email: amcalpin@cityofcortez.com

Comments: public lands Economic impact on Montezuma County

Montezuma County data relevant to the process

Employment in mining
1998-2013 ↓ 12%
1.4% Montezuma
0.6% U.S.
13 jobs - lost over 15 years

Farm employment
7.9% Montezuma
1.4% U.S.
1970-2014
45 years 65.3% ↑
% of land in MOCO farm
53.2%

non-mining employment
↑ 457 jobs 7.4% ↑

private land 23.5%
Federal land 42%
Tribal land 33.8%

non-mining employment
67.5%
30.0% government

1970-2014
↑ 97.5% MOCO / 56.5% US
population increase
184.9% MOCO / 103.6% US
employment

Travel/tourism employment 21.7%
recreational opportunities

cultural resources | environmental impact | personal income

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal identifying information on your comment, we 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.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: RICKY LIGHTFOOT

Address: 12296 ROAD 33, MANCOS, CO 81328

Phone: 970.749.3403

Email: ricky.lightfoot@hotmail.com

Comments:

I support a MLP that protects groundwater, watersheds, view sheds and recreation. Specifically I want to see protection for areas of high archaeological site density - Not just individual sites, ~~but~~ I see these areas as being the equivalent of National Historic Districts that include more than just individual buildings.

Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas Sub-group Minutes

Mar. 16 (Evening Session), 2016 @ Hesperus, CO

Southwest Colorado RAC oil and gas sub-committee members present: Christi Zeller, Matt Thorpe, George San Miguel, Chris Lopez, Dan Huntington, Pete Eschallier, Gred Dubit, Jimbo Buickerood, Dale Davidson, Travis Ward, Gwen Lachelt, Bruce Baizel, Eric Sanford, James Dietrich

BLM staff & SW RAC members present: Connie Clementson (Tres Rios Field Office Manager), Justin Abernathy (Tres Rios Assistant Field Manager), Ryan Joyner (BLM Physical Scientist), Barb Sharrow (Acting Southwest District Manager), Shannon Borders (Southwest District public affairs specialist), Ruth Welch (BLM Colorado State Director) and Greg Shoop (BLM Colorado Associate State Director) and

Eric Sanford called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Connie Clementson welcomed everyone and introduced the BLM employees. Eric Sanford explained how the sub-group is working to gather information to submit to the Southwest Resource Advisory Council. The maps the sub-group is reviewing at the meeting are available [online](#). Zones 1, 2 and 3 cover La Plata County and that will be the focus for the evening meeting. The sub-group introduced themselves. Eric encouraged the audience to review the website and to continue to submit comments via email.

Comment Summary

Eric Sanford reviewed the comment summary. It is provided at the end of the minutes.

Map Exercise

Christi Zeller said sometimes the public comments don't reflect what is accurate. Since she is representing the oil and gas industry, she and Chris Lopez created handouts to better inform the sub-group. See attachments. There is a misconception that the Tres Rios [Resource Management Plan](#) is incomplete. In regards to Zone 1 and 2, most of the acreage is withdrawn from oil and gas activity. She needs to know specific acreage within each parcel and needs to know where the basin is to determine potential.

Matt Thorpe said Colorado Parks and Wildlife submitted a comment letter with three main attributes that could be done within a MLP including limitations on pads and road density, phased leasing and mandatory mitigation. CPW works with operators and landowners to benefit the landscape and wildlife. CPW needs to know what lands are leased and what stipulations are on those acres to determine if it's stringent enough. There's not a lot of land affected by the MLP, but the public lands become more critical and are needed for wildlife as other development occurs regardless of the industry involved.

George San Miguel said Mesa Verde is a Class 1 air shed under the Clean Air Act. The coal fire plant came and went. The other plants near Farmington are reducing emissions, and he applauds those actions. Mesa Verde has a robust air quality program, and the mitigations could be lost with the addition of oil and gas development. With good technology that could be handled in a way not to harm the air shed.

Chris Lopez said he's worked for agencies and for operators, and he is approaching this plan by trying to understand the rules in the RMP. There are many regulations that the industry complies with in order to develop oil and gas. He asked what are additional rules and regulations could be implemented via MLP in Colorado. He wants to ensure there is a need for additional rules and regulations. The sub-group needs to identify what is being protected and what are the current regulations available to offer protections. He said a MLP should fill those gap and holes if it exists.

Dan Huntington lives in the Hesperus area, and said no wells in the area are operating today. All of the leasing in this area is done, and the lack of water is the biggest concern because water is over appropriated. He is also concerned about access to public lands via private lands. He doesn't believe the MLP will do what the public thinks it will do.

Pete Eschallier said there's some non-factual information in the information that was handed out by Christ Zeller. Phil's World is an important economic driver. He's concerned about accessing public lands via county or private lands. For example, he accesses the Mesa Verde Escarpment via the Montezuma County landfill. James Dietrich explained this was not a legal access point. Pete said he hasn't read one public comment about someone not wanting the MLP. He thinks it's a positive step forward, and we should work with local government for more oil and gas regulation. In regards to Waivers, Exemptions and Modifications, he wants blue print for each parcel to get rid of these options.

Greg Dubit lives adjacent to parcels in La Plata Canyon. It's a prime area for recreation with high recreation values and uses. There are also landlocked parcels that have a huge value for migratory game and for hunting. He believes oil and gas will impact these migratory routes. Industrial extraction activities have big impacts. Also this is adjacent to the watershed in a water critical area, and he wonders if the water resource is available.

Jimbo Buickerood says he believes the RMP has shortcomings, because stipulations that assure socio-economics are not protected as well as stipulations for conservation easements, split estates and agricultural lands should be included in the MLP. He said the RMP is the highest level of regulation and the APD is the next level. The middle ground could be the MLP. He said the biggest concern is water, and the MLP can look at the resources in the area and how this can protect those areas from impacts of development. The sub-group also needs to look at Mesa Verde to consider the stipulations used in other MLPs to protect other national parks. He suggested implementing a public comment deadline, and then a meeting to analyze public comments.

Dale Davidson represents the conservation communities. He is concerned about the high density of archeological sites and the sub-group needs to consider Native American communities and how these sites are important to those communities. He's also concerned about potential seismic activities near McPhee Reservoir, Mesa Verde and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Travis Ward said a lot of areas are closed to recreation unless you have access via private lands. He said Jackson Lake, Mancos State Park, the entrance to La Plata Canyon, Hesperus Ski Area and Smelter Mountain should be closed to leasing. Parcels 105, 107 and 108 should be NSO due to recreation. Chris Lopez said several of those parcels have NSO and CSU stipulations.

Gwen Lachelt would like to hear from Bill Dvorack, because he has been involved in two other MLP processes. The MLP was developed in 2011 with an Instruction Memo as a way to figure out how to deal with the protests from lease sales and RMPs. This RMP was protested, and she believes a MLP could coordinate activities. She said it offers a chance to develop things right. La Plata County made the request about three years ago to do this. One example is that Swift Energy proposed to drill two experimental wells, and they moved to an area where there wouldn't be an impact to the land owner. This is an example of how a MLP could work. Additionally, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission looked at the depth of this well, about 2200 feet, and discovered it was close to fresh water. COGCC said do not frack, and she doesn't see that kind of analysis in the RMP. This could be the model for the area, and this could be a model for phased development and cumulative impacts.

Bruce Baizel said water is critical, and he and his neighbors are on wells. He looked at the RMP and tried to find stipulations to protect the wells. He wants to propose a stipulation to require a buffer for water well. Zone 2 has the most split estate and water wells are critical. The MLP is a chance to look at stipulations for split estate land owners. Access is also a huge issue, because operators will need to construct all roads. Protecting wildlife corridors via stipulations is also important, and it is not in the RMP. The MLP also needs to recognize conservation easement protections. Truck traffic is a big issue and it runs 24/7 during oil and gas development. It really irritates people, and it needs to be addressed. The MLP also needs to address lights at night, because it can be seen for miles.

Eric Sanford said his company operates in Gunnison and Pitkin counties, and those areas are politically sensitive. He's been to many meetings and he understands there's two sides pro and against. The RMP came out in February 2015 and is one of the newest in the state. He said there's a perception that it's not accurate due to being protested. The RMP process provides for protests, and the RMP hasn't been proven to be inadequate due to those protests. This MLP is unique because it is primarily on lands that are withdrawn or on fee lands. An MLP was established in Moab Canyon Lands and those are primarily federal lands. The area of interest is the exactly the opposite with most of the lands being private, and this has to be considered in this process. Comparisons between the two MLPs are not accurate due to this difference. This MLP has to be considered in relation to the legal limits. Asking BLM to enforce private conservation easements is not feasible, because it cannot be done legally. He asked if there are things that aren't in the RMP that could be addressed in an MLP.

Public Comments

Bill Dvorak-He is an outfitter and a member of the Northwest Resource Advisory Council, and has been involved with two other MLP processes. He said the idea behind a MLP was that the BLM was trying to cut back on protests and litigation. South Park was the example that he provided, and he said they had public meetings prior to MLP and many partners asked for the MLP. This convinced the BLM to do the MLP. You can do enhanced management practices with a MLP.

Mike Nolen-see attached written comments

Robin Richard-see attached written comments

Vanessa Mazal- see attached written comments

Sharon Orr- see attached written comments

Paul Schmett- see attached written comments

Dave Peters- see attached written comments

Craig Fergenbaum- see attached written comments

Gordon Raddo-He said water is a critical issue, and it is going away due to increased temperatures. The MLP should have a schedule to phase out leasing in order to preserve water for agricultural and residential use.

Next Steps

The RAC members will determine the next steps, and this information will be send to the sub-group via email. The next SW RAC meeting is Friday, March 18, and will include a sub-group update.

Oil & Gas Sub-group Comment Summary

March 16, 2016

The following information is a summary of the comments the Bureau of Land Management's SWRAC Oil and Gas Sub-group has received regarding the potential Master Leasing Plan within the Tres Rios Field Office. This summary reflects input that has been provided to the sub-group, to date. It is not a comprehensive list of all submitted comments. All comments are provided for public review at [\(put webpage address here\)](#). Many of the commenters appreciated the BLM's willingness to consider a MLP, and they understood the magnitude of the task the sub-group was undertaking. After reviewing the maps, the public asked how the current boundary was determined and if this boundary was appropriate when considering resource impacts. They suggested an acre-by-acre analysis to determine where recreation is appropriate and where oil and development is needed. They also suggested balancing the needs of recreation and oil and gas development to maintain the local economic benefits.

The sub-group was also challenged to determine whether or not the RMP has the tools to manage oil and gas development including the placement of roads, pads and pipelines to protect sensitive landscapes, wildlife, cultural resources and watersheds. Some indicated the general language in the RMP will not provide resource protections, and the MLP can avoid and/or mitigate resource and user conflicts. Therefore, a moratorium on fluid mineral leasing should be imposed by the BLM during the MLP process. The MLP should consider traffic, noise, visual impacts, air pollution, property values and big game winter range.

They would also like the MLP to consider quality of life in balance with multiple uses. They also understand if the federal agencies' create an environment where development doesn't occur, then the development moves to private land. Some asked what considerations are made for the existing wells outside of these boundaries. One suggestion was to apply federal minerals stipulations to private minerals.

Within the process, water quality baselines must be established and the BLM should do everything possible to prevent the deterioration of water quality. The sub-group should consider spills or surface contamination that could contaminate aquifers.

Additionally, air quality baselines must be established and monitoring must occur throughout the region. The BLM also needs to determine the cumulative health effects to exposure of chemicals that are emitted by operations and consider the Four Corners Methane Hot Spot. Climate change is the most crucial aspect of stopping mineral extraction.

Ensuring wildlife is protected is a priority in this area. This includes ensuring resource protections for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing are maintained to enhance the economy of these rural counties.

A Health Impact Assessment is also needed to ensure the public's health and safety are secure.

While the RMP allows development within the Phil's World trail system and Mesa Verde National Park, many commenters suggested closing these areas to leasing. These areas are culturally rich with considerable view sheds; therefore, noise and light pollution must be considered. Additional areas that should be protected include Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, the Old Spanish Trail corridor and the McPhee Reservoir.

The public understands the scale of development depends on profitability for the operator. Furthermore, the oil and gas industry is subject to boom and bust cycles; therefore, this industry should be replaced with more reliable and diversified job opportunities.

Each operator should be required to perform dust mitigation due to the increase in traffic, drainage needs to be a priority to reduce erosion, pipelines need to be buried and pipeline construction must follow industry standards.

Inspections should be done by qualified personnel. Don't award contracts to the lowest bidder, and be sure contractors are knowledgeable and reputable. Any damages done by operators or contractors should have consequences, and mineral royalties should be used in the area for monitoring.

Some suggested reviewing IM 2010-117 and determining if the four mandatory criteria are met. This analysis should determine whether or not the BLM should not move forward with a MLP. Others said there will not be adequate analysis of cumulative impacts without an MLP, and an Application for Permit to Drill analysis is too little and too late for cumulative impacts of 3,000 new wells. The public also has concerns about how the application of waivers, exceptions and modifications could exempt operators from stipulations. Additional commenters suggested preventing all mineral leasing and extraction while others suggested limiting the number of wells.

Public involvement is a critical part of the process, and the public expects more time to comment. They would like a better understanding of how public information and comments on the MLP will be compiled, considered and how a final recommendation will be made.

Co2, Oil and Gas Fast Facts

Montezuma County

Since June 3, 1996 to March 15, 2016 there have been 1,336 oil and gas leases taken. From one operator, not producing CO2 here is a summary:

	<u>Gross Acres</u>	<u>Net Acres</u>
Federal	211,868	211,113
State	40,507	40,507
Fee	937,514	248,018
TOTAL	1,189,889	499,638

- Montezuma County has 121 active wells, approximately 60% are CO2.
- Approximately 10 CO2 Wells are located within the Proposed MLP Boundary none of which are located on BLM land.
- The last well drilled on Federal Land was in the MLP area was in November, 2001
- The last well drilled on Federal Land was in May, 2012 (BIA) and April, 2012 (BLM)
- The last well drilled in Montezuma County was drilled in January 2015
- Montezuma County's First well was drilled in 1921
- McElmo Dome, one of the world's largest deposits of nearly pure carbon dioxide (CO2) – discovered 1948.
- The primary reservoirs for oil and natural gas are the Pennsylvanian Desert Creek and Ismay Formations.
- 16 Producers currently operate in Montezuma County
- Co2 wells (KinderMorgan) are not fracked
- Within the proposed boundary there are 180,318 acres of fee mineral lands (Private surface/ Private mineral). The proposed MLP will not apply to these lands. Currently there are 39 active wells
- Within the proposed boundary there are 17,054 acers of private surface/ federal minerals. (Split estate). There are currently 9 active wells
- Currently there are 56 wells producing federal minerals
- Ute Mountain Ute has 17 active wells
- Within the proposed boundary there are 23,134 acres of BLM administered lands.

RECREATION

- Recreation within the proposed BLM Master Leasing Plan Boundary
- There are 23,134 acres of BLM lands within the proposed MLP boundary.
- There are 5,751 acres of BLM with legal public access (24.85%).
- The remainder (75.15%) is landlocked by private lands and have no legal access except by permission of adjacent landowners. This means that over 75% of the BLM land in the MLP boundary currently has virtually no recreational use.
- Phil's World is the primary recreational use area within the MLP boundary. Phil's World consists of about 2,400 acres and has about 30 miles of mixed use trails; expansion of about 25 to 30 miles of trails.

La Plata County

Fee Leasing within Boundary of proposed MLP in La Plata County (Dryside): There are over 125 leases taken by Swift Energy; there are over 340 leases taken by Red Mesa Holdings and over 100 by Energen and over 580 leases taken by GasRS Inc in Township 34N Range 12, Township 34N Range 11, Township 33N Ranges 11 and 12 for about 144 sections of land or 92,000 acres.

- 76 wells or permitted wells in the Dryside – not including Tribal mineral and surface – only 1 producer
- 19 are P/A
- 35 are Producing
- 4 are Shut In
- 11 are Abandoned Locations
- 2 Workovers
- 3 permits that have expired

DrySide is primarily Mesa Verde Formation and Dakota – Dryside has no coalbed methane production.

There does not appear to be any recreation opportunities in La Plata County. Perhaps none of these lands have public access??

There are no fracked wells in the Dryside on fee or BLM lands – since May of 2011

In the Ignacio Blanco field outside of the proposed MLP map there have been 124 wells fracked with a total base water volume (in gallons) average of 137,519, including one Dryside Tribal well.

Swift Energy has plugged and abandoned the one Wildcat well.

RMP Section	Page	Table	Topic
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http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5434480.pdf (September 2013)

References for Mitigation (the word is in the document 160 times) and Protection of the Environment – word count is just in Volume 1 -

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My name is Mike Nolan. I am a small farmer in the Mancos Valley South of where 160 is tucked between Menefee and Weber. I raise 5 acres of vegetables, hay and wheat in the valley on irrigated land that is fed from Jackson Lake and the Mancos River.

Let me start off by stating that I am in complete support of oil and gas development as long as it is done in a ecologically safe and responsible manner. I believe that we are all here in the room today encouraging all of you to go forward with an MLP because the oil and gas industry has proved, time and time again, that being ecologically safe and responsible, though a priority, is not always part of the outcomes of oil and gas drilling.

In the meeting earlier today in Cortez and AGAIN TONITE, you asked us to be specific about lots and tracks of land. Well, if I was a mountain biker I could draw lines around Phil's world, if I worked for the NPS I could do the same for Mesa Verde and if I were an archaeologist I could show you where artifacts and historic sites are. Well, I'm a farmer. I own land miles and miles away from my water source, water which I own. That water travels through BLM land and private land. That water source is also my drinking water. I will be as specific as to state that I can not have brackish water, waste water and produced water enter our water source in and around Jackson Lake and the ditches that feed the laterals in the Mancos valley. I saw what happened this summer in Durango with the Gold King Mine spill and how it negatively affected meat and vegetable producers in the Animas valley. I can't have that here in the Mancos valley. At the end of the day, the absolute majority of us are farmers and ranchers in the Mancos valley and if our water is tainted, even by a little, by any means our livelihoods are threatened very quickly.

The current RMP barely, if at all, mentions agriculture and that is a big problem with how much irrigated agricultural land we have within the BLM/ MLP borders we are discussing. Our agricultural waters are also our drinking waters.

I ask that the working group and RAC please work on protecting these resources by strengthening the exemption, modification and waiver criteria to protect our drinking and irrigation water within the borders we are discussing. Also, further development of conditions of approval and best management practice under other resource values that are relevant to agriculture in the region.

Finally, I thank the working groups from both counties for all their volunteered time. It is a thankless job. I encourage you, if you can, for my sake and everyone else's in the room, to continue to participate with the SWRAC group as they make their recommendations on the MLP to the BLM. The 14 of you want to be here and I appreciate that. I also thank the RAC oil and gas subgroup members and I would ask, specifically of Eric Sanford, that though you believe that the MLP is merely a shiny new tool for opposition industry and a redundant and superfluous federal government waste (which you stated in an October 8th, 2015 editorial in the Cortez Journal), you take the time to properly do your job, partisan politics

aside and make a recommendations that are not in your special interest, but in the interest of the citizens these counties, the oil and gas industry and the federal government as a whole.

Thank you

Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan Comments

March 16,2016

Name: Robin E. Richard
Residence: Currently Durango, CO
Lived in Montezuma and La Plata Counties for 18/27 years

Thanks for being allowed to speak.

Thanks to all for their efforts toward thoughtful resource development.

I strongly support an MLP because I have been nurtured for years by the surrounding landscapes, ecosystems, wildlife, and people of the region and deeply care for all of them.

While we have rich oil and gas resources, there are much more valuable, vital, and enduring resources at risk of being severely damaged if we fail to institute wise resource development. In irreparably damaging these resources, we rob current and future generations of the need and the right to be nurtured and supported by these lands and all they offer.

An MLP is needed to conscientiously develop very limited and short-term resources such as oil and gas while protecting enduring and invaluable resources. Resources requiring protection include wildlife populations, arable farm land, air quality, water quality, hunting, cultural resources such as national parks and sacred native lands, and recreation.

We have learned difficult lessons from the mistakes of current and previous generations regarding the type of irreparable harms that come from careless and unthoughtful resource extractions. The land, air, water, and ecosystems on which we all depend can be difficult to impossible to recover once damaged. Once destroyed, they can no longer offer us the joy, well-being, and sustenance it has been our good fortune to experience in this life.

I strongly support the development of a robust MLP. A robust MLP allows us to use the knowledge we have to develop needed resources as safely, wisely, and conscientiously as possible.



March 16, 2016

SW RAC Oil and Gas Sub-Group
 c/o Ms. Shannon Borders
 Public Affairs Specialist
 Bureau of Land Management
 2465 S. Townsend Ave.
 Montrose, Colorado 81401

Connie Clementson
 Tres Rios Field Office Manager
 29111 Hwy. 184
 Dolores, Colorado 81323

Dear Ms. Borders and SW RAC Oil and Gas Sub-Group,

On behalf of National Parks Conservation Association's one million members nationwide, many of which call Colorado home or are part of the more-than half million visitors to Mesa Verde National Park each year, we write to voice our continued support of the proposed Master Leasing Plan (MLP) for lands in Montezuma and La Plata counties, and to provide insight into the mapping exercise the oil and gas sub-group is investigating.

While the recently-approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) provides many protections for Mesa Verde National Park and the surrounding landscape of cultural and natural resources, the MLP would offer a higher degree of certainty to protect sensitive resources in the southwest Colorado that remain at risk from the unforeseen effects of oil and gas leasing decisions. These resources could include: air and water quality; pristine night skies within the park itself and other protected places; natural soundscapes; plant and animal life; and the invaluable cultural resources in and around the park, many of which are revered as sacred by Native American tribes in the Four Corners area.

In addition, the MLP will ensure that the half million visitors to Mesa Verde each year can continue to experience the park as one of those rare, near-pristine places, and in turn, that local economies can continue to gain from the hundreds of jobs and over \$50 million in economic

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benefit that the park provides. Without an MLP, public lands management decisions in southwest Colorado, where only 8% of the public land remains completely closed to oil and gas leasing, have the potential to directly impact the park and the economies that it supports. In addition to a host of negative impacts to the park, current leasing policy can create conflicts between the National Park Service (NPS), tasked with protecting natural and cultural resources within the units under its jurisdiction, and federal agencies whose mandates require them to balance complimentary activities across jurisdictional boundaries.

NPCA holds that, without turning a lens toward intentionally and unequivocally protecting sensitive resources, unbalanced development could result in irreversible damage to Mesa Verde National Park and the network of related natural and cultural resources found throughout public lands in southwest Colorado. For example, Mesa Verde's air quality has already breached the EPA's Air Quality Index, exceeding the federal safety standard for ozone. Park visitors, and the economies driven in large part by the park and its associated protected areas, expect clean air and clear vistas. Under the law, parks designated with Class I status¹, such as Mesa Verde, are also legally provided additional protections under the EPA's Regional Haze Rule of the Clean Air Act.

The oil and gas industry in the Four Corners is contributing to a violation of federal standards for the park and this impact is projected to increase even under "medium" development scenario, as noted in the BLM's Colorado Air Resources Management Modeling Study², but NPCA believes that this can be lessened through master leasing, which has the opportunity to cut pollution and dust from industrial activities near the park, improving visibility, and reducing disturbance to desert soils, and sensitive fauna and wildlife in these areas.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Recently, the Colorado BLM's TRFO announced the initiation of the scoping process to address Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in the vicinity of Mesa Verde National Park, as part of a Resource Management Plan Amendment.³ NPCA supports using the ACEC designation to protect wildlife, rare and sensitive archeological, religious, cultural resources as well as terrestrial plant species near the park that are vulnerable to development activities. Special management of these areas is important to ensuring biodiversity and preservation of the integrity of cultural natural systems that are directly tied to health and integrity of the park and other parts of the landscape. However, despite our general support for considering ACEC designations, NPCA feels that it is imperative that the RMPA process not delay, interfere with, or serve as a substitute for the proposed MLP, which provides for landscape-level oil and gas planning within the entire MLP boundary. The ACECs, as proposed, can serve as

¹ Environmental Protection Agency, Class I areas protected under the Regional Haze Rule (3/14/16), available at: <https://www.epa.gov/visibility/visibility-regional-haze-program>

² Colorado Air Resources Management Modeling Study (CARMMS), Bureau of Land Management, available (as of 3/16/16) at: [http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM Information/nepa/air quality/carmms.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM%20Information/nepa/air%20quality/carmms.html)

³ BLM Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan Amendment, available (as of 3/16/16) at: [http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM Information/nepa/TRFO NEPA/acecs.print.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM%20Information/nepa/TRFO%20NEPA/acecs.print.html)

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complimentary to the MLP to strengthen protections for sensitive resources like Native American cultural sites connected to Mesa Verde.

The proposed ACECs cover only a fraction of acreage that NPCA is concerned could have significant impact to park, and do not address leasing issues in other areas of Montezuma and La Plata counties within the proposed MLP boundary that also impact Mesa Verde, and the network of NPS- and BLM- managed parks and monuments.

Cultural Landscape Protection

Even outside of the boundaries of Mesa Verde, this region of southwest Colorado contains among the highest density of recorded archaeological sites in the United States, numbering over 100 per square mile in some areas, and including Yucca House, Hovenweep and Canyon of the Ancients national monuments. These special places and related sites within this ancient Puebloan landscape continue to hold great significance for Native American tribes living throughout the Four Corners area, who consider the Mesa Verde region of southwest Colorado as part of their ancestral homeland. The BLM should prioritize the protection of the cultural landscape throughout the proposed MLP boundary, first for its sacred value to ancestral Puebloan people, its significance to our shared American heritage, but also for its research value National Park Service and the archeological community, which are working to better understand this part of human history.

In addition to protecting resources on the ground, the MLP can also help to preserve dark skies in the parks and monuments by requiring low-and no-cost light-reducing solutions where development is occurring. Many of the buildings and cultural sites within and adjacent to the proposed MLP boundary area were constructed with specific consideration of celestial bodies visible under pristine, dark conditions. Limiting light pollution from oil and gas operations is critical to maintaining dark skies for present and future generations to appreciate. It is key to the nighttime visitor experience of Mesa Verde and nearby Hovenweep, the latter of which is a certified Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association, and which maintains a successful stargazing program. Protecting the region's dark skies from industrial "light pollution" will allow to visitors to continue to look upon the skies that approximate those that ancestral Puebloan people experienced a thousand years ago.

Collectively, the MLP and the addition of two ACECs present the opportunity for stakeholders to come together to develop plans that respect the cultural heritage of ancient civilizations, to contribute to preserving those historic values for future generations.

Master Leasing Plan Opportunities

Based on our experience in working on past master leasing plans, NPCA would like to comment on the exercise of imagining the *types of protections* that an MLP in the proposed TRFO area could afford for park resources and values, and to offer guidance in regard to the maps/zones 1-5 presented as part of this process. ***To this end, NPCA has prepared a list of example stipulations from the Dinosaur Trail and Moab master leasing plans, both of***

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***which are targeted at protecting national park values among other resources.
(Attached)***

In addition to MLP-wide protections, NPCA has serious concerns with zones 3, 4, 5 due to their high potential for oil and gas leasing, limited or discretionary protections, sightlines from key viewpoints within the park, obstruction of wildlife habitat and migration corridors, and high concentration of cultural sites that are at risk for disturbance or destruction.

For example, Zone 4 has high concentration of cultural sites and great potential for development that is not adequately protected by either surface occupancy stipulations under the RMP or the proposed ACECs alone. NPCA trusts that these conflicts and others can only be addressed *with certainty* through a master leasing plan, as compared to a piecemeal approach or in conditions attached to an application for permit to drill. If development were to accelerate because of shifts in the market or advances in technology at a later date, there is too much discretion in current BLM policy to adequately protect the park, related sites and associated values.

NPCA has been involved in several other MLPs, including the near completed Moab MLP for lands near Canyonlands and Arches National Parks, and the recently-finalized Dinosaur Trail MLP near Dinosaur National Monument. ***These processes provide evidence that MLPs can accommodate future development in balance with the pristine qualities that national parks and other protected places are valued for.***

NPCA encourages the SW RAC to swiftly move forward with the decision to pursue an MLP across impacted lands in Montezuma and La Plata counties so that the planning process can begin in earnest. In our experience, momentum, along with transparency, collaboration, and sound information, are all ingredients for a successful MLP process.

We thank you for convening this process and taking steps that we hope will lead to a strong plan to protect the park and the other extraordinary resources in Southwest Colorado.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Mazal
Colorado Program Manager

Jerry Otero
Southwest Oil and Gas Manager

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National Park-related MLP Stipulation Examples

The BLM has completed or is close to completing two Master Leasing Plans adjacent to national parks: the Dinosaur Trail MLP in Colorado and the Moab MLP in Utah.

- Finalized in August 2015, the Dinosaur Trail Master Leasing Plan⁴ covers 357,800 acres of federal minerals in northwestern Colorado. The northern MLP boundary lies adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument, a stunning network of canyons at the confluence of the Green and Yampa Rivers.
- The Moab Master Leasing Plan (draft)⁵ covers the area between Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park in east-central Utah. An important center for tourism and outdoor recreation, the residents of Moab have been active participants in the Moab MLP process, which is expected to be finalized in summer 2016.

Both of these national park-adjacent MLPs contain a number of stipulations designed to protect the resources important to the national parks. In order to protect the national park visitor experience, and thus protect reliable national park-derived economies, the Dinosaur Trail and Moab MLPs included stipulations related to national park vistas, water quality, night skies, soundscapes and other resources. Examples of these stipulations are below.

National Park Visual Resources – Viewsheds

From Moab MLP (Note: multiple stipulations for the same area reflect different draft Alternatives):

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
No Surface Occupancy (NSO)	Viewsheds of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (166,380 acres)	No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRM Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park.
		No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRI Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park.
		No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRM Class II area along the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park.

⁴ BLM Colorado White River Field Office Resource Management Plan Amendment and Dinosaur Trail Master Leasing Plan: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/land_use_planning/rmp/white_river.html

⁵ BLM Utah Moab Field Office Draft Master Leasing Plan and Resource Management Plan Amendment: <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/MLP/deis.html>

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		<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within VRM Class II area along the eastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect visual resources on BLM lands as well as National Park viewsheds.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
Closed	Viewsheds of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (188,154 acres)	<p>VRM Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park would be closed to mineral leasing.</p> <p>VRI Class II areas surrounding Arches National Park would be closed to mineral leasing.</p> <p>VRM Class II areas on the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park would be closed to mineral leasing.</p> <p>BLM lands along the entire eastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park to a distance of 3 miles from the Park boundary would be closed to mineral leasing.</p>
NSO	Viewsheds of Arches National Park (34,243 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within the viewshed from the northern side of Arches National Park that is outside the VRI Class II areas.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect visual resources on BLM lands, as well as the Arches National Park viewshed.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Viewsheds of Canyonlands National Parks	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within the viewshed from the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park that is outside the VRM Class II area.</p>

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	(3,800 acres)	<p>Purpose: To protect Canyonlands National Park viewsheds.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
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From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	VRM Class II Areas	<p>Site-specific Visual Resources Management and Noise Reduction Plan must be submitted to the BLM by the operator as a component of the APD or Sundry Notice – Surface Use Plan of Operations. The operator shall not initiate surface disturbing activities unless the BLM Authorized Office has approved the Plan (with conditions, as appropriate).</p> <p>Purpose: To manage lands in a manner to protect view sheds, night skies, and soundscapes within the</p> <p>Dinosaur Trail MLP, with emphasis on those areas in the proximity of Dinosaur National Monument (including the Visitor’s Center/Headquarters and Harpers Corner Road).</p> <p>Exception: The BLM Authorized Officer may grant an exception if it is determined that the action as</p> <p>proposed in the Surface Use Plan of Operation or Master Development Plan would not result in a</p> <p>failure to meet the performance standards above; or, a BLM evaluation, in consultation with the</p> <p>National Park Service, determines that the area is not visible, cannot be heard, and night skies would</p> <p>not be affected as observed from key observation points on the National Monument, including along</p>

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		<p>Harpers Corner Road and near the Visitor Center.</p> <p>Modification: The stipulation and performance standards identified above may be modified based on negative or positive monitoring results from similar actions on similar sites or increased national, state, or field office performance standards.</p> <p>Waiver: The BLM Authorized Officer, in consultation with the National Park Service, determines that operations (visual, noise, light) on the entire lease area would not be detectable from Dinosaur National Monument.</p>
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National Park Visual Resources – Night Skies

From the Moab MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	Planning Area	<p>Operators are required to comply with the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimize flaring of gas 2. Limit the use of artificial lighting during nighttime operations to only those that are determined necessary for safety 3. Utilize shielding and aiming techniques, as well as limiting the height of light poles to reduce glare and avoid light shining above horizons 4. Direct lights downward onto the task area. The bottom surface of the light fixture should be level, or if unable to be fully level, pointed as close to straight down as possible or shielded to avoid light being projected horizontally 5. Use motion sensors, timers, or manual switching for areas that require illumination but are seldom occupied 6. Reduce lamp brightness and select lights that are not broad spectrum or bluish in color. <p>Purpose: To protect night skies.</p> <p>Exception: The Authorized Officer may grant an exception if actions are necessary for human health and safety. The Authorized Officer could also grant an exception if it could be demonstrated that other</p>

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		<p>options could produce similar reduction in night sky light pollution to those listed above.</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
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From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds</u>	See above: National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds
CSU	50 acres	<p>Minimize noise and light pollution within VRM Class III areas adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument (DNM) headquarters using the best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital-grade sound reducing mufflers, and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from DNM. Additionally, there will be a requirement to reduce light pollution by using methods such as limiting height of light poles, timing of lighting operations (meaning limiting lighting to times of darkness associated with drilling and work over or maintenance operations), limiting wattage intensity, and constructing light shields. However, this requirement is not applicable if it affects human health and safety. Movement of operations to mitigate sound and light impacts will be required to be at least 660 feet from the DNM headquarters.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect night skies and soundscapes in the proximity of Dinosaur National Monument headquarters area that falls within VRM Class III areas. (Note: this area is not included in CSU-37.)</p> <p>Exception: An exception may be granted if a determination is made that natural barriers or view sheds will meet these mitigation objectives or if human health and safety were adversely affected.</p>

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		Modification: None. Waiver: None.
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National Park Natural Soundscapes

From Moab MLP (Note: multiple stipulations for the same area reflect different draft Alternatives):

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (369,519 acres)	<p>Operators are required to comply with the following within 6.1 miles (9,800 meters) of National Parks:</p> <p>Noise mitigation efforts would be implemented with a maximum decibel level of 51 decibels for production equipment (measured from the direction of the Park at a distance of 350 feet from source). These sound levels could be achieved by replacement diesel engine exhaust silencers (mufflers) noise barriers, and other noise control measures.</p> <p>Purpose: To protect the soundscapes of the National Parks. Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. (148,432 acres)	No surface occupancy would be allowed within 2.5 miles of National Park boundaries.

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		<p>Purpose: To reduce auditory impacts from mineral operations to backcountry portions of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (166,099 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within 2.8 miles of National Park boundaries.</p> <p>Purpose: To further reduce auditory impacts from mineral operations to backcountry portions of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.</p> <p>Exception: None</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>
NSO	Lands bordering Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (148,432 acres)	<p>No surface occupancy would be allowed within 2.5 miles of National Park boundaries.</p> <p>Purpose: To reduce auditory impacts from mineral operations to backcountry portions of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.</p> <p>Exception: The Authorized Officer may grant an exception if it could be demonstrated that the project would not impact National Park soundscapes.</p> <p>Modification: General modification applies.</p> <p>Waiver: General waiver applies.</p>

From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

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Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
CSU	See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds</u>	Site-specific Visual Resources Management and Noise Reduction Plan See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources: Viewsheds</u>
CSU	See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources – Night Skies</u>	Minimization requirement See above: <u>National Park Visual Resources – Night Skies</u>

National Park Water Quality

From Moab MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description
NSO	Courthouse Wash and Salt Wash Watersheds (113,715 acres)	No surface occupancy would be allowed within the Courthouse Wash and Salt Wash Watersheds. Where horizontal and directional drilling is conducted from areas adjacent to these watersheds, drilling operations would not penetrate the associated groundwater. Purpose: To protect the Courthouse Wash watershed (an important recharge area for the unique ecological system within Arches National Park) and the Salt Wash watershed (an important watershed which drains through Arches National Park). Exception: None Modification: General modification applies. Waiver: General waiver applies.

National Park-adjacent Cultural Resources

From Dinosaur Trail MLP:

Stipulation	Area	Stipulation Description

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NSO	360 acres near the Mellen Hill Sites	<p>No surface occupancy or disturbance will be allowed within and adjacent to the Mellen Hill Sites (5RB227, 5RB279, 5RB489, etc.)</p> <p>Purpose: To preserve and protect examples of cultural and historic resources to ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.</p> <p>Exception: None.</p> <p>Modification: None.</p> <p>Waiver: A waiver may be granted if the destruction of all the physical characteristics of a district, site, building, structure, object, traditional cultural property, historic landscape, or discrete group of thematically related properties, that represents American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture (BLM Manual 8110.32 E) results in these locations no longer possessing integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to qualify them for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places described by Criteria (a) – (d) within 36 CFR 60.4.</p>
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Colorado Field Office

2400 Spruce Street, Suite 200 | Boulder, CO 80302 | P 303.919.9054 | F 801.359.2367
www.npca.org



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Sharon Orr

Address: 190 Aikali Gulch Rd Hesperus CO 81326

Phone: 970 588-3870

Email: Sloendgo@gmail.com

Comments:

We are in a water critical area, yet priority seems to go to coal and oil and gas. The Master Leasing Plan needs to be framed around the fragility of the water sources in this area, ^{primarily agricultural} particularly in the area of the coal mine, as there are many oil wells proposed in ^{around} that residential area.

I urge this ^{Sub} RAC to ^{recommend} protecting our water sources that have been, or ^{could} are going to be taken for granted.

if there is not sufficient study
of aquifers and the affect it has
on oil & gas would have on

them. Our water, the little we have
must be treated w/ respect, and any industrial

Please protect our water, quality
of life, property values, and our air.

impact
considered

with
stipulation

with ~~less~~ common
sense and intelligence.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: PAUL SCHMITZ

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: Schmitzseek@msn.com

Comments:

There is a serious oversight of consumptive use of water for planned drilling, mining, and "takings" of surface + subsurface waters via 2010 DWR Non TROB Admon declarations. The coverage area of at least (2) Drill Zones, The Paradox in NON TROB MAPS, AND SAN JUAN BASIN ACCESS ZONES, that will seriously deplete waters with no recharge requirements are imposed. This is a misuse of the Public Trust and of likely impact to water depletion.

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, 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.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Dave Peters
Address: 2531 CR 124
Phone: 247-8386
Email: pdave4@hotmail.com

Comments:

I'd like to see Units 32 and 35 along CR 124 (La Plata Canyon Rd.) withdrawn from consideration ~~for~~ for mineral extraction.

Reasons: 1.) Water. Our subdivision lies adjacent to these units, in a water-critical area. Any disruption to our water volume or quality would be disastrous. Short of removing these units from consideration, there must be: a.) stipulations for minimal distance from wells to drill sites, and b.) pre-drilling and ongoing baseline/monitoring testing for our well.

2.) Views - Very, very important in our subdivision. We like it clear & dark. This is a big deal.

Also very important, overall, for Mesa Verde NP
Several thousand additional wells will only make this worse.

This is my first meeting on this topic, and it seems that common sense calls for a MLP.

BLM Master Leasing Plan – Public Meeting

Hesperus, Colorado

March 16, 2016

My name is Craig Feigenbaum. I live in Mancos, Colorado. I am a Biology Professor at Southwest Colorado Community College (SCCC) and a livestock Farmer. I primarily raise chickens and lamb that I sell locally. I am a strong supporter of a BLM Master leasing plan.

I believe that it is important to implement an MLP is in addition to any other Resource Management Plans. I am not against oil and gas development, however, I think it is important to evaluate the impact of future development on our local resources. Specifically, I think it is important to look minimize the negative impact on agriculture and tourism.

Water is by far the most limited resource here in the Southwest. Anyone that has every tried growing anything will recognize how fundamentally important water is to life. Most people in the Valley that are fortunate enough to have water rights, deal with the reality that their water will be shut-off at some point during the summer. I am extremely concerned that that future gas and oil development is the surrounding watersheds will negatively impact the quantity and quality of water used for local food production. I believe that a MLP could be used to protect our local water supply.

In addition to agriculture, I moved to Mancos because of the outdoor recreation. I love biking at Phil's World and hiking at Mesa Verde. I am not the only one. Many people visit our region from all over the world to access our recreation. Money from these tourists drive our economy. I am concerned that gas and oil development near our recreation areas would decrease tourism and our tourist economy. I believe that a MLP could be used to protect our local tourist attraction so that we do not see a decline in our economy.

Again, I am a strong supporter of a BLM MLP. I specifically think this plan could be used to protect the quantity and quality of water used to produce food, as well as, to preserve recreation areas that attract tourism.



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Bob Wright

Address: 125 South Ave

Phone: 970-759-3466 Durango, CO 81301

Email: bob@animas.net

Comments: Phil's World should be removed from oil/gas + coal leasing to the industry development of ~~oil~~ extracting mineral resources. This area represents many sensitive economic, wild life, recreation, cultural site, neighboring private landowners of agricultural and residential ~~sites~~ properties. The BLM land encompassing the existing recreational trails used for biking, atv, hiking, running, hunting, horses does not total to a ^{significant} ~~large~~ acreage amount. One single gas/oil well with all the construction, would have a huge detrimental impact to all of the above. Oil/gas wells in this area would most likely turn mountain bikers away from coming to our area to recreate

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, 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.

over ↘

on the trail ~~and~~ systems established here, fame
goes for all local users and reventroduct.

A huge resource would ~~be~~ be almost
destroyed. An so would all the years
of human effort, planning, ~~and~~ and
dollars invested by private, and
BLM agencies to develop
this area.

Hopefully the MLP
would go into effect to give BLM
the tools and management support to
Prohibit mineral development
on highly sensitive land parcels.
~~What?~~



**Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Oil and Gas Sub-group
March 16, 2016
Cortez and Hesperus, CO**

Public Comment Form

Name: Paula Mathias
Address: 788 Cougar Way Hesperus, CO
Phone: 970-749-3057
Email: paulagmathias@gmail.com

Comments:

Given the current oversights that have occurred between numerous agencies (BLM, DRMS, LA PLATA Co) in regards to GCC/ King Coal II Mine I propose that the citizens along CR120 N finally be given a "break" along with all homes/wells to the South. The lack of a proper EIS, in conjunction w/ DRMS mandated monitoring wells which are still not implemented, reiterates the immediate need to know how ~~our~~ ^{our} wells are currently being affected by the current extractive industry (coal). Daily use is over 32,000 g/day... on the water critical dryside of La Plata County. How can we afford to give our precious resource to more industry?! When will a local citizen's fresh air, visibility, night sky, wildlife + daily hike be on an equal playing field with a corporation? LA PLATA Co is green + progressive. A MLP is a must! Thank you



CITY OF CORTEZ
210 EAST MAIN STREET
CORTEZ, CO 81321

April 12, 2016

Bureau of Land Management
Southwest Resource Advisory Council Oil and Gas sub-group
Via e-mail: blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

RE: Master Leasing Plan

Dear Advisory Council Members:

The City of Cortez is aware that the Bureau of Land Management is currently considering undertaking a Master Leasing Plan for BLM lands in Montezuma and La Plata Counties. There are well thought out arguments for and against this direction which must certainly be weighed; after considering some of those same arguments, we believe that a MLP is warranted for the reasons outlined below.

In all fairness, it is important to note that the City of Cortez recognizes the considerable financial contribution that returns to a community because of energy and mineral extraction. The City has benefited from severance taxes and federal mineral leasing revenues, as well as from the investments made into the community by companies and their employees. By supporting the MLP Process, the City supports the notion that some areas are unsuitable for extraction, while others may at least warrant higher scrutiny. In other words, the City supports a MLP process that carves out areas of scrutiny with a scalpel, ensuring that we aren't regulating an industry and adding needless restrictions for no other reason than that we can.

The reasons for supporting a MLP process are simple. Montezuma County's economy is complex and diverse. While energy and mineral extraction does have a positive economic benefit, it is dwarfed by the agricultural and tourism sectors. These uses must be considered first in any areas eligible for extraction.

Equally as important, the Cortez community has consistently identified our natural surroundings as something that contributes to a high quality of life and a primary reason that people choose to call Cortez home. We believe that our local community should support and augment our residents, not be a reason that they choose to live somewhere else.

For these reasons, we hope that the BLM will pursue a MLP process to ensure that Montezuma County residents have an opportunity to ensure that development is consistent with these principals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen W. Sheek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Karen W. Sheek

Mayor

**Reports submitted by
Oil & Gas Sub-group
Members**



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: Final Recommendation: MLP for Montezuma County

1 message

Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Thu, Apr 7, 2016 at 11:29 AM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carla Hoehn** <choehn@triadwestern.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 7, 2016 at 11:26 AM

Subject: Final Recommendation: MLP for Montezuma County

To: "Borders, Shannon" <sborders@blm.gov>

Cc: James Dietrich <JDietrich@co.montezuma.co.us>, kertel@co.montezuma.co.us, jlambert@co.montezuma.co.us, lsuckla@co.montezuma.co.us

Good Morning Shannon,

It has been my pleasure to serve on the SWRAC Oil & Gas Sub-Committee over the past several months and my final thoughts and recommendations for action are as follows:

After much public discussion, it appears that there are many valid concerns with the existing Resource Management Plan that may need to be addressed. However, in light of the fact that none of the criteria required to trigger the development of a Master Lease Plan in Montezuma County have been met, I cannot support continued efforts in that direction. It is my opinion, and the opinion of many of the members of the general public that I have spoken with, that if there are deficits in the existing RMP then we should modify the existing RMP rather than developing an entire new set of regulations under a separate MLP. I also have heard many concerns from the public that the BLM is over-reaching its authority by instituting an MLP when none of the criteria have been met. If a government agency is allowed to side-step the existing guidelines at their sole discretion, where will it stop? If the criteria for instituting an MLP are no longer applicable or are outdated, then the BLM should try to rectify that problem rather than ignoring it or stepping over it. It is my opinion that we should not be placing a new layer of governmental regulation (MLP) over the top of a potentially faulty one (RMP). I don't disagree that we may want to prohibit oil & gas development in certain areas of our county, but let's amend the existing RMP if it is determined that more stringent regulations are necessary.

Best Regards,

Carla Hoehn

Triad Western Constructors, Inc.

Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist

4/12/2016

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Fwd: Final Recommendation: MLP for Montezuma County

Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401
970-240-5399

CHRIS SPICER LOPEZ
224 Hermosa Circle
Durango, Colorado 81301
(505) 699-9832 (cell)
chrislopez@eis-llc.com

April 7, 2016

Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401
email: sborders@blm.gov

Re: Tres Rios Field Office Master Leasing Plan Report and Recommendation Letter

Dear Ms. Borders and Southwest Resource Advisory Council (SWRAC) Members,

Thank you for including me on the SW Colorado Master Leasing Plan Working Group as an industry representative for La Plata County. I work in the regulatory, environmental and land services sectors for the oil and gas industry, having served previously as an Oil and Gas Planner for La Plata County, and currently as a Regulatory Specialist for an independent oil and gas exploration and production company. My primary job duty is ensuring that all of the various aspects of an oil and gas company's operations are in compliance with Federal, State, local and Tribal regulations, and as such have become intimately familiar with navigating the multitude of laws, regulations and codes that impact the oil and gas industry.

In regards to making a recommendation for the BLM Tres Rios Field Office's (TRFO) proposed Master Leasing Plan (MLP) for La Plata and Montezuma Counties, I do not believe that an MLP is warranted for the reasons discussed below:

- 1) Instructional Memorandum 2010-117 Leasing Reform states that the "preparation of an MLP is required when **all** four of the following criteria are met", and I do not believe that any of the four criteria are met in the case of the proposed TRFO MLP as outlined below:
 - a. A substantial portion of the area to be analyzed is not currently leased.
 - i. Although total numbers regarding mineral interests (Federal and Fee) that have been leased within the proposed MLP Boundary were not provided by the BLM staff during the meetings, it does not appear that this criterion has been met as a substantial portion of both the Federal and Private mineral estate within the boundaries of the proposed MLP in both Montezuma and La Plata Counties has been leased to my knowledge.

- b. There is a majority of Federal mineral interest.
 - i. Although total numbers regarding Federal mineral interests that are within the proposed MLP Boundary were provided by the BLM staff during the meetings, but not in regards to total Private mineral interests, it does not appear that this criterion has been as it is clear that the majority of the mineral estate is Private based upon the maps provided.
 - c. The oil and gas industry has expressed a specific interest in leasing, and there is a moderate or high potential for oil and gas confirmed by the discovery of oil and gas.
 - i. Although historically the oil and gas industry has expressed a specific interest in leasing within the proposed MLP Boundary, the total number of producing oil and gas wells is quite low, and particularly small in number on Federal Surface and Split Estate. Also, recent exploration by Swift Energy in the area did not prove there is high potential for oil and development as the wildcat Waters 34-12-32 #1H well was subsequently plugged and abandoned.
 - d. Additional analysis or information is needed to address likely resource or cumulative impacts if oil and gas development were to occur where there are: multiple-use or natural/cultural resource conflicts; impacts to air quality; impacts on the resources or values of any unit of the National Park System, national wildlife refuge, or National Forest wilderness area, as determined after consultation or coordination with the NPS, the FWS, or the FS; or impacts on other specially designated areas.
 - i. The San Juan Public Lands Center and TRFO recently completed and published a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in September, 2013, along with a Resource Management Plan (RMP) in February 2015. These two documents were developed over the course of nearly a decade's worth of research, analysis and public comment, which resulted in numerous stipulations being applied to the Federal surface and mineral estates to minimize any impacts of oil and gas development. There has not been enough time to date to determine whether or not these stipulations are sufficient to address this criterion, so it seems premature to pursue additional stipulations on the Federal surface and mineral estate that may be unnecessary and unwarranted. Additional analysis also occurs when a new well location is proposed on Federal mineral estate through an extensive NEPA Environmental Assessment process which includes a public comment period.
 - e. An MLP may also be completed under other circumstances at the discretion of the Field Manager, District Manager, or State Director.
 - i. It has been stated that the proposed TRFO MLP is being pursued under this criterion of IM 2010-117. I would like to specifically understand what the other circumstances are that has influenced the State Director to consider an MLP for the TRFO given that none of the four required criteria have been met. If an MLP were to be pursued in this area, it would set precedent that the required criteria outlined in IM 2010-117 are of no consequence or value and that an MLP may be pursued by the desire of a single individual.
- 2) The San Juan Public Lands Center and TRFO recently completed and published a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in September, 2013, along with a Resource Management Plan (RMP) in February 2015.

- a. Through extensive research, analysis and public comments over the course of nearly a decade, the RMP allocated lands that are available for lease with appropriate stipulations, mitigation and monitoring to develop Federal minerals on Federal surface and Split Estate, while minimizing any impacts. Numerous protections, stipulations, mitigation and monitoring requirements can be found within the RMP in Appendix H – Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations, and additional site specific stipulations are placed on oil and gas development in the Conditions of Approval (COA's) that are attached to an Application for Permit to Drill (APD). Also, the majority of the Federal mineral estate within the proposed MLP boundary have the following additional No-Surface Occupancy (NSO), Controlled Surface Use (CSU) and Timing Limitations (TL) stipulations:
 - i. NSO – 56.6% of the total Federal mineral estate (Federal and Private surface).
 - ii. CSU – 83.2% of the total Federal mineral estate (Federal and Private surface).
 - iii. TL – 60.7% of the total Federal mineral estate (Federal and Private surface).
- 3) The oil and gas industry is well regulated by numerous agencies at the Federal, State and local levels, so additional stipulations that will be developed by an MLP are unnecessary and unwarranted.
- a. In addition to the all of the stipulations outlined by the TRFO RMP and site specific COA's attached to APD's, the BLM is currently proposing to revise existing regulations (Onshore Orders #3, #4 and #5) as well as institute new regulations (Onshore Order #9) to further regulate oil and gas development. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also regulates oil and gas development at a Federal level and is proposing a plethora of new regulations, along with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and numerous other Federal Agencies. There is State level regulation with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) that place their own stipulations and restrictions on oil and gas development. Finally, there are local level jurisdictions, La Plata and Montezuma Counties that impose their own regulatory stipulations and requirements on oil and gas development within their boundaries as well.
- 4) The TRFO does not have the staff, time, budget or resources to conduct an MLP in a timely fashion.
- a. Previously I worked for an operator that was actively leasing in the Paradox Basin when the Glen Canyon – San Juan River MLP (now the San Juan MLP) was being developed by the BLM Utah State Office. The BLM State Office approved an MLP for Southeast Utah in 2011, and to date, the MLP process has still not been initiated beyond internal BLM assessments of the boundaries and justification for an MLP.

In regards to a report, I was able to attend all of the meetings and public comment sessions held on both February 11th and March 16th of 2016. I very much appreciate the professionalism and courtesy exhibited by the entire work group towards each other given the diversity of expertise and opinions that each individual brought to the table. I would also like to thank all of the BLM staff whom worked diligently to coordinate the meeting spaces and public comment sessions, as well as address the Working Group's questions and requests in a timely fashion. I am disappointed in the overall process though as I am still unclear as to ultimate purpose for bringing the Working Group together. I had hoped that the members of the Working Group were going to be able to meet on at least one additional occasion (that would not include a public comment session) in order to debrief on the public comments received and discuss our recommendations amongst the members of the group. As it stands now, it

appears that our recommendations will be included in the same category as the public comments, so the formation of the Working Group seems unnecessary as this could have been handled through direct public comment to the SWRAC. In addition, because this exercise is simply a process of making recommendations to a Council that will make their own recommendation to the BLM that will ultimately make their own decision in regards to a MLP, I regretfully have to say the whole Working Group and public meetings process feels a bit like a charade.

In conclusion, the MLP does not meet the criteria outlined by IM2010-117, the updated TRFO RMP was completed and published just over one year ago, there are numerous Federal, State and local regulations, restrictions, lease stipulations and operational requirements already in place that are applied to oil and gas development, and the TRFO does not have the resources necessary to conduct an MLP in a timely fashion. I do not believe that an MLP is warranted as it does not add any new information to what is already a very robust leasing and project review process as outlined in the TRFO RMP.

Sincerely yours,

Chris S. Lopez

Industry Representative appointed by La Plata County Commissioners

Cc: SWRAC Members – John Reams, Ernie Williams, James Dietrich, Eric Sanford, & Jimbo Buickerood
Board of County Commissioners – La Plata County

C Zeller Land Services LLC
P. O. Box 3833
Durango, CO 81302
e-mail: cjzeller@charter.net (970-259-1301)

April 8, 2016

Shannon Borders, Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management

email: sborders@blm.gov

RE: Comments regarding - BLM Master Leasing Plan, responding to letter dated 3-24-2016

Dear Shannon:

I was appointed by Montezuma County to participate in the BLM Southwest Regional Advisory Council (SWRAC) Master Leasing Plan as the industry representative. I consult for the La Plata County Energy Council, a non-profit trade organization that represents 44 members, promoting responsible natural gas development.

I attended all five meetings and one additional meeting in December conducted by Montezuma County Board of County Commissioners to listen to Montezuma residents provide input by area for the lands specific to Montezuma County. Please accept these comments:

General: I am disappointed in the process developed to determine if a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) is warranted for lands mapped in both La Plata and Montezuma Counties. Instructional Memorandum 2010-117 has specific criteria for MLP's and none of the criteria are present in the lands being considered for a MLP. Further in a letter from BLM, Lori Armstrong, received 8-16-2013 and addressed to the La Plata County Commissioner: "Given the small amount of BLM-managed surface and federal mineral interest, the lack of confirmed discovery of oil or gas, and the extremely limited number of federal leases or potential for development in this area, we found this area of western La Plata County is not a viable candidate at this time for a Master Leasing Plan." What changed? There is no requirement for this when all four of the following criteria are not met:

- A substantial portion of the area to be analyzed in the MLP is not currently leased.
- There is a majority Federal mineral interest.
- The oil and gas industry has expressed a specific interest in leasing, and there is a moderate or high potential for oil and gas confirmed by the discovery of oil and gas in the general area.
- Additional analysis or information is needed to address likely resource or cumulative impacts if oil and gas development were to occur where there are: multiple-use or natural/cultural resource conflicts; impacts to air quality; impacts on the resources or values of any unit of the National Park System, national wildlife refuge, or National Forest wilderness area, as determined after consultation or coordination with the NPS, the FWS, or the FS; or impacts on other specially designated areas.

The only change is some other conversation, outside of the purview of the public, where other influences reversed this decision and the discretion of the Field Manager, District Manager, or State Director, may have been pressured to have the SW RAC create a subcommittee to look into the idea of a MLP.

Additionally, linked below is a training event conducted by the San Juan Citizens Alliance (SJCA) and coordinated by Conservation Colorado for public input training for BLM Tres Rios Office Master Leasing Plan. The training took place on August 18, 2015 from 6 PM to 8 PM at Sunflower Theatre in Cortez, Colorado. This misleading but effective training was apparent from the first meeting to the last meeting for the sub group work. This event, and other social media notices on the SJCA Facebook page, is the sole reason why education opportunities were lost and testimony from the public was vague, emotional, not accurate and ended with overwhelming support for a MLP.

<http://www.sanjuancitizens.org/event/public-input-training-for-blm-tres-rios-office-master-leasing-plan-2/>

<https://www.facebook.com/sanjuancitizens>

I must express the disappointment I feel when a worthwhile exercise, is hijacked by activists. In the four meetings with the SW Rac sub group, I felt there was not enough consistent attendance by the appointed members to make any unified decision. It is unfortunate that many on the subgroup have knowledge about oil and gas and CO2 that they gleaned only because of the public testimony. Finally, to see this type of testimony and anger is discouraging because it tears communities apart, and pits neighbor against neighbor. I know that was not the purpose of the meetings; but certainly it seems apparent as this process concludes. This is the first reason why I do not support a MLP. If a MLP moves forward, it is my belief that these activist efforts will continue and the communities will be misinformed by the media and social media, making the process ineffective, costing the federal government money and delaying lease sales indefinitely.

According to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), mineral exploration and production, including oil and natural gas, is one of the “principle or major” uses of public lands. I am concerned that activists and La Plata County is trying to get the BLM to back away from its obligations under FLPMA and the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA). BLM has cancelled lease sales recently in Colorado because of policies put in place in 2010. The 2010 policy of converting lease sales in the state, as required by the Mineral Leasing Act, into field- and district-office specific sales has created a situation in which quarterly lease sales are not held because the parcels are not ready, even as interest remains. The February 2016 and August 2016 sale cancellations are two examples. Simply calling these sales “postponed” is another delay tactic. The reality is that when only two sales are held in a year, activists and La Plata County is in essence directing BLM Colorado to fail to meet its obligation to hold four quarterly sales.

Because of the relatively new BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP) released February 2015 and Federal Lands Policy Act (FLPMA, 1976), and specifically the high level of protections found in the RMP and various BLM Final Environmental Impact Statements, as well as Appendix [R - BLM Master Leasing Plan Policy and Description of Leasing Analysis](#) and Appendix [H - Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations](#) found in the RMP, I do not support the BLM moving forward with a Master Leasing Plan. I learned of no specific reason to conduct a Master Leasing Plan. I created an index that I used at all meetings, to see if any input provided anything that is missing in the RMP or anything that should be added to lease provisions or COA. I believe the RMP has analyzed and allocated lands that are available for lease with appropriate stipulations, mitigation and monitoring to develop fluid minerals for both BLM parcels and private parcels, with BLM minerals. There are many other documents on the BLM website that also assisted me to conclude that a MLP is not warranted by Instructional Memorandum or public input: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/energy/oil_and_gas/best_management_practices.html

Per the directive from John Reames, in letter dated, March 24, 2016, since I do not believe a MLP is warranted, I will not be providing any specific comments by Map Area. I would like to add that the Appendix H also applies to biofuels; it clearly would have been different meetings if Appendix H applied to solar and renewables.

Also, as requested in the letter are suggestions and recommendations for the Southwest Resource Advisory Council’s consideration. I suggest some additional educational information for the SW RAC Master Leasing Plan website, perhaps adding to the FAQ. Items listed below would help educate the public.

La Plata County Facts:

Fee Leasing within Boundary of proposed MLP in La Plata County (Dryside): There are over 125 leases taken by Swift Energy; there are over 340 leases taken by Red Mesa Holdings and over 100 by Energen

A non-profit trade organization promoting safe and responsible natural gas development in La Plata County.

and over 580 leases taken by GasRS Inc in Township 34N Range 12, Township 34N Range 11, Township 33N Ranges 11 and 12 for about 144 sections of land or 92,000 acres.

- 76 wells or permitted wells in the “Dryside” – not including Tribal mineral and surface – only 1 producer
- 19 are P/A
- 35 are Producing
- 4 are Shut In
- 11 are Abandoned Locations
- 2 Workovers
- 3 permits that have expired
- Dryside is primarily Mesa Verde Formation and Dakota – Dryside has no coalbed methane production.
- There are very little recreation opportunities in La Plata County. Much of the BLM land do not have public access.
- There are no fracked wells in the mapped areas 1 and 2 and 3 on fee or BLM lands – since May of 2011
- Although the Ignacio Blanco Field is outside of the proposed MLP map there have been 124 wells fracked wells with a total base water volume (in gallons) average of 137,519, including one south of the mapped area, a Tribal well.
- Swift Energy has plugged and abandoned the one Wildcat well, which never had any production.

Montezuma County Co2, Oil and Gas Fast Facts

Since June 3, 1996 to March 15, 2016 there have been 1,336 oil and gas leases taken.

From one operator, not producing CO2 here is a summary:

	<u>Gross Acres</u>	<u>Net Acres</u>
Federal	211,868	211,113
State	40,507	40,507
Fee	937,514	248,018
TOTAL	1,189,889	499,638

- Montezuma County has 121 active wells, approximately 60% are CO2.
- Approximately 10 CO2 Wells are located within the Proposed MLP Boundary none of which are located on BLM land.
- The last well drilled on Federal Land was in the MLP area was in November, 2001
- The last well drilled on Federal Land was in May, 2012 (BIA) and April, 2012 (BLM)
- The last well drilled in Montezuma County was drilled in January 2015
- Montezuma County’s First well was drilled in 1921
- McElmo Dome, one of the world’s largest deposits of nearly pure carbon dioxide (CO2) – discovered 1948.
- The primary reservoirs for oil and natural gas are the Pennsylvanian Desert Creek and Ismay Formations.
- 16 Producers currently operate in Montezuma County
- Co2 wells (KinderMorgan) are not fracked
- Within the proposed boundary there are 180,318 acres of fee mineral lands (Private surface/ Private mineral). The proposed MLP will not apply to these lands. Currently there are 39 active wells
- Within the proposed boundary there are 17,054 acers of private surface/ federal minerals. (Split estate). There are currently 9 active wells

A non-profit trade organization promoting safe and responsible natural gas development in La Plata County.

- Currently there are 56 wells producing federal minerals
- Ute Mountain Ute has 17 active wells
- Within the proposed boundary there are 23,134 acres of BLM administered lands.

RECREATION

- There are 23,134 acres of BLM lands within the proposed MLP boundary.
- There are 5,751 acres of BLM with legal public access (24.85%).
- The remainder (75.15%) is landlocked by private lands and have no legal access except by permission of adjacent landowners. This means that over 75% of the BLM land in the MLP boundary currently has virtually no recreational use.
- Phil's World is the primary recreational use area within the MLP boundary. Phil's World consists of about 2,400 acres and has about 30 miles of mixed use trails; expansion of about 25 to 30 miles of trails.

Mesa Verde National Park – Cultural Resources

Table 4.1.10: Heritage and Cultural Resources – use this to begin the educational efforts described in the Monitoring sections.

Additionally, reiterating Appendix H would be helpful and Appendix R. Adding the following would be further justification why the MLP should not move forward and help the public understand, if indeed, you also agree to make the recommendation **not** to conduct a MLP:

With the recent release of the Tres Rios Resource Management Plan (RMP), the need to proceed with a MLP which would cover the Resource Management Area is not necessary. There are ample environmental measures addressed in the RMP. For Example:

- There are 79 different oil and gas lease stipulations identified in the RMP for use by the BLM which include:
 - Specific areas where certain no surface occupancy, controlled surface use or timing limitations will be imposed.
 - No surface occupancy for a variety of aquatic and terrestrial species Colorado river cutthroat, Greenback Cutthroat Trout, bats, certain raptors, national scenic byways, cultural, historic/National Register sites, paleontological sites, recreational areas, recharge areas for groundwater resources, within a ¼ mile of reservoirs and lakes, major river corridors, plant species, steep slopes in excess of 35%, land prone to mass movement and seasonally within mapped severe winter range, winter concentration areas, and mule deer critical winter habitat to name a few.
 - Operational Constraints: Oil and gas surface operations over shallow (<2,000 feet) potentially usable groundwater (<10,000 total dissolved solids) are required to:
 - Pitless, self-contained drilling systems, In the completion of an oil, gas, injection, disposal, or service well, where acidizing or fracture processes are used,
 - no deleterious substances shall be permitted to pollute subsurface water,
 - flowback and stimulation fluids would be contained within tanks that are placed on a well pad or in a lined, bermed area,
 - Fluids, additives, and other materials used for drilling and completion operations must be protective of public health and the environment in the areas where they are used.
 - For well where a multi-stage high volume hydraulic fracturing is anticipated, the operators shall indicate the method used to handle, transport, and dispose of the recovered fluids.
 - Controlled surface use stipulations for surface occupancy in the vicinity of Columbian sharp tailed grouse and Gunnison sage grouse,

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- monitoring water quality (surface and groundwater in the vicinity of proposed well pads;
- Timing Limitations for certain wildlife species
- Strict Air Quality requirements regarding emissions of certain equipment used during operations.
- A statement from the RMP which reads:
 - The FEIS that accompanies this RMP includes analysis necessary for offering specific lands for lease. The analysis discusses the availability of the TRFO for oil and gas leases. In addition, it describes necessary protective stipulations to be attached to leases on SJNF surface lands, TRFO surface lands, and non-federal surface where the oil and gas estate is owned by the BLM.
 - The RMP does not authorize surface disturbance for oil and gas exploration or development. Surface-disturbing activities on leases will require additional environmental analysis and decisions.
 - The oil and gas leasing decision in this RMP will not apply to existing oil and gas leases. When those existing leases expire or terminate, the leasing decision in this RMP will apply to any new leases issued.
- The RMP has an existing MLP. Appendix R of the RMP addressed the criteria required to conduct a MLP and specifically addressed what lands would be available in the Paradox Leasing Analysis Area and provides the following:
 - The inclusion of currently leased lands, Wilderness Study Areas, similar landscapes, and areas stipulated as No Surface Occupancy (NSO), only 37% of the federal lands are available for leasing and not protected from surface occupancy.
 - Out of the 269, 226 acres that would be available for lease (and that are not currently leased), 47% of the area includes NSO stipulations to protect resources. An additional 43% have controlled surface use stipulations and Timing Limitations, with the remaining 11% having standard lease terms.
 - Within this analysis are details regarding how resources are being protected and a summary of protections.
 - Appendix R clearly demonstrate the RMP has already performed the requisite MLP in the Paradox portion of the study area.

In summary, there are a multitude of lease stipulations and operational requirements which already exist in the RMP. As a result of the Hermosa Creek Watershed, there are areas in La Plata County where leases were permanently withdrawn. For the remaining acreages left, it is time to strike a balance with oil and gas development and resource protection. A MLP will not add any new information to what is already a very robust leasing and project review process outlined in the RMP.

Sincerely,



Christi Zeller
Energy Representative appointed by Montezuma County Commissioners

C: Board of County Commissioners – Montezuma County

Section	Page Number	Topic	Language
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Additional

2.21
Alternative
Energy:
Geothermal,
Wind, Solar,
Biomass
II-122

Renewable -
Biomass

Allocated BLM lands as open to be considered for geothermal leasing or closed for geothermal leasing, and identified those National Forest System lands that are legally open or closed to leasing; Developed a reasonably foreseeable development scenario that indicated a potential for 12,210 megawatts (MW) of electrical generating capacity from 244 power plants by 2025, plus additional direct uses of geothermal resources in the western states; and Adopted stipulations, BMPs, and procedures for geothermal leasing and development.

These actions were implemented as BLM resource management plan amendments for **114 land use plans**. The ROD amended the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (BLM 1985) to show **496,439 acres open and 146,597 acres closed to geothermal leasing** within the TRFO's jurisdiction. The amendments adopted the stipulations and leasing procedures provided in Chapter 2 and the BMPs provided in Appendix B of the PEIS. Specific areas of BLM-administered lands have not been identified for utility-scale electrical production from geothermal sources in Colorado.

Appendix H Applies here as well.

2.21
Alternative
Energy:
Geothermal,
Wind, Solar,
Biomass
II-122

II-122

Renewable -
Solar

This Approved RMP carried forward decisions from the Solar Energy Development PEIS and ROD of October 12, 2012 (BLM and DOE 2012), signed by the BLM in cooperation with the DOE. The ROD excluded all lands within the planning area for solar development for projects 20 MW or greater, except for 12,105 acres of variance areas within the TRFO's jurisdiction. Solar applications for projects 20 MW or greater filed within the variance areas are subject to the requirements in the ROD, including required design features.

Geothermal
2.21.1 Stipulations included in the Geothermal Resource Leasing PEIS and ROD (BLM and USFS 2008) serve as the minimal level of protection and are adopted as applicable to this RMP. The Authorized Officer retains the discretion to issue stipulations in order to mitigate the impacts on other land uses or resource objectives. In general, oil and gas lease stipulations identified



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Durango Area 15 Office
151 East 16th Street
Durango, Colorado 81301
P 970.247.0855 | F 970.382.6672

Ms. Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave
Montrose, CO 81401
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

April 8, 2016

RE: Request for Comment on MLP by SWRAC Oil and Gas Sub-group Members

Dear Ms. Borders:

CPW received the letter from SWRAC Chairman John Reams requesting comments from each group member on the potential Master Leasing Plan and announcing that the public comment period would close on April 8th.

CPW submitted a letter dated 10 February 2016 to the Oil and Gas Sub-group outlining issues that have been raised in previous lease sale comments to the BLM. CPW feels that an MLP in western La Plata and Montezuma Counties could help address those concerns. As discussed in our 10 February 2016 letter, the existing stipulations in the RMP do not:

- limit the density of surface facilities or provide caps on surface disturbance sufficient to protect sensitive wildlife habitats;
- adequately protect land conservation values associated with conservation easements;
- identify the site-specific BMPs necessary to protect the unique resource values associated with the proposed lease parcels;
- adequately address mitigation of residual adverse impacts to wildlife resources;
- adequately define site-specific exception, waiver, and modification criteria sufficient to provide certainty to landowners, oil and gas operators, resources agencies, and the public.

Chairman Reams requested specific comments for each of the BLM parcels included in the proposed MLP area to identify what additional protections are needed beyond those currently found in the Tres Rios Field Office RMP. Most of the issues of concern identified by CPW apply to nearly every parcel (with the exception of protecting land conservation values associated with conservation easements). Due to the number of parcels involved and the abbreviated timeline, CPW cannot provide detailed comments at this time outlining the issues that apply to each parcel. Meeting that request would require a detailed and time intensive GIS analysis to identify deficiencies on a parcel-by-parcel level.



CPW would be happy to work with BLM staff to address this deficiency if the RAC would like that analysis.

I would also like to offer a few comments related to process. Based on the group's first meeting, my understanding was that the Oil and Gas Sub-group members would listen to public input but would also have an opportunity for more in-depth group discussions. That type of conversation happened briefly at the last public meeting in Hesperus as we went around the table and gave our thoughts on MLP. Overall, the group seemed ready to have at least one more meeting that would have allowed us to further those discussions, to consider other potential options, etc. I was surprised to see that we would not have that opportunity.

Another point related to process is having both the public comment period and the group comment period close on the same date. Again, my understanding was that our group was supposed to listen and consider public comment throughout the process. Group members will not have an opportunity to see comments that come in on the last day of the comment period because they are also trying to meet that same deadline. Is the RAC going to distribute a summary of all public comments to the Sub-group members and the public?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact me at 970-247-0855.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Thorpe #997". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "T".

Matt Thorpe
Area Wildlife Manger- Durango

Durango Dog Ranch
Gregg Dubit * P.O. Box 29 * Hesperus CO, 81326
970-759-1741
www.durangodogranch.com

4/6/16

Dear Southwest Resource Advisory Council & Tres Rios BLM,

The Durango Dog Ranch has operated under a special use permit on the Tres Rios BLM and San Juan National Forest for the past 20 years, administrated under the Dolores Office. Our business offers seasonal, 1 hour, 1/2 day, full day adventures by dog sled, over the snow. We have a multi trail permit spanning Dolores, Montezuma, La Plata and San Juan Counties, and we hold additional special use contracts with Purgatory Ski Resort and the Town of Silverton, at Molas Lake Park. Operating a business which uses public lands is a special privilege for all special use permittees. We pay a percentage of earned proceeds back to the National Forest Service/BLM. We guide local and visiting tourists on outdoor adventures in one of the most beautiful, culturally rich and unique parts of the United States.

As a member of the 'Sub-Group' representing recreational outfitting on public lands I feel it is safe to say that all recreational, hunting, fishing... outfitters have a special regard and a special relationship with our public lands, which goes back to 'leaving no trace' so that others may enjoy the same wonderful experiences on our public lands. In addition to owning and operating the Durango Dog Ranch, I have a degree in Forest Resource Management, from the University of N.H. Thus I am acutely aware that the BLM and Forest Service are charged with managing/balancing the timber and mineral resources of our public domain, alongside with recreational, hydrologic and biologic concerns.

The rise of recreation as a dominant use on our public lands has grown dramatically in the last 50 years, and the economic impact of recreational dollars in our communities (to include lodging, dining, etc.) is on par, if not exceeding extractive industries in parts of Southwest Colorado, look at employment numbers at our ski area, the train, Mesa Verde National Park & Concessions, Lodging and Restaurants, sporting goods retail... when comparing recreational economic impacts to extractive industries (logging mining, oil and gas).

I came to this process with an open mind: Resource Management Plan (RMP) vs. Master Leasing Plan (MLP): Is the RMP adequate, or is the MLP necessary? Throughout the 4 meetings it became clear that the RMP, which was recently completed, but was built using evaluation, data, & inputs which are dated (over 10 years old). **The vast majority of the public comments support a Master Leasing Plan.** The thematic concerns in the public comments pointed to deficiencies in the RMP: Water Quality (pre and post testing), Water quantity sourcing, Water for Agriculture, Big Game Migration routes and potential impacts, Siesmic event (earthquake) potential from both hydraulic fracturing and from deep injection to; Cultural Sites, and to reservoir dams at Jackson Lake, McPhee, and Ridges Basin, and the new Long Hollow reservoirs,

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Surface Occupancy on the Mesa Verde Escarpment, & at Phils' World, and many comments regarding concern over Waivers and Exceptions, plus the economic impacts of recreation on our public lands, not to mention the absence of multi cultural stakeholder involvement on the RAC and on the Sub-Group.

In closing, many comments were made (by RAC members) that the private surface and private minerals would be developed/extracted 1st, and that this potential MLP will apply only to federal surface, and to federal minerals. Given that oil and gas as a commodity are in large supply, with very low value at this time, and that as supply drops and value increases, private surface will be developed 1st. Given all of the above, **I recommend that the BLM and the SWRAC proceed with a Master Leasing Plan.** Given the public concern and the apparent deficiencies in the Resource Management Plan a Master Leasing Plan will provide the opportunity to address the multiple concerns and deficiencies mentioned above.

Our public lands in Southwest Colorado are unique, culturally rich, and a large part of why most of us live here, and why thousands visit each year at every season. This public land must be managed with the utmost regard, care, and thorough evaluation. For all of the above reasons I recommend that the BLM proceed with the more thorough Master Leasing Plan, process.

Sincerely, Gregg Dubit



JAMES R. LAMBERT
P.O. Box 279
Pleasant View, Colorado 81331

March 29, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: Tres Rios Proposed MLP

I would like to go on record as opposing implementation of this proposed MLP for the following reasons:

1. It is my understanding that the purpose of the proposed MLP would be to correct deficiencies that might exist in the new RMP that was finished in Feb., 2015. After studying the RMP, I find it very difficult to identify any deficiencies that could be imagined. If anything, I would consider the RMP over regulatory of the oil and gas industry already. However, the current RMP is fact, so I would consider it to be more than adequate to protect the environment and the health and welfare of the land and the citizens of the area. I have read most of the public statements that have been made and I am at a loss to really find any of these statements that addresses any real deficiency. The only statements that come close to doing this are asking for the exceptions granted to the BLM officer in charge, to make depending on presently unknown circumstances, be eliminated. The intent appears to take away any discretion that is necessary for good management. To do this could cut both ways. The intent is to not allow the officer in charge the ability give any preferential treatment, but in so doing it would also stop the officer from imposing a more restrictive measure should he or she feel its necessity. I believe the BLM personnel have to be allowed to do their job and be accountable for it.
2. While I am more concerned with Montezuma County, in which I live and am on the Board of County Commissioners, I feel that the proposed MLP is unnecessary in both LaPlata and Montezuma counties, I feel it is especially unneeded in Montezuma County. Economically we in Montezuma County subscribe to the multiple use philosophy that I believe that the BLM is obligated to. While we have considerable recreation opportunities here, we also have grazing, some timber cutting and we rely very heavily on the oil and gas activity in our county. Living very close to the Kinder Morgan CO2 expansion in the northern portion of our county, I have seen how the restrictions that already exist on BLM land have made it virtually impossible for Kinder Morgan to work on BLM land. They have had to go to considerably more expense and farmers in the

area have had to experience well drilling and pipelines on their farm ground. Of necessity, there would have been some of this on farm ground either way, but had it not been virtually impossible for Kinder Morgan to do part of their work on BLM land, it would have been unnecessary for so much of the farmland to be disturbed. The argument that increasing regulations will make it easier on the oil and gas companies because they will have better assurance as to what to expect doesn't cut it. Very obviously, any further restrictions will reduce, or eliminate any further development, development that is needed by the county.

3. I believe that implementing a MLP is imposing a very large and unnecessary financial burden on the taxpayers, not only of our county but of the country in general. Probably the most prevalent answer we, as the County Board of Commissioners, receive from representatives of the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service when we see things that need to be done on public lands is that they don't have enough money in their budget to accomplish these tasks. To add to the budget something of this magnitude that is totally unnecessary only exacerbates the problem in our eyes. It also takes away time from our local public lands representatives that could be much better spent on the management they are already charged with. The time that has already been spent on this proposal by public lands officials and members of the public at large, that have volunteered their time, has pretty much been a waste the best that I can see it.

Sincerely,
James R. Lambert
Montezuma County
Commissioner, Dist. 1



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: BLM Sub-group report

1 message

Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Mon, Apr 11, 2016 at 11:12 AM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kokopelli Bike** <pete.kokopelli@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Apr 8, 2016 at 8:25 PM

Subject: BLM Sub-group report

To: sborders@blm.gov

As I am writing this report to the BLM Resource Advisory Council, I am struck by the lack of direction and guidance there has been through this whole process which is now culminating in the form of this recommendation. How will the decision ultimately be made by the RAC? What weight will this recommendation be given compared to the many numerous comments made by the public? All the uncertainty and confusion aside, I believe that there is a duty to see this process through as we have been instructed to do.

As a local business owner, whose business depends on and is vitally linked to outdoor recreation on the public lands that are under consideration for the proposed Master Leasing Plan, I unequivocally recommend that the Master Leasing Plan process be started by the BLM. The MLP could help focus the BLM's future oil and gas leasing in a way that would ensure these important Federal lands in our local landscape be developed in smart and forward thinking way. Furthermore, it is my opinion that even though the Resource Management Plan is far reaching, it has a few short comings that have been brought to the attention of the sub-group that I have served on.

First, I believe that the BLM, in its recently released Resource Management Plan has left some gaps and possible loop holes considering Oil and Gas leasing on the BLM parcel that contains the Phil's World trail system and the proposed trail expansion. As it is part of a special recreation designation by the BLM, it has already been recognized by the BLM as important to the area. Clearly, anyone who drives by the parking lot on a warm Saturday afternoon can attest, it is also well used and major driving factor for this economy. I believe the complete protection of this parcel is crucial for the development of Montezuma County and its cities and towns therein. Currently, there are many stipulations put forth by the RMP that protect the nature of this property, but none of these mention the trail system or specifically the location of the single track in relation to possible well sites. Yes, there is always out cry if there is an eagle's nest or a cultural site, but what about the trail itself? Is there a set back from existing trails guiding where new wells could possibly be drilled? Is the view shed of the trail user taken into consideration? What about a stipulation for new access roads and where they might cross the existing and proposed trails? I will tell you from my experience that if there is oil and gas development on the Phil's World parcel and it is done without consideration of the above concerns, the trail will cease to be used. After all, the major components that make the Phil's World trail system so popular are its wilderness feel, its uninterrupted views of Mesa Verde and its the sense of solitude the user gets while enjoying the trail. I believe the MLP could address these concerns that the RMP has overlooked and protect this gem of a landscape and the trails within ensuring the same outdoor experience for future trail users, the continued broad and diverse growth of the local economy and quality of life of the local residents (100 mile radius at least!). It is time to start viewing lands like this and the trails that they contain as just as important of an asset as the oil or gas that may hide below the surface.

Secondly, there have been many comments about the permissive language that permeates the RMP. Language like "exceptions, modifications" etc. may be common place in federal documents but many local citizens have objected to such text. Leaving waivers and exceptions to current RMP stipulations up to the local land manager is just not good enough for local people who concerned about protecting the lands they cherish. Also, why not engage a public comment period in the form of an MLP so people can express themselves and their concerns at

one time to build a cohesive and balanced leasing plan instead of using the existing framework of public comment for each waiver/exception that comes along. Anyway, who has time to be that engaged in the process to monitor the federal government? In some ways, I believe local land managers are banking on the apathy and ignorance of the local constituency. If anything has come from this process that is crystal clear is that people want a MLP and they want to be involved. Why make it harder for people to be engaged unless the end result is that you would rather not hear them?

Finally, many folks have spoken about their concern with our water resources. Whether it be from an agricultural standpoint or a general health and well being aspect, it is clearly the next big crisis that faces us all in the West. The reckless use of our most precious resource to bolster oil and gas revenues must be stopped. It will be the demise of all if we waste our clean water on oil and gas production. I believe that an MLP might be a tool that could limit the misuse of our most essential and prized asset of all.

In conclusion, I don't know how much this will be weighted. I am not an oil and gas person or someone who is versed in federal regulations concerning this. To put a person such as myself in this position to make a judgement on whether an MLP is needed or not is almost ludicrous. I have absorbed from the public however, that there is great concern over these public lands under consideration for the MLP and that overwhelmingly they have recommended that the process be looked into by the BLM. So, therefore if the RAC was to make a recommendation to the BLM that represents the citizens that have commented, then they should do so in favor of pursuing the MLP.

Sincerely,

Pete Eschallier

—

Pete Eschallier - Owner
Kokopelli Bike and Board
130 West Main
Cortez, CO 81321
[\(970\) 565-4408](tel:(970)565-4408)
www.kokopellibike.com

—

Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401
970-240-5399



TRFO_OilandGas, BLM_CO <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

Fwd: SWRAC comments

1 message

Borders, Shannon <sborders@blm.gov>

Wed, Apr 6, 2016 at 1:58 PM

To: BLM_CO TRFO_OilandGas <blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Becky Oliver** <rboliver@ftitel.net>

Date: Tue, Apr 5, 2016 at 7:53 PM

Subject: SWRAC comments

To: sborders@blm.gov

After attending 4 out of 5 RAC meetings and speaking with dozens of residents of Montezuma County, it is my opinion that an MLP on the BLM is unnecessary and futile. The current rules and regulations for drilling and resource procurement seem to me to be more than adequate. During the meetings I attended, the same activists attended every meeting and are against any kind of drilling. It appeared as if they all have a "not in my area" mentality, despite the fact that the majority of them arrived in vehicles burning fuel. I would be agree with the implementation of a NSO on Phil's World to protect the bike trails.

Rodney Oliver
SWRAC Sub-group member

—
Shannon Borders
Public Affairs Specialist
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