

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-122-EA**

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**Decision Record  
Amended Environmental Assessment  
For the  
February, May, August 2010  
Lease Parcel Reviews  
For the  
Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, & Rock Springs  
Field Offices  
Of the  
Wyoming High Desert District**

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**March 2011**

High Desert District  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82401  
307-352-0256

**DECISION RECORD**  
**for the**  
**Amended Environmental Assessment**  
**DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-122-EA**  
**February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales**

**Background:** In February, May, and August 2010 oil and gas lease sales were conducted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wyoming State Office. The sales included parcels from the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs Field Offices of the High Desert District. Environmental Assessments (EAs) DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-133-EA (KFO), DOI-BLM-WY-100-2010-380-EA (PFO), DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-332-EA (RFO), and DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-121 (RSFO) with their associated FONSI and Decision Records were issued addressing parcels in the June 2008 through May 2010 lease parcel sales. Also on July 30, 2010, Environmental Assessments DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-137-EA (KFO), DOI-BLM-WY-100-EA2010-447 (PFO), DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-347-EA (RFO), and DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-126 (RSFO) with their associated FONSI and Decision Records were issued for parcels on the August 2010 lease parcel sale. Collectively these eight Environmental Assessments supported the issuance of 520 parcels (649,549.73 acres) and deferral and/or deletion of 50 parcels (63,655.95 acres). Parcels on the June 2008 through December 2009 sale lists that were not recommended for deletion or deferral through listed EAs were subsequently issued. Ninety-one (91) parcels from the February, May, and August 2010 sale lists were in protest resolution status on December 22, 2010 when DOI Secretary Salazar issued Secretarial Order (SO) 3310 Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management and had not been issued. One (1) additional parcel (WY-1002-047) did not have any qualifying bids at the lease, was transferred to the non-competitive sale list, and was still unsold when SO 3310 was signed.

The Order provided direction to the BLM to maintain wilderness resource inventories on a regular and continuing basis for public lands under its jurisdiction. It further directed 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. The Amended EA was prepared to address SO 3310 and to analyze the parcels and suitable surrounding areas for determination of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC); all other analyses the EAs referenced above remained valid and was not readdressed in the Amended EA. The 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.

**Decision:** It is my decision to implement Alternative B (the Proposed Action) of the Amended Environmental Assessment (EA), and to recommend that eighty-four (84) parcels from the High Desert District be issued from the February, May and August 2010 lease sales. Additionally, parcel WY-1002-047 would remain available for non-competitive sale and subsequent issuance. Seven (7) other parcels on the February, May, and August lists would be deferred from issuance pending field review to determine if the area meets or does not meet the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria.

**Authorities:** The authority for this decision is contained in 43 CFR 3100 and 43 CFR 6300.

### **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. Compliance with all terms and conditions of approval would be required for all approved projects.

### **Terms/Conditions/Stipulations:**

All parcels are subject to standard lease notices 1 through 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 Appendix A 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 Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (KRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the RMP/Record of Decision (ROD) approved in May 2010; the Pinedale Resource Management Plan (PRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the RMP/ROD approved in December 2009; the Rawlins Resource Management Plan (RRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the RMP/Record of Decision (ROD) approved in December 2008; the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (PRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the RMP/ROD approved in October 1997.

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 Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs RODs, RMPs, and FEISs and the above referenced EAs.

### **Alternatives Considered:**

**Alternative A: No Action** -- Under the No Action alternative, the BLM would withdraw ninety-two (92) parcels from being issued per the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sale results and would return all monies received from the high bidder. Surface management would remain the same and existing land uses, including ongoing oil and gas development, would continue on surrounding federal, private, and state leases.

**Alternative B: Proposed Action** -- The Proposed Action would be a recommendation to the State Director to issue leases for eighty-four (84) parcels previously sold but not issued, and that are administratively available under the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs 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 Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs Field Offices (FOs) to address site specific concerns or new information not identified

in the land use planning process. Additionally, parcel WY-1008-047 would continue to be available noncompetitively with subsequent sale and issuance.

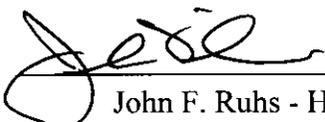
Seven (7) parcels (WY-1002-044 and parcels WY-1005-062, 063, 064, 065, 066, & 069) would be deferred from issuance pending field review. Approximately 102,529.81 acres would be issued for lease and 7,007.63 acres would be deferred under this alternative.

**Alternative C: Maximum Parcel Offering** -- Alternative C would issue all eighty-four (84) parcels recommended for leasing under Alternative B, plus it would offer the seven (7) parcels recommended for deferral under Alternative B, and would retain parcel WY-1008-047 as available for an over-the-counter sale and subsequent issuance. All other aspects of this alternative are the same as the proposed

**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. Alternative B was chosen because the eighty-five (85) parcels do not meet the LWC criteria and therefore do not impact lands with wilderness characteristics as being the most environmentally sound alternative that meets the purpose and need. Additionally, it would defer issuing seven (7) parcels from the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales in an area that needs to have field inventory to determine if it meets the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria or not.

1. This decision is in conformance with the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs 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 Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs FOs to address site specific concerns or new information not identified in the land use planning process.
5. Alternative B provides 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. Alternative B meets the purpose and needs identified in the EA.

 Acting For  
John F. Ruhs - High Desert District Manager

3-23-2011  
Date

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-122-EA**

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**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

**Amended Environmental Assessment**

**For the**

**February, May, August 2010**

**Lease Parcel Reviews**

**For the**

**Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, & Rock Springs**

**Field Offices**

**Of the**

**Wyoming High Desert District**

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**March 2011**

High Desert District  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82401  
307-352-0256

# Finding of No Significant Impact

DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-EA

## Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared an Amended Environmental Assessment (AEA) (DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-EA) to address lands with wilderness characteristics prior to issuing certain lease parcels within the High Desert District sold through the February, May and August 2010 oil and gas lease sales. The offering of these lease parcels was covered under the following Environmental Assessments along with their associated Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) and Decision Record (DR):

- DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-133-EA for the February and May parcels and DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-137-EA EA for the August parcels in the Kemmerer Field Office (KFO);
- DOI-BLM-WY-100-2010-380-EA EA for the February and May parcels and DOI-BLM-WY-100-EA2010-447 for the August parcels in the Pinedale Field Office (PFO);
- DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-332-EA EA for the February and May parcels and DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-347-EA for the August parcels in the Rawlins Field Office (RFO);
- DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-121 EA for the February and May parcels and DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-126 for the August parcels in the Rock Springs Field Office (RSFO).

Collectively these eight EAs/FONSIs/DRs supported the issuance of 520 parcels (649,549.73 acres) and deferral and or deletion of 50 parcels (63,655.95 acres). Parcels on the June 2008 through December 2009 sale lists that were not recommended for deletion or deferral through listed EAs were subsequently issued. Ninety-two (92) parcels from the February, May, and August 2010 sale lists were in protest resolution status on December 22, 2010 when DOI Secretary Salazar issued Secretarial Order (SO) 3310 Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management and had not been issued. One (1) additional parcel (WY-1002-047) did not have any qualifying bids at the lease, was transferred to the non-competitive sale list, and was still unsold when SO 3310 was signed.

The Order provided direction to the BLM to maintain wilderness resource inventories on a regular and continuing basis for public lands under its jurisdiction. It further directed 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. The Amended EA was prepared to address SO 3310 and to analyze the parcels and suitable surrounding areas for determination of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC); all other analyses the EAs referenced above remained valid and was not readdressed in the Amended EA. The 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.

The selected alternative (Alternatives B - the Proposed Action) of the Amended Environmental Assessment recommends that eighty-four (84) parcels within the High Desert District from the February, May and August 2010 lease sales be issued to the respective successful bidders. Parcel WY-1002-047 would remain available for non-competitive sale and subsequent issuance. Additionally, it would defer

issuing seven (7) parcels from the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales in an area that needs to have field inventory to determine if it meets the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria or not.

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 Desert District Interdisciplinary Teams, to address site specific concerns or new information not identified in the land use planning process.

The Amended EA (DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-122-EA) is attached. A No Action alternative (Alternative A) was analyzed in the original EAs and in the Amended EA in addition to the Proposed Action.

### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

I have reviewed AEA DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-EA, March 2011 and have determined that Alternative B is 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 Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs 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 Desert District Office boundaries and would have local impacts on the resources similar to and within the scope of those described and considered within the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs 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 EAs 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 Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs RMPs and their respective FEISs/ROD or the original EAs listed above.

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. While ecologically critical areas were identified through the AEA or the original eight EAs, the AEA did evaluate the eighty-five (85) parcels for wilderness characteristics and determined that they do not fall within Multiple Use Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. Seven (7) parcels were determined to need field inventory to ascertain if they are in an area(s) that meets the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria.

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. Oil and gas leasing on the eighty-five (85) parcels not having wilderness characteristics is consistent with the decisions and land use allocations in the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs RMPs/RODs.

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.**

The issuing of eighty-four (84) parcels, retaining parcel WY-1002-047 on the non-competitive lease list, and deferring seven (7) pending field review 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 the administrative act of issuing these leases.

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 Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs RMPs/FEISs or the original EAs listed above. 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 issuing of eighty-four (84) parcels, retaining parcel WY-1002-047 on the non-competitive lease list, and deferring seven (7) pending field review 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.

 Acting For  
John F. Ruhs - High Desert District Manager

2-23-2011  
Date

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**DOI-BLM-WY-030-2011-122-EA**

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**Amended Environmental Assessment  
for the  
February, May, August 2010  
Lease Parcel Reviews  
For the  
Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, & Rock Springs  
Field Offices  
Of the  
Wyoming High Desert District**

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**March 2011**

High Desert District  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82401  
307-352-0256

# **Amended Environmental Assessment for the February, May and August Oil & Gas Lease Sales**

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Identifying Information:**

In February, May, and August 2010 oil and gas lease sales were conducted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wyoming State Office. The sales included parcels from the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs Field Offices of the High Desert District. Environmental Assessments (EAs) DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-133-EA (KFO), DOI-BLM-WY-100-2010-380-EA (PFO), DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-332-EA (RFO), and DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-121 (RSFO) with their associated FONSI and Decision Records were issued addressing parcels in the June 2008 through May 2010 lease parcel sales. Additionally, Environmental Assessments DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-137-EA (KFO), DOI-BLM-WY-100-EA2010-447 (PFO), DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-347-EA (RFO), and DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-126 (RSFO) with their associated FONSI and Decision Records were issued for parcels on the August 2010 lease parcel sale. Collectively these eight Environmental Assessments supported the issuance of 520 parcels (649,549.73 acres) and deferral and or deletion of 50 parcels (63,655.95 acres). Parcels on the June 2008 through December 2009 sale lists that were not recommended for deletion or deferral through the listed EAs were subsequently issued. However, ninety-one (91) parcels in the High Desert District from the February, May, and August 2010 sale lists were in protest resolution status on December 22, 2010 when DOI Secretary Salazar signed Secretarial Order (SO) 3310 Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management and had not been issued. One (1) additional parcel (WY-1002-047) did not have any qualifying bids at the lease, was transferred to the non-competitive sale list, and was still unsold when SO 3310 was signed.

The Order 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 Amended EA is prepared to address SO 3310 and to analyze the parcels and suitable surrounding areas for determination of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC); all other analyses the EAs referenced above (See Section 1.2) remain valid and will not be readdressed in this Amended EA. 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.

**1.2 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans and Other Environmental Assessments**  
Pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.28 and 1502.21, this amended environmental assessment (EA) tiers to and incorporates by reference the information and

analysis contained in the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan(RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement(FEIS), the Pinedale RMP/FIES, the Rawlins RMP/FEIS, and the Rock Springs RMP/FEIS. These RMPs was approved through subsequent Records of Decision (ROD).

This Amended EA also incorporates by referenced the following Environmental Assessments:

Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008-May 2010; DOI-BLM-WY-090-2010-133-EA; Kemmerer Field Office; July 30, 2010.

Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008-May 2010; DOI-BLM-WY-100-2010-380-EA; Pinedale Field Office; July 30, 2010.

Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008-May 2010; DOI-BLM-WY-030-2010-332-EA; Rawlins Field Office; July 30, 2010.

Previously Sold Lease Parcels June 2008-May 2010; DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-121; Rock Springs Field Office; July 30, 2010.

August 2010 Lease Parcels; DOI- BLM-WY-090-2010-137-EA; Kemmerer Field Office; July 30, 2010.

August 2010 Lease Parcels; DOI- BLM-WY- 100-EA-2010-447; Pinedale Field Office; July 30, 2010.

August 2010 Lease Parcels; DOI- BLM-WY-090-2010-137-EA; Rawlins Field Office; July 30, 2010.

August 2010 Lease Parcels; DOI-BLM-WY-040-EA10-126; Rock Springs Field Office; July 29, 2010.

### **1.3 Location of Proposed Action:**

All parcels addressed in this EA are under the administration of the Kemmerer, Pinedale, Rawlins, and Rock Springs Field Offices within the High Desert District.

### **1.4 Name and Location of Preparing Office:**

Lead Office – High Desert District Office, Rock Springs, WY

### **1.6 Applicant Name:**

Parcels were nominated through Expressions of Interest for the February, May, and August 2010 Oil and Gas Competitive Lease Sale.

### **1.7 Purpose and Need**

The purpose of this document is to analyze the impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics as prescribed in the implementation of SO 3310 prior to lease issuance of parcels sold at several previous competitive oil and gas lease sales.

The BLM's purpose for issuing the leases addressed in this Amended EA is to 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. Wyoming is a major source of natural gas for heating and electrical energy production in the United States. The offering for lease, sale, and subsequent issuance of oil and gas leases is needed to meet the requirements of MLA, FLPMA, and the minerals management objectives in the Pinedale, Rock Springs, Rawlins and Kemmerer Resource Management Plans (RMP). Oil and gas leasing provides oil and gas companies the opportunity to expand existing areas of production and to locate previously undiscovered oil and gas resources to help meet the public's energy demands.

## **Chapter 2 Proposed Action and Alternatives**

Thirty-three (33) parcels from the February 2010 oil and gas lease sale, twenty-three (23) from the May 2010 sale, and thirty-six (36) from the August 2010 sale to date have not been issued for lease of the successful bidders, or in the case of parcel WY-1002-047 has not been sold. In compliance with SO 3310 and in conformance with BLM Manual 6300-1, these parcels are being re-reviewed prior to issuance for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. The review replaces all previous discussions/analysis relating to LWC in the referenced EAs listed in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of this Amended EA as it relates to parcels previously addressed for the February, May and August 2010 sales. This section describes the alternatives considered for analysis.

Standard terms and conditions as well as special stipulations addressed in previous analyses would apply. Lease stipulations (as required by Title 43 Code of Federal Registration 3131.3) were added to each parcel as identified by the Field Offices to address site specific concerns as addressed in previous analyses.

### **2.1 Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail**

**No Action Alternative:** This alternative analyzes the effect of not issuing leases for parcels previously sold in the February, May or August 2010 sales. Under the No Action alternative, the BLM would not issue any of the leases that have been sold. Surface management would remain the same and existing land use, including ongoing oil and gas development, would continue on surrounding federal, private, and state leases.

The BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) states that for Environmental Assessments (EAs) on externally initiated proposed actions, the No Action Alternative generally means that the proposed action would not take place. In the case of a lease sale, this would mean that an expression of interest to lease (parcel nomination) would be denied or rejected, and a lease would not be issued for that parcel. For this AEA however, the intent of the No Action would be to not issue leases for parcels previously sold and returning all monies received for the nominated parcels.

It is not expected that demand for energy oil and gas will go down, and a decision to not issue these leases may not prevent future leasing in these areas consistent with land use planning decisions, and subject to appropriate stipulations, identified in the Resource Management Plan. Therefore, it is anticipated that these parcels may be nominated and leased at a future date. While future leases may contain more restrictive lease terms, it is reasonable to consider that a substantial portion of the development possible under current planning decisions will be possible under future leases.

**The Proposed Action: Issue Certain Leases with Stipulations and Defer Others:** Under the proposed action, the BLM-Wyoming State Director would issue eighty-four (84) parcels sold collectively at the February, May, and August 2010 oil and gas lease sales, as detailed in Appendix A. The parcels would be issued with the stipulations recommended through the analysis in the EA's referenced in Section 1.2. The State Director would also continue to make the one (1) parcel that did not receive any qualifying bids at the February 2010 sale available for non-competitive sale.

Seven (7) parcels WY-1002-044 (formerly WY-1002-052) and parcels WY-1005-062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 069 (formerly WY-1005-072, 073, 074, 075, 076, & 081)) would be deferred from issuance pending field review. Approximately 102,529.81 acres would be issued for lease and 7,007.63 acres would be deferred under this alternative.

**Alternative 3 – Issue All Leases with Stipulations:** Alternative 3 would be the same as the Proposed Action, except all ninety-two (92) parcels listed in Appendix A would be issued by the State Director sold at the February, May, and August 2010 oil and gas lease sales. Approximately 109,537.44 acres would be issued for lease under this alternative.

## **Chapter 3 - Affected Environment**

This section describes the environment that would be affected by implementation of the alternatives described in Section 2. Aspects of the affected environment described in this section focus on relevant major resources and issues. All relevant major resources and issues, except for LWC, are adequately described in previous NEPA documents. 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.

### **3.1 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)**

Wilderness characteristics are resource values that include naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and/or 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) or are 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).

BLM began the initial inventory in the fall of 1978 and completed a 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 under the jurisdiction of BLM Wyoming, 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.

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 leases for these parcels complies with SO 3310. As directed by the SO 3310, the BLM first undertook an additional screening process to determine whether or not the parcels, and the area around the parcels would qualify according to size and naturalness. Based on this additional review it was confirmed that eighty-four (84) parcels sold at the February, May, and August 2010 oil and gas lease sales, as well as the parcel not receiving any bids, do not fall within areas meeting the criteria for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, see Appendix B. These results substantiate a 2010 inventory of these parcels. Seven (7) other parcels (WY-1002-044 (formerly WY-1002-052) and parcels WY-1005-062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 069 (formerly WY-1005- 072, 073, 074, 075, 076, & 081)) also underwent initial wilderness review in 2010, at which time parcels 044 and 069 were determined to not have wilderness characteristics due to their proximity to BLM Road 4407 and to existing oil/gas wells; parcel 062, 064, 065, & 066 were determined to not have wilderness characteristics due to adjacent oil & gas leases and leases held by production. Parcel 063 was determined to meet the wilderness criteria, but was still made available for leasing due to the Dispersed Recreation Use Area designation and associated decisions in the 2008 Rawlins RMP/ROD. The post Secretarial Order 3301 review conducted in March 2011 determined that all seven (7) parcels fell within a more expansive area than that reviewed in 2010. This larger area is defined as the land bounded by BLM Road 4407, Sweetwater County Road 25, the Wyoming/Colorado State line, the Bitter Creek/BLM Road 4412, and a constructed and maintained road connecting roads 4407 and 4412. The area is greater than 5000 acres. It was also determined that the area containing these parcels has several widely spaced bisecting two-track roads, as well as several reclaimed well pads and associated reclaimed access roads. Due to the wide spread/relatively sparse nature of the two-tracks, field inventory is needed to determine if the presence and condition of the two-tracks and the reclaimed facilities meet the naturalness criteria in BLM Manual 6300-1 or not.

## **Chapter 4 - Environmental Analysis**

### **4.1 Wilderness Characteristics:**

**No Action:**

Under the No Action Alternative, the issuance of leases under the Proposed Action would not occur. No resulting effects on special management areas, multiple use lands with wilderness characteristics or WSAs would be expected to occur beyond the current situation.

### **Proposed Action:**

As stated in the referenced EA's in Section 1.2, offering and issuing an oil and gas lease is an administrative action; consequently the issuing a lease would have no direct adverse impacts to the affected environment, which in the case of this AEA is wilderness characteristics. At the time of issuance, it is unknown if, when, or where future development on the parcel may be proposed. Detailed site specific analysis of individual wells or roads would occur when a proponent submits an Application for Permit to Drill (APD) or at the stage of full mineral resource development.

Review and inventory of the ninety-two (92) parcels that have either been sold and not yet issued or not sold and are available for non competitive sale were screened for wilderness characteristics as addressed in SO 3310 and BLM Manual 6300-1.

The required wilderness inventory evaluates wilderness characteristics as defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and incorporated in FLPMA. In order for an area to be classified as an LWC, it must possess sufficient size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive type of recreation and unconfined recreation. In addition, it may also possess supplemental values. The parcels and surrounding area were evaluated for these characteristics. Eighty-five (85) parcels were found to be within areas that either do not meet lands of wilderness characteristics size criteria or they do not meet the naturalness criteria. Seven (7) parcels were determined to need additional field review to ascertain if the area contains naturalness, solitude and/or provide opportunities for primitive recreation.

Based on the review through this AEA, the issuance of the proposed 84 parcels would not impact or impair identified lands with wilderness characteristics. Sale and issuance of the parcel that received no bids also would not impact or impair identified lands with wilderness characteristics. Issuance of the seven parcels that may contain wilderness characteristics could result in post lease development (well pads, roads, pipelines, etc.) that could impact the wilderness characteristics and the ability of the BLM to manage those lands for wilderness. Deferring the seven parcels would protect these areas until field inventory can be performed to determine if the parcels do or do not contain wilderness characteristics. Additionally, it would defer issuing seven (7) parcels from the February, May and August 2010 Lease Sales in an area that needs to have field inventory to determine if it meets the lands with wilderness characteristics criteria or not.

### **Alternative 3 – Issuance of All Parcels:**

Impacts under this alternative would be basically the same as for the Proposed Action, except the eleven parcels deferred through the Proposed Action would be issued under Alternative 3. The issuance of these parcels could result in post lease development (well pads, roads, pipelines, etc.) that would diminish and/or eliminate any existing wilderness characteristics and preclude the

ability of the BLM to manage them for wilderness or wildlands values. This would, in turn, impact potential LWC-related recreational use opportunities.

#### **4.2 Cumulative Impacts**

With the exception of the potential impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics described under the Proposed Action and Alternative 3, the cumulative impacts would be the same as those described in the referenced EA's.

#### **Chapter 5 - Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted**

A BLM Interdisciplinary Team reviewed all ninety-two (92) parcels in accordance with SO 3310 and Manuals 6300-1 and 6300-2. No other entities were consulted in the development of this Amended Environmental Assessment.

#### **Chapter 6 List of Preparers**

Bill Lanning, District Resource Advisor - Preparer  
Kemmerer Field Office BLM Staff  
Pinedale Field Office Staff  
Rawlins Field Office Staff  
Rock Springs Field Office Staff

**Appendix A**  
**(Listing of the Parcels Covered by this EA)**

Serial Number	Final Parcel #	Sale Date	Jurisdiction
WYW 178968	PAR 50;	02/01/10	KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179188	PAR 79;	05/10/10	KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179305	PAR 76;	08/02/10	KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179306	PAR 77;	08/02/10	KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179307	PAR 78;	08/02/10	KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179186	PAR 77;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179187	PAR 78;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179189	PAR 80;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179190	PAR 81;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179191	PAR 82;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179192	PAR 83;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179193	PAR 84;	05/10/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179303	PAR 74;	08/02/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179304	PAR 75;	08/02/10	PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178925	PAR 6;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178926	PAR 7;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178927	PAR 8;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178928	PAR 9;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178929	PAR 10;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178930	PAR 11;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178936	PAR 17;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178937	PAR 18;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178939	PAR 20;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE

WYW 178940	PAR 21;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178941	PAR 22;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178942	PAR 23;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178943	PAR 24;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178944	PAR 25;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178945	PAR 26;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178946	PAR 27;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178947	PAR 28;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178948	PAR 29;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178950	PAR 31;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178951	PAR 32;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178952	PAR 33;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178953	PAR 34;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178954	PAR 35;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178955	PAR 36;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178956	PAR 37;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178961*	PAR 42;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178963*	PAR 44;	02/01/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179160	PAR 50;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179161	PAR 51;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179162	PAR 52;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179163	PAR 53;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179164	PAR 54;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179171	PAR 61;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179172	PAR 62;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179173	PAR 63;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE

WYW 179174	PAR 64;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179175	PAR 65;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179176	PAR 66;	05/10/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179257	PAR 25;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179258	PAR 26;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179261	PAR 29;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179262	PAR 30;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179263	PAR 31;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179264	PAR 32;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179265	PAR 33;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179266	PAR 34;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179267	PAR 35;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179268	PAR 36;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179269	PAR 37;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179270	PAR 38;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179271	PAR 39;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179272	PAR 40;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179273	PAR 41;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179274	PAR 43;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179275	PAR 44;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179276	PAR 45;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179277	PAR 46;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179278	PAR 47;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179279	PAR 48;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179280	PAR 49;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179283	PAR 52;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE

WYW 179291	PAR 60;	08/02/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179308	PAR 42;	08/04/10	RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178961*	PAR 42;	02/01/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178963*	PAR 44;	02/01/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178964	PAR 45;	02/01/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178965	PAR 46;	02/01/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178455**	PAR 47;	No Bids	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178966	PAR 48;	02/01/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 178967	PAR 49;	02/01/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179178	PAR 68;	05/10/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179179	PAR 69;	05/10/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179180	PAR 70;	05/10/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179185	PAR 75;	05/10/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179296	PAR 65;	08/02/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179297	PAR 66;	08/02/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179298	PAR 67;	08/02/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179299	PAR 69;	08/02/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179300	PAR 70;	08/02/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
WYW 179301	PAR 71;	08/02/10	ROCK SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE

\*Portion of this parcel fall within the Rawlins FO, the rest is located in the Rock Springs FO

\*\*Parcel currently on the noncompetitive lease list and is available over-the-counter

## APPENDIX B

### Summary of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Review for Unissued February, May, & August 2010 Oil and Gas Lease Parcels (Based on 6300-1 Forms 1, 2, & Summary Sheet on file at the respective Field Office)

Parcel #	Field Office	Meets Criteria for LWC per 6300-1 (Yes Defer the Parcel No Issue the Parcel)	Field Inventory Needed to Determine if the Area Containing the Parcel Meets the LWC Criteria (Defer the Parcel)
WY-1002- 050	KFO	No	No
WY-1005- 079	KFO	No	No
WY-1008- 076	KFO	No	No
WY-1008- 077	KFO	No	No
WY-1008- 078	KFO	No	No
WY-1005- 077	PFO	No	No
WY-1005- 078	PFO	No	No
WY-1005- 080	PFO	No	No
WY-1005- 081	PFO	No	No
WY-1005- 082	PFO	No	No
WY-1005- 083	PFO	No	No
WY-1008- 084	PFO	No	No
WY-1008- 074	PFO	No	No
WY-1005- 075	PFO	No	No
WY-1002-006	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-007	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-008	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-009	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-010	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-011	RFO	No	No

WY-1002-017	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-018	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-020	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-021	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-022	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-023	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-024	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-025	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-026	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-027	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-028	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-029	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-031	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-032	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-033	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-034	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-035	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-036	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-037	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-042	RFO/RSFO	No	No
WY-1002-044	RFO/RSFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1005-050	RFO	No	No
WY-1005-051	RFO	No	No
WY-1005-052	RFO	No	No
WY-1005-053	RFO	No	No
WY-1005-054	RFO	No	No

WY-1005-061	RFO	No	No
WY-1005-062	RFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1005-063	RFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1005-064	RFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1005-065	RFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1005-066	RFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1008-025	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-026	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-029	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-030	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-031	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-032	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-033	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-034	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-035	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-036	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-037	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-038	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-039	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-040	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-041	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-042	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-043	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-044	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-045	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-046	RFO	No	No

WY-1008-047	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-048	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-049	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-052	RFO	No	No
WY-1008-060	RFO	No	No
WY-1002-045	RSFO	No	No
WY-1002-046	RSFO	No	No
WY-1002-047*	RSFO	No	No
WY-1002-048	RSFO	No	No
WY-1002-049	RSFO	No	No
WY-1005-068	RSFO	No	No
WY-1005-069	RSFO	Undetermined	Yes
WY-1005-070	RSFO	No	No
WY-1005-075	RSFO	No	No
WY-1008-065	RSFO	No	No
WY-1008-066	RSFO	No	No
WY-1008-067	RSFO	No	No
WY-1008-069	RSFO	No	No
WY-1008-070	RSFO	No	No
WY-1008-071	RSFO	No	No

\* Parcel currently on the noncompetitive lease list and is available over-the-counter