Amended Environmental Assessment

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Amended Environmental Assessment

WY-060-EA11-81

March 2011

High Plains District February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales

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High Plains District Office

2987 Prospector Drive

Casper, Wyoming 82604

(307) 261-7600

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Chapter 1

Introduction

From February 2010 through August 2010 66 parcels in the Buffalo, Casper, and Newcastle Field Offices (BFO, CFO and NFO respectively) of the High Plains District were made available for sale at formal lease sales; all available parcels were subsequently sold and monies have been received. On July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessments DOI-BLM-WY-070-EA10-247 (Buffalo), WY-060-EA10-114 (Casper), and DOI-BLM-WY-080-2010-18-EA (Newcastle) with their associated Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSIs) and Decision Records (DR) were issued to further support the issuance of 519 parcels (402595.19 acres) sold but not issued from June 2008 through May 2010. On July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessment WY-070-EA10-267 was issued in support of the August and November 2010 lease sales by the Buffalo Field Office. On July 29, 2010, Environmental Assessment WY-060-EA10-121 was issued in support of the August and November 2010 lease sales by the Casper Field Office. On July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessment WY-080-EA10-22 was issued in support of the August and November 2010 lease sales by the Newcastle Field Office. The following Amended Environmental Assessment (AEA) documents an additional review by the Buffalo, Casper, and Newcastle Field Offices of the 66 parcels that were offered and sold, but have not been issued during Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales conducted during the time from February 2010 through August 2010. Of those 66 parcels, one was originally recommended for deferral based on the ongoing sage grouse resource management plan (RMP) amendment process. Therefore only 65 parcels were analyzed in this AEA.

All parcels addressed in this AEA are under the administration of the Buffalo, Casper, or Newcastle Field Offices of the High Plains District. Please see Appendix A for the list of parcels covered by this AEA by field office. This AEA intends to address new information that was not available at the time the parcels were sold, but prior to the issuance of lease agreements. The alternatives analyzed in the original EAs listed above will be used in this AEA as well.

On December 22, 2010 Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, signed Secretarial Order (SO) 3310 Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management. SO 3310 provides direction to the BLM to maintain wilderness resource inventories on a regular and continuing basis for public lands under its jurisdiction. It further directs the BLM to protect wilderness characteristics through land use planning and project-level decisions unless the BLM determines in accordance with SO 3310, that impairment of wilderness characteristics is appropriate and consistent with other applicable requirements of law and other resource management considerations. This document is to address SO 3310 and analyze Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC); all other analyses (See Section 1.3) remain valid. As such, this AEA represents a new analysis for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and replaces all

previous discussions/analysis of this topic as it relates to parcels previously addressed for the February, May and August 2010 sales.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this document is to analyze the impacts of issuing leases for parcels sold at several previous competitive oil and gas lease sales to allow private individuals or companies to explore for and develop oil and gas resources on public lands. The decision to offer parcels at previous competitive lease sales from February 2010 and May 2010 were supported by Determinations of NEPA Adequacy (DNAs); however, given the passage of time and potential environmental issues that have arisen since those sales, BLM prepared DOI-BLM-WY-070-EA10-247 (Buffalo), WY-060-EA10-114 (Casper), and DOI-BLM-WY-080-2010-18-EA (Newcastle), to analyze whether it remained appropriate to issue leases for these parcels. Furthermore, WY-070-EA10-267 (Buffalo), WY-060-EA10-121 (Casper) and WY-080-EA10-22 (Newcastle) analyzed whether or not it was appropriate to offer for lease 121 parcels in the three of field offices for the August and November 2010 lease sales.

The sale and issuance of oil and gas leases is needed to meet the growing energy needs of the United States public. Wyoming is a major source of natural gas for heating and electrical energy production in the lower 48 states, especially for markets in the Eastern United States. Continued sale and issuance of lease parcels is necessary to maintain options for production as oil and gas companies seeking new areas for production or attempting to develop previously inaccessible or uneconomical reserves.

Leasing

It is unknown if, when, or where future development on the parcels may be proposed. Detailed site specific analysis of individual wells or roads will occur when a lease holder submits an Application for Permit to Drill (APD).

Issuance of leases would not be in conflict with any local, county, or state plans.

This AEA tiers to the following environmental assessments and incorporates by reference the following informational documents:

Buffalo Field Office

Action	Document	Date Signed
Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010	Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-WY-070-EA10-247	7/30/2010
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales August and November 2010	Environmental Assessment WY-070-EA10-267	7/30/2010
	Secretarial Order 3310 and Wilderness Characteristics Inventories and Form 1	Various

	Analysis of Wilderness Study Areas, a Final Inventory Report	May 1981

Casper Field Office

Action	Document	Date Signed
Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010	Environmental Assessment WY-060-EA10-114	7/30/2010
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales August and November 2010	Environmental Assessment WY-060-EA10-121	7/29/2010
	Secretarial Order 3310 and Wilderness Characteristics Inventories and Forms 1 and 2	Various
	Analysis of Wilderness Study Areas, a Final Inventory Report	May 1981

Newcastle Field Office

Action	Document	Date Signed
Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010	Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-WY-080-2010-18-EA	7/30/2010
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales August and November 2010	Environmental Assessment WY-080-EA10-22	7/30/2010
	Secretarial Order 3310 and Wilderness Characteristics Inventories and Form1	Various
	Analysis of Wilderness Study Areas, a Final Inventory Report	May 1981

Chapter 3 Affected Environment:

This section describes the environment that would be affected by implementation of the alternatives described in Chapter 2 of the original EAs. Aspects of the affected environment described in this section focus on relevant major resources and issues. Certain critical environmental components require analysis under BLM policy. Only those aspects of the affected environment that are potentially impacted are described in detail as described in the Introduction to this AEA.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)

Wilderness characteristics are resource values that include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Areas evaluated for wilderness characteristics generally occur in undeveloped locations of sufficient size (5,000 acres or larger) to be practical to manage for these characteristics. Smaller areas may be considered if they are contiguous with designated Wilderness or WSAs, or in rare circumstances, are of a manageable size in accordance with FLPMA.

An inventory containing the project area occurred in 1980 and is documented in Wyoming Wilderness Study Areas, a Final Inventory Report. Page 9, Phase I – Inventory states "The inventory phase had two parts: initial and intensive. Its overall purpose was to identify public lands administered by the BLM which had wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-577)."

"Initial Inventory: In Wyoming, the BLM began initial inventory for LWCs in the Fall of 1978 and was completed through review of information already available in the BLM offices and through consultation with industry, State government, conservation groups, individual citizens and private organizations. Of the 17.8 million acres of public lands, 1.04 million acres in 86 inventory units were recommended for further inventory. The proposed initial inventory decisions were announced by the Wyoming State Director on February 7, 1979. A 90-day public comment period followed. The final decision on the initial inventory was released on July 15, 1979. Approximately 16.6 million acres of public land in Wyoming was released from wilderness consideration at that time. BLM announced that 1.2 million acres in 83 units would be advanced to the intensive inventory."

Buffalo has begun an RMP revision and has been engaged in re-inventorying those areas that had not been inventoried previously due to acquisitions or those new citizen's proposals since the last RMP.

Casper finished their RMP in 2007 and re-inventoried the same types of areas, specifically those not previously inventoried due to acquisitions or those new citizen's proposals since the last RMP.

Newcastle finished their RMP in 2000 but no re-inventorying of the office was done due to very scattered and sparse public land ownership.

Per SO 3310, the BLM has undertaken a review of these previous inventories to determine whether or not conditions have changed, and whether or not issuance of these parcels complies with SO 3310. As directed by the SO 3310, the BLM first undertook screening process to determine whether or not the parcels, and the area around the parcels, would qualify according to size and naturalness.

In DOI-BLM-WY-070-EA10-247 for BFO, three parcels were recommended for deferral until RMP revisions could be completed to address those parcels previously identified as containing wilderness character. Two of these parcels were in the October 2008 and one parcel was in the April 2009. Since this EA is concerned with only the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sale parcels, these three parcels are not affected by this AEA.

In the CFO, the following parcels were determined to meet the size criteria: August 2010, Parcel 27 (WY-1008-027) and Parcel 28 (WY-1008-028). Neither parcel could be determined to not contain naturalness. Therefore, the CFO recommends deferring issuance of leases for parcels in the August 2010, Parcel 27 (WY-1008-027) and Parcel 28 (WY-1008-028) until additional information can be gathered to confirm whether or not wilderness characteristics do exist. Based on this same updated review, the remaining parcels in the CFO were determined to screen-out of a LWC designation and are recommended for lease issuance.

Newcastle has not recommended any deferrals for wilderness characteristics. The reassessment under SO 3310 confirms the previous analysis under the above cited EAs.

Chapter 4 Environmental Analysis

Wilderness Characteristics:

Proposed Action:

While the act of issuing a lease would have no impacts, potential impacts from implementation decisions could impair 3 of the four wilderness characteristics where they exist: naturalness, solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation, and other special values.

Alternative B Proposed Action

Under this alternative, 63 leases would be recommended for issuance: 7 lease parcels in the BFO, 30 lease parcels in the CFO, and 26 lease parcels in the NFO. 2 parcels are proposed for deferral of issuance in the CFO (August 2010, Parcel 27 (WY-1008-027) and Parcel 28 (WY-1008-028)), containing approximately 1,918.63 acres. This deferral is recommended until an additional inventory can be completed. Once this inventory is completed either 1) the lease stipulation would be revised and the High Bidder would be given a chance to accept or reject the lease with revised stipulations; or 2) the BLM would not issue leases for those parcels and return all monies received as a result of the sale. If the decision was made not to issue the leases, those parcels would not be subject to development, eliminating the potential to impair naturalness, solitude, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation where those values exist.

Alternative C Full Lease Issuance

Under this alternative, all 65 leases would be issued with the stipulations as detailed in Appendix A. However, due to the larger acreage under this Alternative potentially subject to surface disturbing activities, the potential for impacts are similar to, but have a higher probability of occurring, as under Alternative B. Regardless, issuance of all leases, including those potentially containing wilderness characteristics could cause adverse environmental impacts and preclude alternative formulation under the RMP revision which could potentially violate NEPA policy and SO 3310.

Issuing leases for parcels August 2010, Parcel 27 (WY-1008-027) and Parcel 28 (WY-1008-028), prior to a new inventory being completed, could preclude alternative analysis and ultimate selection, relating the area in question. Potential impacts to naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined opportunities for recreation, and/or any other outstanding qualities of the parcel could occur. Depending on the outcome of the inventory, this might represent loss of a management opportunity to maintain open spaces in their natural state.

Subsequent development of these parcels could also indirectly affect surrounding lands with wilderness characteristics through removal of vegetation, human intrusion, noise, odor, and impacts to recreation and hunting opportunities through displacement of wildlife.

Appendix A

Serial Nr Full		Final Parcel #	Act Date	Ra Txt
WYW	178923	PAR 4;	02/01/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178924	PAR 5;	02/01/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178931	PAR 12;	02/01/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179125	PAR 15;	05/10/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179132	PAR 22;	05/10/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179254	PAR 22;	08/02/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179255	PAR 23;	08/02/10	BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE
~~WYW~~	~~178932~~	~~PAR 13;~~	~~02/01/10~~	~~CASPER FIELD OFFICE~~ *
WYW	178933	PAR 14;	02/01/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178934	PAR 15;	02/01/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178935	PAR 16;	02/01/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178938	PAR 19;	02/01/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179112	PAR 2;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179113	PAR 3;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179116	PAR 6;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179117	PAR 7;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179124	PAR 14;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179133	PAR 23;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179143	PAR 33;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179144	PAR 34;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179145	PAR 35;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179147	PAR 37;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179148	PAR 38;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179149	PAR 39;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179150	PAR 40;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179151	PAR 41;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179152	PAR 42;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179153	PAR 43;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179154	PAR 44;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179155	PAR 45;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179156	PAR 46;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179157	PAR 47;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179158	PAR 48;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179159	PAR 49;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179165	PAR 55;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179166	PAR 56;	05/10/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179259	PAR 27;	08/02/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179260	PAR 28;	08/02/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179281	PAR 50;	08/02/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179282	PAR 51;	08/02/10	CASPER FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178969	#0900; PAR 1;	02/03/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178970	#0900; PAR 2;	02/03/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	178971	#0900; PAR 3;	02/03/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179118	PAR 8;	05/10/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179120	PAR 10;	05/10/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179121	PAR 11;	05/10/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179122	PAR 12;	05/10/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179233	PAR 1;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179234	PAR 2;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179236	PAR 4;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179237	PAR 5;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179239	PAR 7;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179240	PAR 8;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE

WYW	179241	PAR 9;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179242	PAR 10;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179243	PAR 11;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179244	PAR 12;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179245	PAR 13;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179246	PAR 14;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179247	PAR 15;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179248	PAR 16;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179249	PAR 17;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179250	PAR 18;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179251	PAR 19;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179252	PAR 20;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE
WYW	179253	PAR 21;	08/02/10	NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE

Notes

* Deferred in CFO's "Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010," WY-060-EA10-114.

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Amended Environmental Assessment

WY-060-EA11-81

Finding of No Significant Impact

March 2011

High Plains District February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales

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Finding of No Significant Impact

High Plains District February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales
WY-060-EA11-81

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an Amended Environmental Assessment (AEA) (WY-060-EA11-81) to address offering certain unissued lease parcels within the High Plains District at the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales that were originally covered under the following EAs:

On July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessments DOI-BLM-WY-070-EA10-247 (Buffalo), WY-060-EA10-114 (Casper), and DOI-BLM-WY-080-2010-18-EA (Newcastle) with their associated FONSIs and Decision Records were issued to further support the issuance of 519 parcels (402595.19 acres) sold but not issued from June 2008 through May 2010. On July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessment WY-070-EA10-267 was issued in support of the August and November 2010 lease sales by the Buffalo Field Office. On July 29, 2010, Environmental Assessment WY-060-EA10-121 was issued in support of the August and November 2010 lease sales by the Casper Field Office. On July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessment WY-080-EA10-22 was issued in support of the August and November 2010 lease sales by the Newcastle Field Office. The Amended Environmental Assessment (AEA) documents an additional review by the Buffalo, Casper, and Newcastle Field Offices of the 66 parcels that were offered and sold, but have not been issued during Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales conducted during the time from February 2010 through August 2010. Of those 66 parcels, one was originally recommended for deferral based on the ongoing sage grouse resource management plan (RMP) amendment process. Therefore only 65 parcels were analyzed in this AEA.

The selected alternatives, Alternatives B, from all six documents would be a recommendation to the Wyoming State Director to issue 63 of the 65 parcels sold at the above stated sale. Standard terms and conditions as well as parcel specific timing limitation, no surface occupancy, and controlled surface use stipulations have been attached to the parcels as specified through the EAs to be issued. Lease stipulations (as required by 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3131.3) were added to each parcel as identified by the High Plains District Interdisciplinary Teams, to address site specific concerns or new information not identified in the land use planning process.

Additionally, there would be a recommendation to the State Director to defer two parcels until lands with wilderness characteristic inventories can be completed later this summer.

The AEA (WY-060-EA11-81) is attached. A full lease issuance alternative (Alternative C) and No Action alternative (Alternative A) were analyzed in the original EAs in addition to the Proposed Action.

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have reviewed AEA WY-060-EA11-81, March 2011. Based upon a review of the AEA and the supporting documents, I have determined that Alternatives B from the original documents are not a

major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively, with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RMPs/Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEISs) or the above cited EAs. Therefore, an EIS is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context:

The Action would occur within the High Plains District Office boundaries and would have local impacts on the resources similar to and within the scope of those described and considered within the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RMPs and their respective FEISs/Records of Decision (ROD) or the above cited EAs.

Intensity:

The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

1. **Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

   The Action/Alternatives would affect resources as described in the original EA and the AEA. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to the various resources were incorporated in the design of the action alternatives. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the AEA are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RMPs and their respective FEISs/ROD or the original EAs.

2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

   The proposed action is designed to issue lease parcels sold in these three sales. No aspect of the Action/Alternatives would have an effect on public health and safety. If the parcels are subsequently issued and the leases enter into a development stage, public health or safety would be further addressed through site specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

   The only unique characteristics present within the project area are historic and cultural resources. These characteristics have been deemed to be not affected by the Action/Alternatives with mitigating measures as attached to the lease parcels. The proposed action is designed to issue lease parcels. No aspect of the Action/Alternatives would have an effect on cultural resources at the issuance phase. If the leases enter into a development stage,

cultural resources would be further addressed through site specific NEPA. Although it is not identified as an ecologically critical area, none of the parcels fall within Multiple Use Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial.**

   Effects on the quality of the human environment are not expected to be significant or highly controversial. Site specific NEPA will be conducted that addresses specific effects on resources at the time of development. Controversy in this context is considered to be in terms of disagreement about the nature of the effects– not political controversy or expressions of opposition to the action or preference among the alternatives analyzed within the Amended EA.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

   The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the AEA, the original EAs, and corresponding RMPs. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

   This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary teams within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not expected.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

   The AEA did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RMPs/FEISs or the original EAs. The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not expected.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

   There are no features within the project area listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP that would be adversely affected by a decision to issue the subject parcels. If the leases enter into a development stage, NRHP resources would be further addressed through site specific NEPA.

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.**

   Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to plants, wildlife and fisheries have been incorporated into the design of the action alternatives. Although listed species may occupy habitat within the project boundary, it has been determined that they will not be affected because surface use restrictions, including timing limitation stipulations (TLS), no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations, and controlled surface use (CSU) stipulations, as well as unavailable for leasing designations, will be applied to the lease parcels. Furthermore, post-lease actions/authorizations (e.g., Application for Permit to Drill (APDs), road/pipeline Right-of-Ways (ROWs)), could be encumbered by TLS and CSU restrictions on a case-by-case basis, as required through project-specific NEPA analysis or other environmental review.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

    The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

Signed:

The following Field Managers concur with the High Plains District Manager's Finding:

[signature]	3/4/11
Buffalo Field Manager	Date
[signature]	3-4-11
Casper Field Manager	Date
[signature]	3-4-2011
Newcastle Field Manager	Date
Stephanie Connolly	3-4-2011
High Plains District Manager	Date

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Decision Record

Amended Environmental Assessment

WY-060-EA11-81

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DECISION RECORD

Environmental Assessment

WY-060-EA11-81

February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales

Decision: It is my decision to implement Alternatives B (the Proposed Actions) of the following Environmental Assessments (EA), and to recommend sixty-three (63) parcels from the High Plains District, as identified below, be issued from the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales.

Action	Document	Date Signed
Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010 (Buffalo)	Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-WY-070-EA10-247	7/30/2010
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales August and November 2010 (Buffalo)	Environmental Assessment WY-070-EA10-267	7/30/2010
Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010 (Casper)	Environmental Assessment WY-060-EA10-114	7/30/2010
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales August and November 2010 (Casper)	Environmental Assessment WY-060-EA10-121	7/29/2010
Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008 - May 2010 (Newcastle)	Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-WY-080-2010-18-EA	7/30/2010
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sales August and November 2010 (Newcastle)	Environmental Assessment WY-080-EA10-22	7/30/2010

It is also my decision to recommend that the parcels WY-1008-027 and WY-1008-028, falling within an area that needs to have further re-inventorying for lands with wilderness characteristics, be deferred from issuance until then.

Authorities: The authority for this decision is contained in 43 CFR 3100.

Compliance and Monitoring:

No monitoring would be required in the issuance of the lease parcels. Should the parcels be developed, monitoring may be required and would be analyzed under future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation.

Terms/Conditions/Stipulations:

All parcels are subject to standard lease notices 1-3 and the Special Lease Stipulation for cultural resources. They are also subject to the Washington Office: Threatened and Endangered and Sensitive Species Stipulation (included within Instruction Memorandum No. 2002-174); the Migratory Bird Species-Interim Management Guidance Policy (included within Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. 2008-050). Individual parcels are subject to parcel specific stipulations for wildlife resources, paleontological or cultural resources, and conflicting use protection, such as coal mining. Refer to the appendices (appendix A in all except for the NFO August and November 2010 which is just an the appendix) in the above referenced EAs for the actual stipulations and lease notices applied to a given parcel.

Plan Conformance and Consistency:

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the following Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and the associated decision(s): the Buffalo Resource Management Plan (BRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (1985) and the RMP/Record of Decision (ROD) approved in October 1985; the Casper Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (June 2007) and the RMP/ROD approved in December 2007; the Newcastle Resource Management Plan (NRMP) (August 2000) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (June 1999) and the RMP/ROD approved in August 2000 – to include FEIS and /or RMP supplements or amendments in any of the three Field Offices listed above.

Pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.28 and 1502.21, this EA tiers to and incorporates by reference the information and analysis contained in the above mentioned Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RODs, RMPs, and FEISs and the above referenced EAs.

Alternatives Considered:

Alternatives A: No Action -- Under the No Action alternatives, the BLM would withdraw all sixty-five (65) parcels from being issued from the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales. Surface management would remain the same and ongoing oil and gas development would continue on surrounding federal, private, and state leases.

Alternatives B: Proposed Action -- The Proposed Actions would be a recommendation to the State Director to issue sixty-three (63) parcels that are administratively available under the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RMPs/RODs. Standard terms and conditions as well as special stipulations would apply. Lease stipulations (as required by 43 CFR 3131.3) were added to each parcel as identified by the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle Field Offices (FOs) to address site specific concerns or new information not identified in the land use planning process.

Additionally, there would be a recommendation to the State Director to defer the issuance of two (2) parcels. WY-1008-027 and WY-1008-028 fall within an area that needs to have further re-inventorying for lands with wilderness characteristics.

Alternatives C: Full Lease Issuance -- Alternatives C would issue all sixty-five (65) parcels. All other aspects of this alternative are the same as the proposed action.

Rationale for Decision:

The decision to approve the proposed action is based upon the following: 1) consistency with resource management plans and land use plans; 2) national policy; 3) agency statutory requirements; 4) relevant resource and economic issues; 5) application of measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts; 6) meeting the purpose and need for the project. Alternatives B were chosen as being the most environmentally sound alternatives that meets the purpose and need. Additionally, it would defer issuing two (2) parcels from the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales in an area that needs to have further re-inventorying for lands with wilderness characteristics.

1. This decision is in conformance with the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle RMPs.
2. It is the policy of the BLM as derived from various laws, including the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA) of 1920, as amended [30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*] and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), to make mineral resources available for disposal and to encourage development of mineral resources to meet national, regional, and local needs.
3. The decision is consistent with all federal, state, and county authorizing actions required for implementation of the Proposed Action.
4. Standard terms and conditions as well as special stipulations would apply. Lease stipulations (as required by 43 CFR 3131.3) were added to each parcel as identified by the Buffalo, Casper and Newcastle FOs to address site specific concerns or new information not identified in the land use planning process.
5. Alternatives B provide areas for the potential exploration and development of additional oil and gas resources to help meet the nation's current and expanding need for energy sources without creating the impacts associated with offering leases in sage-grouse core areas.
6. Alternatives B meet the purpose and needs identified in the original EA and the AEA.

The following Field Managers concur with the High Plains District Manager's Decision:

Buffalo Field Manager	3/4/11 Date
Casper Field Manager	3-4-11 Date
Newcastle Field Manager	3-4-2011 Date
Stephanie Connolly High Plains District Manager	3-4-2011 Date