Welcome

Welcome to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) public scoping meeting for the **Converse County Oil and Gas Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).**

While you are here, please take time to learn about the proposed project, ask questions, and discuss your concerns with the BLM project manager and resource specialists involved with this project.

Written comments may be submitted tonight or at any point until **June 30, 2014.**

Thank you for joining us.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) EIS Process and Schedule

Summer 2014

Public Scoping

During **Public Scoping**, the public provides input regarding project and resource concerns. This input is used to identify issues to be addressed through alternatives development or EIS analysis.

Fall 2014 - Fall 2015

Draft EIS

The **Draft EIS** identifies Project Purpose and Need, describes alternatives that meet purpose and need while resolving resource conflicts, discloses effects of each alternative on the natural and human environment, and identifies mitigations that may reduce impacts.

Winter 2015

DEIS Public Comment

There will be a **Public Comment** period after releasing the Draft EIS to allow for public comment on the document.

Spring 2017

Final EIS

The **Final EIS** will disclose all public comments and responses to those comments.

Summer 2017

Record of Decision

Following release of the Final EIS, the BLM and the USFS will publish separate **Records of Decision** disclosing which Alternative (analyzed in the EIS) will be implemented, as well as any other Conditions of Approval.

Lead and Cooperating Agencies

Lead Agency

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the Lead Agency with responsibility for preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Responsibilities and Decisions

- Determine if Proposed Action/alternatives conform with the BLM Casper Field Office Resource Management Plan
- Determine if the EIS is adequate in order to reach an informed decision on the Proposed Action/alternatives
- Approve the Proposed Action, a different alternative, or a combination of alternatives
- Determine Conditions of Approval that may be attached to the Record of Decision (ROD).

If the BLM decides to authorize the project, it will be required to review and act on Applications for Permits to Drill and right-of-way applications. Although the EIS analysis includes private lands, the BLM decision will only apply to public lands and minerals.

Cooperating Agencies are government agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise on issues addressed in the EIS. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Douglas Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grasslands (TBNG) is a cooperating agency on the EIS. USFS cooperating agency responsibilities and decisions include selecting alternatives for the USFS ROD, determining conditions of any Surface Use Plans of Operation and Special Use authorizations, and determining conformance with the TBNG Land and Resource Management Plan. If the FS decides to authorize the project, it will be required to review and act on Surface Use Plans of Operation for APDs and Special Use Authorization applications. Although the EIS analysis includes private lands, the USFS decision will only apply to National Forest System lands.

Land Use Plan Amendments

The 2007 BLM Casper Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the 2001 Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG) Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) may need to be amended because:

- The Project impacts may exceed the analysis for surface disturbance, wildlife, cultural resources, air quality and water quality
- Additional historic trail protections may be needed
- Resource stipulations may need to be updated based on the Project

If a land use plan amendment is necessary, analysis would be conducted as part of the EIS process. Any decisions in the RMP and LRMP amendments would apply only to Federal lands and minerals administered by either the BLM or the USFS.

Proposed Action

The Converse County Oil and Gas Project is proposed by a group of operators comprised of Anadarko Petroleum Company, Chesapeake Energy Corporation, EOG Resources, Inc., RKI Exploration and Production, Samson Resources and SM Energy, as well as other smaller operators within the project area.

Key Project Components

- 5,000 new oil and gas wells on 1,500 well pads, 50 water source well pads, 25 disposal well pads, and 375 production pads
- 1,890 miles of roads, with 750 miles of gathering pipeline and 1,350 miles of overhead electrical distribution lines within road disturbance areas
- Additional cross-country disturbance: 750 miles of gathering pipelines, 500 miles of main truck pipeline, 900 miles of surface water pipelines, and 150 miles of overhead electrical distribution
- Electrical substation, gas plant, compression facilities, and thirty 20-acre fresh water makeup ponds

Water Use

50,000-80,000 barrels of water per well, of which 2,000 to 4,000 barrels would be fresh water. Water would be obtained from approved, permitted surface water and groundwater sources

Project Timeframe

2017 to 2027

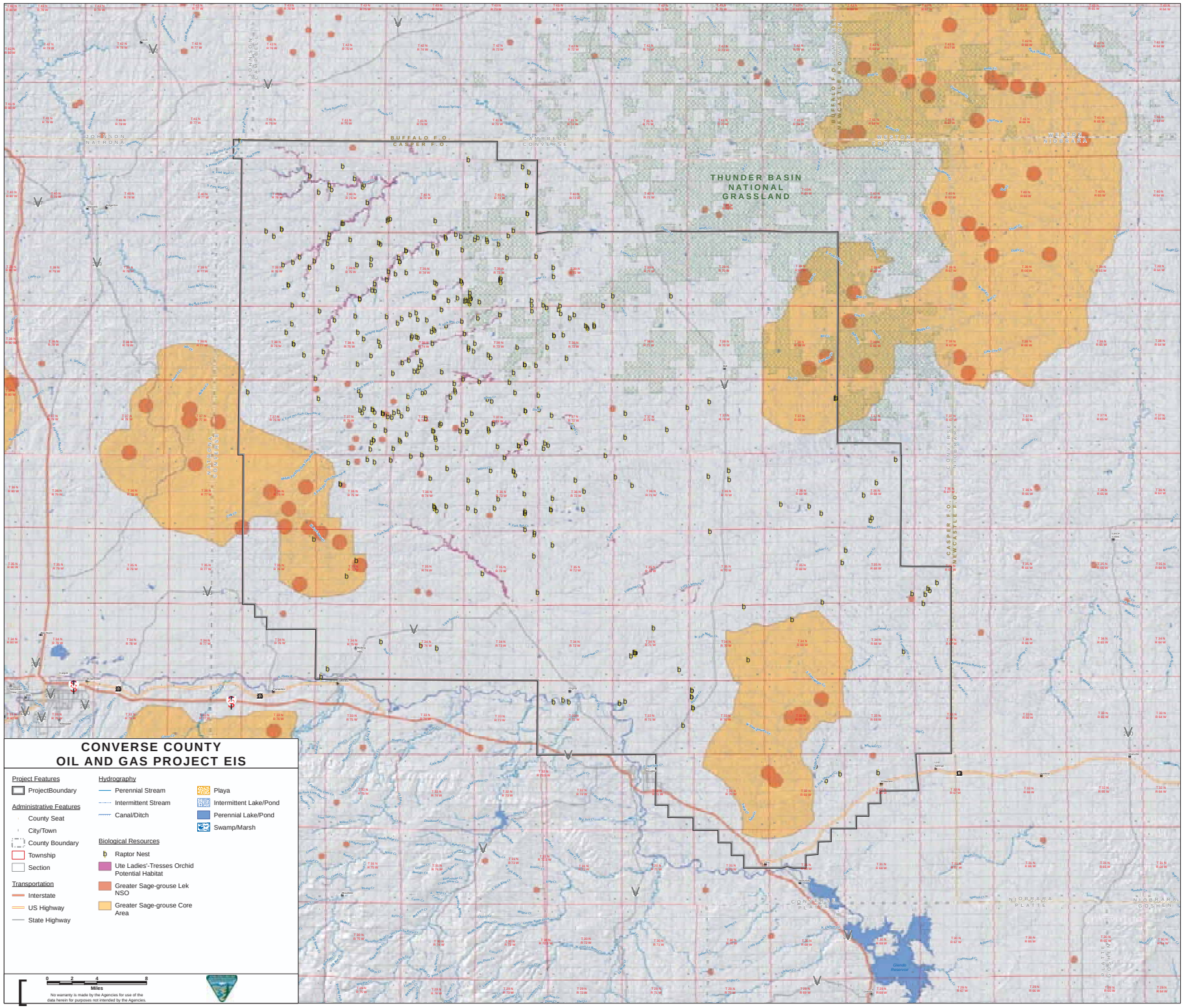
Wildlife/Threatened and Endangered Species

Key wildlife resource issues to be examined in the EIS include:

- How would wildlife resources, threatened and endangered species, sensitive species, and habitat be protected?
- How should the project be designed to achieve objectives for Greater Sage-Grouse conservation and management?
- How would impacts to migratory birds be minimized?
- How would changes to raptor protections (timing stipulations) affect raptor poulations?

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act directs federal agencies to ensure authorized actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or result in destruction of critical habitat. A biological assessment will be prepared to examine impacts to federally listed wildlife and plant species (anticipated to include Preble's meadow jumping mouse and Ute ladies'-tresses).

Are there other issues regarding wildlife or Threatened and Endangered Species that should be considered during alternatives development or impact analysis? Do you have proposed mitigation that would help address impacts to these or other resource issues?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US Highway
State Highway
Hydrography
Perennial Stream
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Canal/Ditch
Playa
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Perennial Lake/Pond
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Soils, Geology, and Vegetation

Soils/Geology Issues

- How would long-term impacts to soils, including runoff and erosion, be mitigated? How would reclamation address areas that are prone to wind and water erosion?
- How would the project affect development of other minerals, such as coal, coal bed natural gas and geothermal (leasable minerals), uranium (locatable minerals) and aggregate (saleable minerals)?

Vegetation Resources Issues

- How would vegetation resources be protected, maintained, or restored?
- How would impacts to Ute-ladies'-tresses, a federally listed plant species, be minimized?
- How would the spread of noxious weeds be mitigated?

Are there other resource issues that should be considered during alternatives development or impact analysis?

Do you have proposed mitigation that would help reduce impacts to these or other resource issues?

Air Resources

Air Resources issues to be examined in the EIS include:

- What are the direct and indirect local impacts created by each alternative?
- How would the project impact locations a significant distance away from the project area?
- How would the impacts of increased airborne dust, industrial particulates, magnesium chloride, and other dust-abating chemicals be mitigated?
- How would the project contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change?

The air quality analysis for the project will be performed using Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved models to assess both near-field and far-field impacts. The CAMx photochemical grid model will be used to assess both project and cumulative regional impacts for criteria pollutants, visibility, and deposition. AERMOD will be utilized to address near-field impacts for criteria pollutants and hazardous air pollutants.

The air analysis is developed in coordination with an inter-agency team that includes air quality technical experts from the EPA, USFS, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality-Air Quality Division.

Water Resources

Water resource issues to be examined in the EIS include:

- How would water resources be managed to protect and maintain ground and surface water quality and quantity?
- What would be the effects on water resources from hydraulic fracturing?
- How would aquifers be affected by water use?

The BLM may conduct groundwater modeling to estimate cumulative drawdowns from existing and future oil and gas operations.

Other EIS considerations:

- Examine variations in water usage and/or sources by alternative
- Assess impacts to ground and surface water quality, including identifying areas where surface and groundwater quality are linked (such as recharge/discharge areas) and assess impacts
- Develop appropriate mitigations, including a water quality monitoring plan with adaptive management components

Historic Trails

The National Trails System Act states that national scenic and historic trails "will be extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, and cultural qualities of the area through which such trails may pass".

There are two trails of high national, regional and local significance situated within the project area: the ***Child's Route of the Oregon Trail*** and the ***Bozeman Trail***.

EIS considerations include:

- Trail locations relative to oil and gas infrastructure placement by alternative
- Contribution of visual resources/soundscape to the historic trail's eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places
- Impacts to heritage tourism

Other Resource Issues

Other resource issues to be examined in the EIS include:

Cultural Resources

How would prehistoric and historic cultural resources be protected? How would consultation with cultural preservation groups be incorporated? What cultural importance do local tribes place on the project area?

Socioeconomics

How would the direct and indirect impacts to social and economic resources be balanced with the positive impacts brought by the extraction industry?

Human Health and Safety

How would public health and safety issues resulting from increased travel, potential chemical spills or fires, and increased access in the project area be minimized?

Noise

How would noise from construction and operation be minimized?

Transportation

How would direct and indirect impacts from traffic be minimized?

Recreation and Visual

How would the effects of the extraction industry on recreational resources and opportunities be mitigated? How would visual impacts in the project area be reduced?

Are there other resource issues that should be considered during development of alternatives or impact analysis?

Do you have proposed mitigation that would help reduce impacts to these or other resources?

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are resource impacts resulting from the proposed project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions not associated with the project, but which affect the same resources as the proposed project.

What else is planned in this area that could affect the same resources as this project?

Cumulative Impact Analysis Steps

1

Identify resource-specific spatial and temporal boundaries (analysis areas)

2

Assemble a list of all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs). Reasonably foreseeable means actively proposed, planned or funded.

3

Describe the effects of past actions, present actions, and RFFAs on each resource

4

Describe the incremental addition of the proposed project and alternatives. Impacts may be ***additive, countervailing*** (balance/mitigate other effects) or ***synergistic*** (greater than the sum of individual effects).

How to Comment

You may submit written scoping comments by any of the following methods:

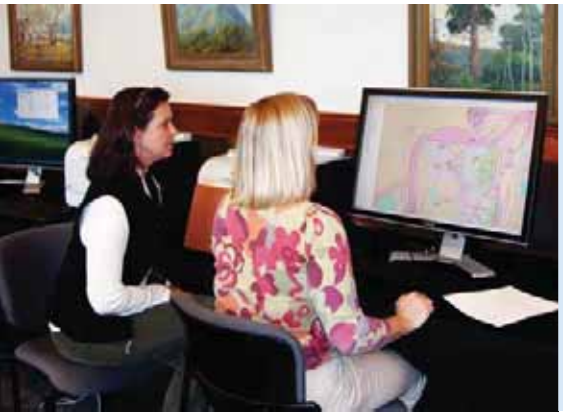
By email
blm_wy_casper_wymail@blm.gov

By fax
307-261-7587

Via the BLM project website
http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/cfo/Converse_County_Oil_and_Gas.html

By U.S. Postal Service (USPS) mail
Converse County Oil and Gas Project
BLM Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, WY 82604

At this meeting
Comment forms are available to fill out and leave with the BLM tonight, or take with you and mail via USPS at a later date.



ALL COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 30, 2014.

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal-identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment — including your personal identifying information — may be made publicly available at any time. While you may 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.