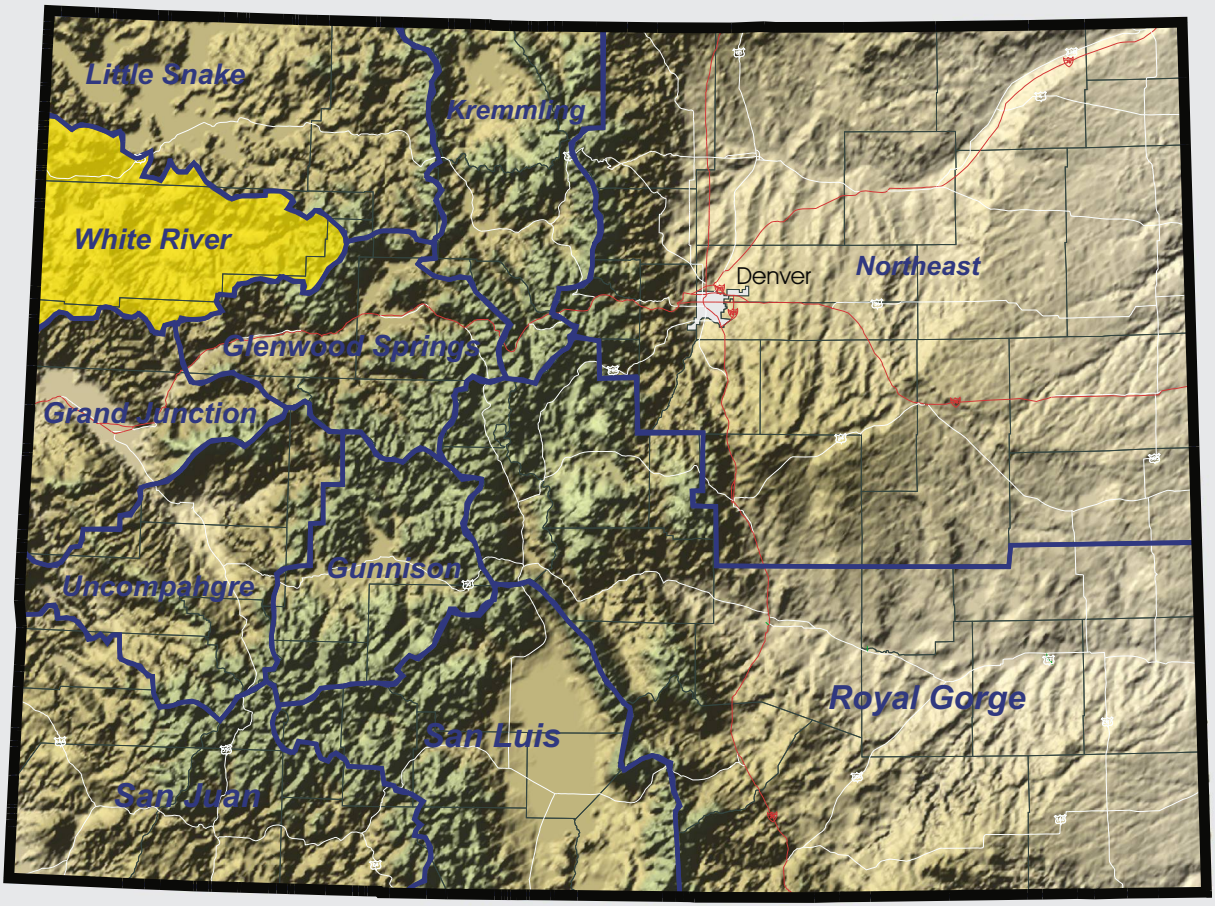
US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

White River

Resource Management Plan Amendments



2001 Oil Shale
Revocation Plan Amendment
EA/DR/FONSI

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RECORD

NUMBER: CO-GJFO-01-81-EA

PROJECT NAME : Oil Shale Withdrawal Revocation/RMP Amendments

ECOREGION/PLANNING UNIT: Northwest Colorardo

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: The oil shale withdrawals proposed for revocation are within the jurisdictional boundaries of the White River Field Office, Glenwood Springs Field Office and the Grand Junction Field Office and are located in the following townships. T2N, R98W; T2N, R99W; T2N, R100W; T1N, R95W; T1N, R96W; T1N, R97W; T1N, R98W; T1N, R99W; T1N, R100W; T1S, R94W; T1S, R95W; T1S, R96W; T1S, R97W; T1S, R98W; T1S, R99W; T1S, R100W; T2S, R94W; T2S, R95W; T2S, R96W; T2S, R97W; T2S, R98W; T2S, R99W; T2S, R100W; T3S, R94W; T3S, R95W; T3S, R96W; T3S, R97W; T3S, 98W; T3S, R99W; T3S, R100W; T4S, R94W; T4S, R95W; T4S, R96W; T4S, R97W; T4S, R98W; T4S, R99W; T4S, R100W; T4S, R101W; T5S, R93W; T5S, R94W; T5S, R95W; T5S, R96W; T5S, R97W; T5S, R98W; T5S, R99W; T5S, R100W; T5S, R101W; T6S, R94W; T6S, R95W; T6S, R96W; T6S, R97W; T6S, R98W; T6S, R99W; T6S, R100W; T6S, R101W; T7S, R96W; T7S, R97W; T7S, R98W; T7S, R99W; T7S, R100W; T7S, R101W; T8S, R99W; T8S, R100W.

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

BACKGROUND: Oil shale deposits were originally withdrawn in 1930 (Executive Order 5327) by President Herbert Hoover, subject to valid existing rights. The withdrawal temporarily withdrew the deposits of oil shale and lands containing such deposits owned by the United States from lease or other disposal for the purposes of investigation, examination, and classification, in order to protect the oil shale resource, pending classification. Oil shale was determined to be leasable in 1954 (retroactive to 1920). A later withdrawal order issued in 1968 (Public Land Order 4522) added to the protection of oil shale resources on these same lands, permanently withdrawing them from appropriation under the mining law and sodium leasing, unless it could be shown that sodium mining would not cause significant damage to oil shale beds. Since oil shale and associated minerals (nacholite, sodium, and dawsonite) have been determined to be leasable, and current policy and procedures provide for adequate protection of the oil shale resource, the oil shale withdrawals are no longer needed to administer public lands. Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires BLM to review existing withdrawals to determine if they are still needed for their original purpose. As these withdrawal orders have, over time, been recognized as being no longer needed, they have been revoked in part on several occasions, lifting the withdrawals from some public lands.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

PROPOSED ACTION: The BLM proposes to amend three Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to revoke withdrawals placed on BLM administered lands for the purpose of protecting the oil shale resource. The three RMPs are the White River RMP, Glenwood Springs RMP, and Grand Junction RMP, all in Colorado. This proposed action only pertains to oil shale lands withdrawn under Executive Order 5327 dated April 15, 1930, as amended, and Public Land Order 4522 dated September 13, 1968, as amended. These two oil shale withdrawal Orders are no longer needed because existing regulations, policies, and land use decisions provide adequate protection and conservation of oil shale resources. The proposed action is to revoke these two withdrawal orders in their entirety.

The proposed revocation involves approximately 900,000 acres of BLM administered land, all in Northwestern Colorado.

A: ALTERNATIVE - NO ACTION: The no action alternative involves leaving the two oil shale resource protection withdrawal orders, EO 5327 and PLO 4522, in effect.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: Presently, the proposed action is not in conformance with the three respective RMPs.

Name of Plan: White River Resource Area RMP

Date Approved: May 29, 1996

Page: 3-29

(Page 3-29) The objective for withdrawals is "to eliminate unnecessary segregations of public lands." With respect to oil shale withdrawals, ..."recommendations are as follows: Oil Shale - Continue, modify to allow for exchanges and other discretionary actions."

New language under the RMP amendment with respect to withdrawals will be - "Oil Shale - Revoke EO 5327 and PLO 4522 in their entirety."

Name of Plan: Grand Junction Resource Area RMP

Date Approved: January 29, 1987

Page: 2-6

(Page 2-6)..."Continue to close areas under existing withdrawals (124,443 acres)."

(Page 2-6)..."Close to location: Existing withdrawals 124,443 acres....."

New language under the RMP amendment with respect to withdrawals will be - "Revoke oil shale withdrawals EO 5327 and PLO 4522 in their entirety."

Name of Plan: Glenwood Springs Resource Area RMP

Date Approved: January 3, 1984

Pages: 12, 13

(Page 12)..."Continue to allow mineral exploration and development on lands not withdrawn for other uses or restricted to mineral activity."

(Page 13)..."Table 2...Closed to Mineral Location...Oil shale withdrawal..."

New language under the RMP amendment with respect to withdrawals will be - "Revoke oil shale withdrawals EO 5327 and PLO 4522 in their entirety."

The proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with the above plans (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3).

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: The purpose for the original withdrawals, to protect oil shale resources, is no longer a valid purpose since the oil shale resources are adequately protected with current BLM policy and procedures. Since the withdrawals are no longer needed, removing them will add to the efficiency of administering public lands, simplify the public lands records, and remove unnecessary confusion created for public land users by the withdrawals.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT:

LAND STATUS

Approximately 900,000 acres of public land are withdrawn under EO 5327 and PLO 4522. These withdrawals are carried on all public land records, maps, and other authorizations or documents where a withdrawal notation would be appropriate.

No agency manager or staff in the affected jurisdictions has indicated a need or desire to utilize and/or retain the withdrawals.

MINERALS/GEOLOGY

Descriptions of the geology and mineral resources in the area of the withdrawals, which BLM proposes to revoke, were prepared to assist in writing this EA. They are available upon request to the BLM and are titled Mineral Resource Assessment - Revocation of the Oil Shale Withdrawal Within the White River Resource Area of Piceance Creek Basin, Colorado and Mineral Report - Revocation of oil shale withdrawal within the Grand Junction Resource Area & Glenwood Springs Resource Area. Categories of minerals are identified below.

Oil Shale: Oil shale is present in considerable quantities of varying quality

throughout the withdrawn area and, while there have been several attempts at development, none have been successful. Oil shale is considered a leasable mineral under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 and as such is administered by the Department of the Interior using leasing policies and regulations. Along with withdrawing the oil shale resources from metalliferous mining, the land was also withdrawn from sodium leasing, unless it could be done without adversely affecting oil shale values.

Regulations contained in 43 CFR 3500 identify lease and mine plan constraints, respectively, that control development on a lease. Individual lease stipulations can also be tailored to meet the intent of the PLO 4522, as is the case with the existing sodium leases. The White River RMP identifies a multi mineral zone (oil shale, nahcolite, and dawsonite) in which future leasing is reserved for multi mineral leasing. This also meets the intent of wording contained in the preamble of PLO 4522.

Sodium Minerals: The primary sodium minerals of interest are nahcolite and dawsonite. They are disposed of by leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. They occur within the saline zone in association with oil shale and are concentrated within the northern part of the withdrawn area in the lower part of the Parachute Creek Member. Nahcolite is a source of sodium bicarbonate which is used for baking soda, cattle feed additives, fire extinguishers and other chemical products. The nahcolite deposit is presently being developed through solution mining methods.

Dawsonite is a source of alumina that can be processed into aluminum. Aluminum minerals are generally appropriated by location of claims under the 1872 mining law. However, since dawsonite is also a valuable sodium mineral and found in association with oil shale, dawsonite has been ruled a leasable mineral by the Department of the Interior.

Zeolites: The mineral analcime is a sodium-aluminum silicate that occurs in tuffs and oil shales of the Green River Formation. Certain zeolite minerals are locatable under the 1872 Mining Law. However, the sodium zeolites are likely chiefly valuable for sodium and therefore leasable under the Mineral Leasing Act. The occurrences of zeolites in the Piceance Creek Basin are minimal and have no current economic potential.

Oil and Natural Gas: Oil and gas resources within the oil shale withdrawals are leasable under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. The withdrawal area has been classified by the USGS as prospectively valuable for oil and gas. Most of the gas resource underlying the Green River Formation and oil shale deposits has not yet been drilled because of the presence of steep terrain, lack of access, and the higher costs for drilling deeper wells. Drilling and gas production has generally been limited to the areas along the Roan Creek and Parachute Creek drainages, and near Anvil Points. In the Roan Creek area, wells are located

along Roan Creek, Carr Creek, Kimball Creek, and Dry Fork, with gas production from the Dakota Sandstone. In the Parachute Area, numerous wells have been drilled along Parachute Creek and on the slopes north of Mount Callahan. These wells produce from the Mesaverde Formation. Wells in the Anvil Points area produce gas from the Wasatch and Mesaverde formations. Although some of the wells near Parachute Creek and Anvil Points are located inside the withdrawal area, these wells are located on Wasatch benches and slopes below the oil shale exposures.

In the northern part of the withdrawal area, dissolution cavities and fractures occurring in the Parachute Creek Member occasionally produce shows of natural gas. The source of the gas is likely from the natural decomposition of kerogen in the oil shale. Although the quantities are low in volume, they sometimes contain high pressures which represent more of a hazardous nuisance to other mineral development than an economic occurrence of natural gas.

Coal: Coal is a leasable mineral. Coal beds occur within one or more zones in the lower part of the Mesaverde Formation. The Cameo zone coal beds are the thickest and have the most economic potential in the Book Cliffs coal field. All coal beds underlying the Green River formation in the withdrawal area are projected to be at depths of 4,000 to 7,000 feet, which is too deep to be considered economically minable today or within the foreseeable future.

Mineral Materials: Most of the withdrawal area is open to mineral material disposal, although there are some areas closed for protection of sensitive resources. Some materials from the Uinta Formation are hard enough to have been used for Rip Rap and decorative stone, from sources primarily located adjacent to major roads within the basin.

Locatable Minerals: A check was made on January 20, 2000, for any claims listed as active. The only claims inside the withdrawal were a few old oil shale claims that had pending legal decisions, the claimant having appealed an Administrative Law Judge's ruling to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. The claims are currently in the District Court as civil actions. The withdrawal precluded filing of additional claims beyond those mentioned.

The withdrawal area formations are unlikely to contain economic deposits of locatable minerals. The withdrawal area does not contain any known locatable minerals or development activities. No upstream source of gold is present which would result in the deposition of placer deposits. It is estimated there are at least 10,000 feet of sedimentary rocks overlying any potential mineral-bearing Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rocks.

WILDERNESS

A check of oil shale withdrawal land proposed for revocation indicates that one WSA,

Black Mountain in the White River Field Office jurisdiction, and two Wilderness Inventory Units, Southeast Cliffs and Northeast Cliffs in the Glenwood Springs Field Office jurisdiction, contain some oil shale withdrawal land. Black Mountain WSA contains an estimated 650 acres, Southeast Cliffs Wilderness Inventory Unit contains an estimated 640 acres, and Northeast Cliffs Wilderness Inventory Unit contains an estimated 820 acres.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

PROPOSED ACTION

LAND STATUS

The proposed action to revoke the two withdrawals, as amended, in their entirety, would put the BLM in compliance with requirements of Section 204 of FLPMA by revoking withdrawals that are no longer needed for their intended purpose.

Revoking the subject withdrawals would simplify the public land records, saving BLM personnel and public users time and effort associated with maintaining and tracking the withdrawal orders as they go about normal business. There would also be less confusion on the part of those using public land records by simplifying the records.

Since the withdrawals are shown on maps used both internally as well as by the public, there have always been questions by those using the maps as to what the withdrawal means. The proposed action would remove a certain amount of public and agency confusion for those using maps.

Also, lifting the withdrawals would change the land status allowing for other actions, such as exchanges, to occur. Any such actions would be subject normal environmental review.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Vaughn Hackett 7-24-01

MINERALS/GEOLOGY

Leasable Minerals: These minerals are administered under the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act with regulations and policies in place to dictate their protection and development.

Oil Shale: Revoking the subject withdrawals will have no impact on the oil shale resource or its development. Revoking the withdrawals would open the lands to location of mining claims, but these lands are not known to contain minable concentrations of metalliferous minerals. There are plenty of safeguards in place to protect oil shale from development of other minerals.

Along with withdrawing public lands from mineral location, PLO 4522 also withdraws the lands from sodium leasing, unless the Secretary finds that development of the sodium deposits would not remove significant amounts of organic matter and would not cause significant damage to the oil shale beds. Revoking PLO 4522 would have no impact on the Secretary's ability to meet the sodium deposits' leasing and development requirements since it is presently being done outside of this PLO. Using regulations contained in 43 CFR 3500, existing sodium leases and associated mine plans have been approved with individual lease stipulations tailored to meet the intent of the withdrawals proposed for revocation. Also, the White River RMP identifies a multi mineral zone (oil shale, nahcolite, and dawsonite) which meets the intent of wording contained in PLO 4522.

It is apparent that 43 CFR regulations and leasing policies in place can adequately meet the intent and purpose of the subject withdrawals.

Sodium Minerals: As described above in the "Oil Shale" section, revoking the two withdrawal orders will have no impact on sodium minerals.

Zeolites: Non-sodium zeolites are not known to occur in economic concentrations within the withdrawal. Any concern over these type minerals would be covered by existing regulations and leasing policies and revoking the withdrawals would have no impact on these minerals.

Oil and Natural Gas: Oil and gas development would not be affected by the revocation. The withdrawal orders never affected oil and gas leasing and development. Current requirements for wells located in oil shale deposits stipulate that casing be set and cemented through the entire oil shale interval for protecting the oil shale resource. These requirements would remain unchanged.

Coal: Revoking the withdrawal orders would have no impact on coal.

Mineral Materials: The withdrawal did not affect saleable minerals, and the revocation will have no affect on mineral materials.

Locatable Minerals: Both withdrawal orders withdrew the lands from mineral location. Since the withdrawal area does not contain any known locatable minerals, the revocation would not result in new exploration and development.

Since the Mining Law of 1872 doesn't preclude mining claim location on non-mineralized lands, there is some potential for new claims located for speculative or nuisance purposes. Based on the lack of locatable mineral values, coupled with the claim filing and maintenance fee requirements, the number of speculative or nuisance claims are expected to be small. While this possibility is

small, if it did occur in a particularly sensitive area, BLM has the ability to deal with the situation through various means, including validity examinations or protective withdrawal.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Bruce Fowler 7-24-01

WILDERNESS

Please note the Locatable Minerals sections above under Affected Environment and Environmental Impacts.

Lifting the withdrawal could result in a small number of mining claims being filed on the estimated 900,000 acres of withdrawn lands. It is possible that some of these claims could be filed in the Black Mountain WSA or the Southeast and Northeast Wilderness Inventory Units, all of which contain some of the withdrawn land.

Since there is no evidence of locatable minerals in the withdrawal, the likelihood of a claim being filed in the WSA or Wilderness Inventory Units is extremely unlikely. The three wilderness related areas are presently partially open to mining claims, but none have been filed on the open lands near or adjacent to withdrawn lands within the WSA or the Wilderness Inventory Units. Any claims filed would probably be in the category of speculative or nuisance claims.

In the case of the Black Mountain WSA, its management is covered by BLM's Wilderness Interim Management Policy (IMP). A WSA is considered under wilderness review, governed by IMP, and under this policy "will continue to be subject to location." As the IMP states, "Location methods and subsequent assessment work will be restricted to operations which the BLM determines satisfies the non impairment criteria." Should a mining claim be filed in the Black Mountain WSA, BLM will assure that Impairment does not occur. Therefore, impairment will not occur as a result of the proposed action.

In the case of Southeast and Northeast Wilderness Inventory Units, BLM will administer these units in such a way that no action results in "irreversible or irretrievable" impacts. Therefore, given the extremely unlikely possibility that a mineral claim would be filed and the ability of BLM to use tools such as validity examinations to limit actions in sensitive areas, plus BLM being committed to not allowing an action that would create "irreversible or irretrievable impacts", the proposed action will not have irreversible or irretrievable impacts on these areas.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Larry Porter 8-06-01

MITIGATION MEASURES:

None required.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

Air Quality: Air Quality will not be affected by this proposal

Signature of specialist: /s/ David P. Stevens 7-24-01

Cultural Resources: Cultural resources will not be affected by this proposal.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Larry Porter 8-06-01

Environmental Justice: There are no disproportionately high and/or adverse human health or environmental effects proposed with this project on minority populations and low-income populations.

Signature of specialist /s/ David P. Stevens 7-24-01

Floodplains, Wetlands, Riparian Zones, and Alluvial Valleys: These resources would not be adversely effected by this administrative proposal.

Signature of specialist: /s/ David Smith 1 August 2001

Invasive, nonnative species: (weeds) These species of plants will not be affected by the proposed action.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Larry Porter 8-06-01

Native American Religious Concerns: This administrative type action will have no affect on Native American Religious Concerns.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Larry Porter 8-06-01

Prime and Unique Farmlands: There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands affected by this proposal.

Signature of specialist /s/ David P. Stevens 7-24-01

Threatened and Endangered Species: The area involved in the proposed action contains the Green River Formation, which supports rare plant species found only there. Some of these are on the BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List. The proposed action would not have any on-the-ground effects on these plants. There are no species listed for Endangered Species Act protection that would be affected either.

Signature of Specialist: /s/ Ron Lambeth 7-24–01

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: This is an administrative action and would have no

direct impact on solid or hazardous wastes. Lifting the withdrawal might allow for other mineral extraction activity that might involve solid or hazardous wastes. However, these issues could be satisfactorily dealt with at that time.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Alan Kraus 24 July 2001

Water Quality, Surface and/or Ground: This is an administrative action. Consequently neither surface nor ground water quality would be affected by this revocation.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Jim Scheidt 7-24-01

Wilderness, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic Rivers: The proposed action will have no affect on Wilderness, Areas of Critical Concern, or Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Signature of specialist: /s/ Larry Porter 8-06-01

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, oil shale withdrawal orders EO 5327 and PLO 5244, as amended, would remain in effect. Since these withdrawal orders are no longer needed for their original purpose of protecting the oil shale resource, BLM would not in compliance with the requirements of section 204 of FLPMA, which requires BLM to review existing withdrawals to determine if there are still needed for their original purpose.

Also, BLM would continue to experience an increased workload and lowered efficiency in managing the public land records due to problems associated with the withdrawals. Maps and other public documents would continue to display withdrawal notations, which would continue to create confusion among users.

The opportunity for increased efficiency of public land administration would not result from removing the unneeded withdrawals and the possibility of actions such as exchanges involving presently withdrawn lands would not occur.

The need to possibly have to deal with a small number of speculative or nuisance mining claims would not occur.

PERSONS CONSULTED:

A notice of intent was published in the Federal Register that BLM intended to prepare an Environmental Assessment and amend the White River RMP, Glenwood Springs RMP, and Grand Junction RMP to revoke EO 5327 and PLO 4522, in their entirety. The notice was published on November 29, 2000, with a 30 day period following during which the public could request further information and/or give BLM comments.

Three people responded to the Federal Register notice and requested to receive the EA when completed.

Two issues/questions were raised by the respondents:
1. Are the withdrawn lands presently leased for oil and gas and will they be leased after the withdrawal is lifted?
2. The FR notice states that "this proposed revocation only pertains to oil shale values in lands withdrawn under Executive Order 5327...and Public Land Order 4522." Later, the notice says the withdrawal "should be revoked in their entirety.: Does this mean that Public Land Order 4522 will be entirely revoked, including the withdrawal of lands from sodium leasing?

Both of these issues are addressed in the EA.

The oil shale withdrawn lands are located in Rio Blanco and Garfield Counties. The Board of Commissioners of these two counties were notified of the proposal to revoke the two oil shale withdrawal orders and will be provided with a copy of the EA for their review and comment and kept informed of any actions taken by BLM in this matter.

Attachment: A map of the State of Colorado, giving land status, is included with the Environmental Assessment. The oil shale withdrawn land is located generally north of DeBeque, south of the White River, west of Meeker, and east of Rangely. Federal withdrawals show grey in color on the map, which comes out grey when the surface ownership is private (federal minerals) and brown when combined with the golden BLM surface and mineral ownership. With the legal description at the beginning of the EA, the reader should be able to locate the withdrawn lands that are the subject of this proposed action.

FONSI

The environmental assessment, analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action, has been reviewed. The analysis reveals a finding of no significant impact on the human or natural resource environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION RECORD

DECISION AND RATIONALE:
It is my decision to implement the proposed action as described.

Rationale for the decision are:
1. Existing regulations, policies, and land use decisions provide adequate protection and conservation of oil shale resources.
2. While removal of the withdrawal from mineral location could produce a small number of speculative and nuisance claims, BLM can deal with them adequately to protect sensitive areas.
3. An Environmental Analysis is done for any action that could affect the oil shale resource.
4. If in the future a legitimate reason to withdraw an area containing sensitive or fragile resources surfaces, it is possible to do so through the planning system.
5. Revoking the withdrawal will remove unnecessary entries from the public land records and thus make them simpler and more efficient to work with and manage. It will also remove the withdrawal notations from maps, which confuse those who use public land maps.
6. Lifting the withdrawal would result in more efficient administration of public lands, allowing other actions, such as exchanges deemed to be in the public interest, to occur.
7. The withdrawal under EO 5327, as amended, and PLO 4522, as amended are no longer needed for their intended purpose and to comply with section 204 for FLPMA should be revoked in their entirety.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None required.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: Not required for this action.

LIST OF PREPARERS:
Vern Rholl, Realty Specialist, WRFO
Vaughn Hackett, Realty Specialist, GSFO
Kay Hopkins, Recreation Planner/Wilderness Coordinator, GSFO
Steve Bennett, Associate Manager, GSFO
Bruce Fowler, Geologist, GJFO
Larry Porter, Resource Advisor, Western Slope Center

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ David P. Stevens

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: _____

DATE SIGNED: _____

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have reviewed EA No. CO-GJFO-01-81-EA, which analyzes the environmental impacts of revoking oil shale withdrawals established by Executive Order 5327, as amended, and Public Land Order 4522, as amended. This analysis supports a finding of no significant impact on the human environment, therefore an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze this proposed action.

11/7/01	11/6/01	11/07/01
Catherine Robertson	Kent Walter	Anne Huebner
Manager, Grand Junction Field Office	Manager, White River Field Office	Manager, Glenwood Springs Field Office

DECISION RECORD
EA No. CO-GJFO-01-81

Decision:

It is the decision of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to approve amendments to the Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs and White River Resource Management Plans recommending revocation of the withdrawals to protect oil shale resources that were established by Executive Order 5327 dated April 15, 1930, as amended, and Public Land Order 4522 dated September 13, 1968, as amended. The revocation will involve approximately 900,000 acres of BLM administered land, all in Garfield and Rio Blanco counties in Colorado.

Rationale for the Decision:

1. Existing regulations, policies, and land use decisions provide adequate protection and conservation of oil shale resources.
2. While revocation of the withdrawal opens the lands to mineral location, it is deemed unlikely that mining claims will be located because no economic deposits of metalliferous minerals are known to occur in the area.
3. Revoking the withdrawal will remove unnecessary entries from the public land records and thus make them simpler and more efficient to use and maintain. It will also remove the withdrawal notations from maps of public land making them easier to understand.
4. Lifting the withdrawal will result in more efficient administration of public lands allowing other uses and actions, such as exchanges, to occur when deemed to be in the public interest.
5. The withdrawals under EO 5327, as amended, and PLO 4522, as amended, are no longer needed for their intended purpose and to comply with section 204 of FLPMA they should be revoked in their entirety.

Public Involvement:

The public involvement process leading to this decision began when a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EA and amend the three RMPs was published in the Federal Register on November 29, 2000. The NOI also announced a 30 day period during which the public could request further information and/or give BLM comments on the proposal. Three people responded. The respondents asked to be put on the mailing list to receive the EA when finished and raised two questions:

1. Are the withdrawn lands presently leased for oil and gas and will they be leased after the withdrawal is lifted?

2. The NOI said that the two Orders would be revoked in their entirety. Does this mean that Public Land Order 4522 will be entirely revoked, including the withdrawal of lands from sodium leasing?

Both of these questions were answered in the EA.

The Rio Blanco and Garfield County Commissioners were notified of the proposal to revoke the two oil shale withdrawal orders and were later provided with a copy of the proposed plan amendment, EA, FONSI, and unsigned Decision Record for comment. They had no questions or comments regarding the proposal.

The proposed plan amendment, EA, FONSI, and unsigned Decision Record were provided on August 7, 2001 to the Governor of Colorado to initiate the 60 day Governor's consistency review for RMP amendments, as required by regulations in 43 CFR 1610.3-2(c). A response resulting from the Governor's review dated October 1, 2001 indicated that ... "the Division of Minerals and Geology has determined that the revocation of the withdrawal would not be problematic. The revocation also does not appear to affect State Trust Lands. ... The Land Board has no land in or near the area under review." The State thanked BLM for allowing the State to review BLM's plans. Thus, the State of Colorado has no concerns with the proposed plan amendments and oil shale withdrawal revocation.

The proposed plan amendment, EA, FOSNI, and unsigned Decision Record were also made available for a 30 day public comment period from August 7 through September 7, 2001. A press release announcing the Notice of Availability for the documents was sent to newspapers in Glenwood Springs, Rifle, Parachute, and Grand Junction, Colorado As a result of newspaper articles, five people requested copies of the documents for review. The three individuals who responded to the Federal Register notice identified above received the public review material. The proposed plan amendment, EA, FONSI, and unsigned Decision Record were sent to all members on the Colorado Wilderness Notification List with a letter explaining the project. **No**

comments were received as a result of the public review.

A request for information from Pete Kolbenschlag, CEC Western Slope Field Director, was received a few days after close of the comment period. The requested information regarding CWP areas affected by the revocation was provided and Mr. Kolbenschlag felt the proposed withdrawal revocation should not present a problem as long as they continued to be able to review proposed on the ground actions in CWP areas, consistent with present procedures.

Implementation and Monitoring:

Following this approval, a request will be sent to the Secretary of the Interior to revoke subject withdrawals in their entirety. No monitoring plan is needed for this action.

Recommended by:

Catherine Robertson 11/7/01
Catherine Robertson
Manager
Grand Junction Field Office
Date: _____

for Kent Walter
Manager
White River Field Office
Date: 11/8/01

Anne Huebner
Manager
Glenwood Springs Field Office
Date: 11/07/01

Approved by:

Ann Morgan
Colorado State Director
Date: 11-28-01

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-600-00-1430-ET-241A]

Notice of Intent To Amend the White River, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction Resource Management Plans To Revoke Oil Shale Withdrawals on Public Lands

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to prepare an Environmental Assessment and amend three Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to revoke withdrawals placed on BLM administered lands for the purpose of protecting the oil shale resource. The three RMPs are the White River RMP, Glenwood Springs RMP, and Grand Junction RMP; all in Colorado. Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), requires that BLM continually review existing withdrawals to determine if they are still needed for their original purpose. This proposed revocation only pertains to oil shale lands withdrawn under Executive Order 5327 dated April 15, 1930, as amended, and Public Land Order 4522 dated September 13, 1968, as amended, and involves approximately 600,000 acres in Colorado.

These oil shale withdrawals are no longer needed because existing regulations, policies and land use decisions provide adequate protection and conservation of oil shale resources.

The oil shale withdrawals proposed for revocation are within the jurisdictional boundaries of the White River BLM Field Office, Glenwood Springs BLM Field Office, and Grand Junction BLM Field Office, and are located in the following townships.

T2N, R98W; T2N, R99W; T2N, R100W; T1N, R95W; T1N, R96W; T1N, R97W; T1N, R98W; T1N, R99W; T1N, R100W; T1S, R94W; T1S, R95W; T1S, R96W; T1S, R97W; T1S, R98W; T1S, R99W; T1S, R100W; T2S, R94W; T2S, R95W; T2S, R96W; T2S, R97W; T2S, R98W; T2S, R99W; T2S, R100W; T3S, R94W; T3S, R95W; T3S, R96W; T3S, R97W; T3S, R98W, T3S, R99W; T3S, R100W; T4S, R94W; T4S, R95W; T4S, R96W; T4S, R97W; T4S, R98W; T4S, R99W; T4S, R100W; T4S, R101W; T5S, R93W; T5S, R94W; T5S, R95W; T5S, R96W; T5S, R97W; T5S, R98W; T5S, R99W; T5S, R100W; T5S, R101W; T6S, R94W; T6S, R95W; T6S, R96W; T6S, R97W; T6S, R98W; T6S, R99W; T6S, R100W; T6S, R101W; T7S, R96W; T7S, R97W; T7S, R98W; T7S, R99W; T7S, R100W; T7S, R101W; T8S, R99W; T8S, R100W.

The public is invited to comment on this proposal and to contact the BLM should they desire further information. A 30 day period for receiving comments begins with publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. Comments received by the public as a result of this notice and news releases in local media will be considered in developing the Environmental Assessment.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments concerning this notice to Larry Porter, Bureau of Land Management, 2815 H. Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506. Electronic mail can be sent to: Larry_Porter@co.blm.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Larry Porter at (970) 244-3012.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This withdrawal revocation proposal does not apply to the Naval Oil Shale Reserve #1 and #3 lands that were recently transferred from the U.S. Department of Energy to the BLM. Management decisions for these lands will be made through a separate planning process.

There are several public land orders and executive orders which relate to the withdrawal of oil shale land. Some of the orders identify how the withdrawals will be administered and their relationship to development of other minerals. This proposed revocation only pertains to oil shale values in lands withdrawn under Executive Order 5327 dated April 15, 1930, as amended, and Public Land Order 4522 dated September 13, 1968, as amended. Oil Shale and associated minerals have been classified as leasable, and as such they are managed with well defined procedures. The oil shale values in these withdrawn lands are adequately protected and administered through existing BLM regulations, planning decisions, and policy. The withdrawals are no longer needed for their original purpose and intent, and should be revoked in their entirety.

Dated: November 22, 2000.

Richard M. Arcand,

Assistant Manager, Northwest Center Office

[FR Doc. 00-30443 Filed 11-28-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JB-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-160-1220-00]

Amendment of Meeting Notice for Central California Resource Advisory Council

This is to amend the meeting place address listed in the notice that was already published.

DATES: Thursday and Friday, November 30–December 1, 2000.

ADDRESSES: BLM California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Larry Mercer, Public Affairs Officer, Bureau of Land Management, 3801 Pegasus Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93308, telephone 661-391-6012.

Dated: November 16, 2000.

Ron Fellows,

Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 00-30388 Filed 11-28-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-40-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Outer Continental Shelf, Central Gulf of Mexico, Oil and Gas Lease Sale 178

AGENCY: Minerals Management Service, Interior.

ACTION: Availability of the proposed notice of sale, and notice of intent to hold two workshops to discuss several new provisions in the proposed notice

Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), Notice of Availability of the proposed Notice of Sale for proposed Oil and Gas Lease Sale 178 in the Central Gulf of Mexico. This Notice is published pursuant to 30 CFR 256.29(c) as a matter of information to the public.

With regard to oil and gas leasing on the OCS, the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to section 19 of the OCS Lands Act, as amended, provides the [illegible]

NORTHWEST CTR.-BLM		
OFFICE	ACTION	INFO
CTR. MGR.		1
RES. & SUP.		2
OPS/FIRE		
AIR CTR.		3
GJFO		
GSFO		
READING RM		
C. FILES		