

## **Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Assessment Glen Canyon MLP (Revised)**

**Name and Location of MLP Area:** Glen Canyon MLP (Revised) in southeastern Utah.

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The area includes approximately 360,000 acres, more or less, in southeastern Utah and is defined as starting at the intersection of the Manti-La Sal National Forest and Utah State Highway (highway) 191, southerly and westerly along highway 191 to its intersection with highway 163, westerly and southerly along highway 163 until it intersects with the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, following the Tribal lands boundary westerly and northerly to the intersection with the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Glen Canyon NRA), northerly and westerly along the boundary of the Glen Canyon NRA until it intersects with the boundary of the Grand Gulch Instant Study Area (Grand Gulch ISA), following the eastern and then northern boundary of Grand Gulch ISA to the intersection with highway 276, northerly and easterly along highway 276 until it intersects with the eastern boundary of section 23 (T.37S., R.17E., SLM), northerly along the eastern boundary of section 23 until it intersects with the southeast corner of section 14 (T.37S., R.17E., SLM), northerly along the eastern boundary of section 14 until it intersects with the boundary of Natural Bridges National Monument, northerly and easterly along the eastern boundary of Natural Bridges National Monument to its intersection with highway 275, easterly and southerly along highway 275 to the northwest boundary of the Fish Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA), southerly, easterly and then northerly following the boundaries of the Fish Creek, Road Canyon, and Mule Canyon WSA to the intersection with the boundary of the Manti-La Sal National Forest, easterly and northerly along the southern boundary of the Manti-La Sal National Forest to the intersection of the National Forest boundary and highway 191.

A map of the revised Glen Canyon MLP is attached as Map A.

### **Does the area meet the criteria and qualify for MLP analysis?**

The revised Glen Canyon MLP meets all requirements under the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Washington Office (WO) Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. 2010-117, *Oil and Gas Leasing Reform*, for MLP analysis.

### **Supporting Information:**

#### **1. What Resource Management Plan(s) are applicable to the MLP area?**

Monticello Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved November 17, 2008<sup>1</sup> (as maintained).

#### **2. Potential resource issues raised in the MLP proposal**

The McLoyd Canyon-Moonhouse and Comb Ridge recreation management zones occur within this MLP and contain areas of high densities for cultural resources and importance. The MLP also includes portions of the Cedar Mesa Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The U95 Bicentennial Scenic Byway bisects the MLP and a portion of the Hole in the Rock Trail traverse the southern boundary of the MLP's area. Portions of the MLP fall within the proposed Greater Canyonlands National Monument. The MLP also includes lands that have been identified in the

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed online at: <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/monticello/planning.html>.

RMP as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics that have not been designated to be managed for their wilderness values. The Valley of the Gods Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is located in close proximity to, but outside, the MLP boundary. The MLP is also in close proximity to (but does not include) Tribal lands, several WSAs, the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and the Natural Bridges National Monument.

### **3. How does the current RMP address these issues?**

The decisions within the Approved RMP were developed through an interdisciplinary process and extensive public participation. The RMP also considered provisions of other state, county and federal plans, habitat management plans, endangered species recovery plans, and numerous activity plans and policies. All of the resource issues/values identified were addressed during the planning process, except for the Proposed Greater Canyonlands National Monument.

The National Historic Preservation Act section 106 consultation requirements were completed and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with a No Adverse Effect determination.

Likewise, the Endangered Species Act section 7 consultations were based upon appropriate surface disturbing activities and a Biological Assessment was completed. The effects determinations for each species, which included considerations of protective measures, such as lease notices and stipulations and other available conservation measures, were affirmed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in their Biological Opinion (RMP, Appendix E). Appropriate stipulations and environmental best management practices applicable to oil and gas leasing and other surface-disturbing activities were developed for each species and can also be found within the RMP (RMP, Appendix B and G). Sensitive species and other wildlife specific lease stipulations and notices were developed in cooperation with the State of Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), as well as USFWS. The RMP details threatened and endangered (T&E) conservation measures (RMP, Appendix M) and raptor best management practices (RMP, Appendix N), including map delineations (RMP, Map 14).

Additional special status species decisions cover conservation measures and notices, mineral development best management practices, inventory and monitoring, implementation of current and future conservation agreements, population augmentations, Gunnison prairie dog protection from surface-disturbing activities, Gunnison sage-grouse habitat prescriptions (lek and year round habitats) and crucial habitat for Mexican spotted owl and Flannelmouth sucker in Arch Canyon (RMP, pages 136-140). Likewise, additional wildlife and fisheries resource decisions for migratory birds, raptors, big horn sheep (lambing and rutting), animal damage control, introduction/transplantation/augmentation, habitat improvements/protection, mitigation, habitat boundaries, seasonal wildlife protection areas, pronghorn fawning, and winter range (mule deer and elk) are also detailed (RMP, pages 152-156).

Management considerations in selecting the approved RMP included air quality, cultural resources, fire management, lands and realty, livestock grazing, mineral resources, recreation, riparian areas, soil and water, special designations (ACECs,

wild and scenic rivers, and historic trails), non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, travel management, vegetation, visual resource management (VRM), wildlife and fisheries, special status species and woodlands.

Management protection was provided for potential ACECs not designated in the Approved RMP (RMP, Tables 2 and 3, pages 31-34). Management provisions that protect the relevant and important (R&I) values are extensive. Some management protections include interim management policy provisions, special recreation management area designations, travel limitations, VRM Class I or II, established user permit systems, camping prohibitions, specific recreation management zones designed to protect cultural resources, and Wild and Scenic River segments closed to leasing. Additional provisions were determined not necessary to protect R&I values.

As previously noted, the MLP includes portions of the Cedar Mesa SRMA. This recreation resource was analyzed in detail within the RMP and specific provisions for the management of oil and gas activity have been applied in the RMP. Impacts were disclosed and management prescriptions were developed to meet program goals and objectives. The RMP specifically contains management actions for hiking, camping, river running and primitive hunting activities (RMP, pages 88-112). For example, oil and gas leasing is subject to a no surface occupancy protection within developed recreation sites. McLoyd Canyon-Moonhouse and Comb Ridge recreation management zones occur within this MLP and contain areas of high cultural resource density and importance. Specific management prescriptions were made to manage recreation use within these zones. Some areas are closed to pack animals and camping may be limited to designated sites.

A listing of RMP protesting parties and a summary of issues are contained in the Director's Protest Resolution Report prepared on November 14, 2008<sup>2</sup>. Challenges to the RMP were appropriately addressed during the planning process. RMP decisions were reviewed against the merits of each substantive protest and ACECs (areas that were previously considered and not designated as an ACEC), non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, and wild and scenic river designations were specifically and extensively reviewed. In his report, the Director affirmed BLM's review process and stood firmly on the decisions regarding the selection and management of recreation and special designations.

**If MLP analysis is warranted, describe how and when MLP analysis will likely occur:**

The RMP for this area was completed in 2008. This MLP would be a "stand-alone" project, as opposed to being part of a planned or in-progress RMP revision or amendment. The BLM Utah will continue to seek to initiate MLP preparation as budgets allow. The Glen Canyon – San Juan River MLP, which was originally approved by the Director of the BLM in February 2011, has been revised, as described in this MLP Assessment, in order to facilitate a more timely and effective completion of the MLP.

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<sup>2</sup> Accessed online at:

[http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Planning\\_and\\_Renewable\\_Resources/utah.Par.95976.File.pdf/Monticello\\_RMP\\_Directors\\_Protest\\_Resolution\\_Report.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Planning_and_Renewable_Resources/utah.Par.95976.File.pdf/Monticello_RMP_Directors_Protest_Resolution_Report.pdf).

**Describe the process used for review:**

An interdisciplinary team looked at a range of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data in order to determine if the MLP area fit the four criteria for which WO IM 2010-117 requires MLP preparation. The following GIS data files were reviewed as a part of the interdisciplinary review process: existing leases, oil and gas wells (active and plugged-and-abandoned), land ownership, deferred lease parcels, unissued leases with pending protests, leases under suspension due to court decisions, and oil and gas leasing expressions of interest (EOIs) - all overlaid with data layers for various resources. Among others, the resource data layers utilized included wilderness inventory, designated wilderness and WSAs, citizen proposed wilderness areas, ACECs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, BLM Natural Areas, and various wildlife habitat layers, such as sage grouse and white tailed prairie dog. Mineral potential was also a resource that was evaluated during this process.

**Describe how and why each of the following criteria are met or not met:**

**1. A substantial portion of the area to be analyzed in the MLP is not currently leased.**

Over 98% of the project area is currently not under an existing oil and gas lease.

**2. There is a majority Federal mineral interest.**

A majority (approximately 75%) of the MLP area has federal government owned mineral interests.

**3. 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.**

The oil and gas industry has submitted EOIs for the 2012, 2013 and 2014 lease sales that have effectively nominated more than half of all of the acreage available for leasing in the MLP. Furthermore, it is likely that more nominations would have been submitted for this area if the BLM Utah was not currently deferring leasing within approved MLPs.

The RMP asserts that the mineral potential throughout the Monticello Field Office is high. Several wells have been drilled in the area, but many of these well have been plugged and abandoned. It seems apparent from historic drilling results that the area has a high potential, but low certainty, for an economic discovery of oil and/or gas.

**4. 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;**

The area contains protested (sold-but-not-issued) and suspended leases with issues such as wildlife, cultural resources and citizen proposed wilderness. These issues could be resolved with environmental assessments (EAs) or Determinations of National Environmental Policy Act Adequacy (DNAs) based upon the 2008 RMP or as a part of the MLP analysis.

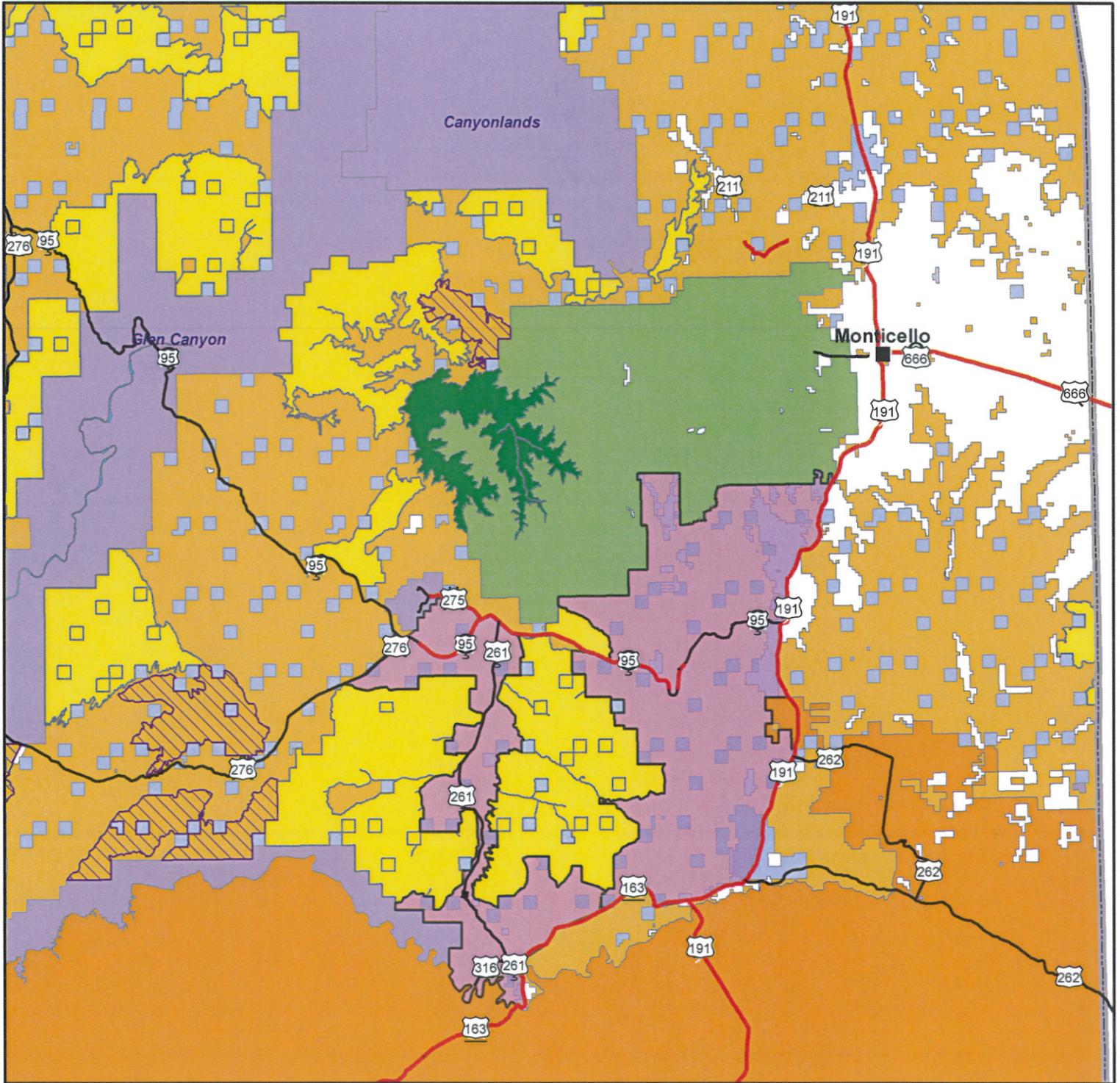
○ **impacts to air quality;**

Air quality does not appear to be a resource specifically at issue within the MLP area; however air quality will be addressed in any document that is completed before leasing is commenced in the area.

- **impacts on the resources or values of any unit of the National Park System, wildlife refuge, or National Forest wilderness area, as determined after consultation or coordination with the National Park Service, the USFWS, or the Forest Service; or impacts on other specially designated areas.**

As previously noted, the MLP encompasses the McLoyd Canyon-Moonhouse and Comb Ridge recreation management zones, portions of the Cedar Mesa SRMA, U95 Bicentennial Scenic Byway and the Hole in the Rock Trail. Also as previously noted, the MLP is in close proximity to several WSAs (including the Road Canyon, Fish Creek and Mule Canyon WSAs and the Grand Gulch ISA), the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, the Natural Bridges National Monument as well as ACEC, Tribal and National Forest System lands. While the MLP excludes these areas, Utah BLM will ensure coordination with all appropriate, and potentially interested, organizations in order to assure that the proper resources are analyzed during the preparation of the MLP. More specifically, Utah BLM intends to coordinate with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, USFWS, the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration and the Governor of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordination Office.

# Map A Master Leasing Plan (MLP) Assessment Glen Canyon MLP (Revised)



## OVERVIEW



## LEGEND

-  Glen Canyon MLP Revised
-  Wilderness Study Areas
-  BLM Wilderness Areas
-  BLM Natural Areas
-  USFS Wilderness Areas

## Surface Land Status

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  U.S. Forest Service
-  National Park Service
-  Indian Reservation / BIA
-  Utah (SITLA)
-  Utah (State Parks)
-  Utah (Other)
-  Private

