Public Comments and BLM Responses on the Revised Draft SEIS
Local Agencies

Comment Number LA-1-1-G-1

Comment

BLM developed the preferred alternative without the involvement of all of the cooperating agencies in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Response

The BLM established cooperating agencies on the SEIS that have jurisdiction by law and special expertise and worked with those cooperating agencies on those portions of the SEIS that the cooperator has jurisdiction by law or special expertise.

Comment Number LA-1-2-G-2

Comment

BLM has not held a meeting with all of the cooperators on this EIS in more than two years. Nevertheless BLM continues to selectively meet with cooperators to discuss revision of the preferred alternative and other material issues, including compensatory mitigation. BLM claims that it is not holding the meetings, merely responding to questions. One such "meeting" was discovered at the Pinedale BLM offices, where BLM was meeting separately with Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) and the operators on October 19, 2007. The selective meeting process precludes the collaboration and resolution of important issues.

Response

The BLM does not have record of the meeting that is said to have occurred on 10/19/2007. However, the BLM, as lead agency, can meet with cooperators on issues where that cooperator has jurisdiction by law or special expertise.

Comment Number LA-1-3-G-3

Comment

As cooperating agencies, SC & SCCD are particularly disappointed with the failure of *Rev'd*. DSEIS to recognize their respective areas of jurisdiction and expertise. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS fails to address county transportation and services issues, conservation and mitigation issues, and county land use and jurisdiction issues. *See* Comments on Preliminary DSEIS Oct. 23, 2006, Nos. 1,5,6,9,16,27,29,30,31,33,40,43,46, & 49.

Response

The BLM respectfully disagrees.

Comment Number LA-1-4-LU-1

Comment

The Revised DSEIS also omits any reference to county authority over the construction of buildings and related structures. *See* e.g. Sublette County Comprehensive Plan (1999 - 2003); Zoning and Development Regulations Resolutions, Sublette County Floodplain Management, Building Permit Application, and Road Standards for County of Sublette.

Response

The text has been revised.

Comment Number LA-1-5-G-4

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS still omits SCCD as a cooperator. *Rev'd*. DSEIS at 1-2. It took the Pinedale Office more than two years to recognize the SCCD request for cooperating agency.

Response

SCCD became a cooperating agency close to the publication date of the Revised Draft SEIS. This will be corrected in the Final SEIS.

Comment Number LA-1-6-G-5

Comment

SC & SCCD met with BLM to discuss the *Rev'd*. DSEIS. BLM officials told SC & SCCD that it needed yet another Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before it would treat SC & SCCD as cooperators. No other cooperating agency was required to resubmit such a request.

Response

The commenter is mistaken. SCCD did not have a finalized MOU with the BLM until early December 2007, just prior to release of the Revised Draft SEIS. Sublette County had a MOU in place and was not required to resubmit a MOU.

Comment Number LA-1-7-M-1

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS does not address opportunities for onsite compensatory mitigation, which are quite different from reclamation or offsite compensatory mitigation plan set out in *Rev'd*. DSEIS App. 9. SC & SCCD believe that this is an important opportunity that should not be overlooked.

Response

The BLM agrees that onsite mitigation is an important opportunity. However, compensatory mitigation must be acceptable to those offering the compensatory mitigation. What was acceptable was analyzed.

Comment Number LA-1-8-M-2

Comment

SC & SCCD propose to expand a compensatory mitigation plan to address more than just wildlife habitat in order to address the full range of affected resources. In addition to addressing onsite compensatory mitigation opportunities, a revised compensatory mitigation plan would add the following objectives:
(1) Improve riparian area soil, water, and vegetation components (which would enhance habitat function), vegetation diversity when appropriate, and manage to remove or reduce noxious or invasive plant species;
(2) Enhance vegetation and soil stability in riparian areas to improve vegetation, water quality, and water temperatures;
(3) Implement livestock range improvements (water developments, fencing and/or vegetation enhancements) that promote livestock distribution and utilization and reduce grazing impacts and pressure on riparian areas;
(4) Improve livestock grazing forage through habitat improvement projects, including vegetation treatments;

Response

Thank you for your comments. The compensatory mitigation, and the mitigation fund, could be utilized for minimizing impacts to various resources as described in Appendix 11, page 5.

Comment Number LA-1-9-GR-1

Comment

SC & SCCD believe that wildlife habitat and improved rangeland resources are not mutually exclusive or even contradictory objectives. For this reason, SC & SCCD recommends revision of the compensatory mitigation plan to ensure that the scope of the plan is broad enough to encompass improved rangeland resource conditions for all grazing animals. This in turn will also ensure improved resource conditions for all multiple uses.

Response

See response to Comment LA-1-8-M-2.

Comment Number LA-1-10-M-3

Comment

The wildlife habitat mitigation plan, Appendix 9C for Alternative D, was developed without the involvement of most of the cooperators. Because BLM can require onsite compensatory mitigation, the rationale that this was an Operator sponsored idea fails. If it is onsite mitigation, BLM had to include all of the cooperators. If it is only offsite compensatory mitigation, the BLM cannot show that it has exhausted onsite compensatory mitigation opportunities.

Response

The BLM can require onsite mitigation and this has been analyzed; however compensatory mitigation must be acceptable to those offering the compensatory mitigation.

Comment Number LA-1-11-RC-1

Comment

SC & SCCD supported the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) comments filed March 28, 2007. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS assumes successful reclamation in three to five years, *Rev'd*. DSEIS at App. 4-12. and defines success by percent of plant cover. *Rev'd*. DSEIS App.8B-2; App. 8C-3.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-1-11-GR-2

Comment

The livestock grazing permittees will be the most affected by reclamation gaps. For example, noxious weeds moving into a disturbed site will also invade adjacent areas, pulling down the plant communities throughout the allotment. Noxious weeds are carried by a number of vectors, including wind, birds, wildlife, as well as livestock. Access to the pasture may also be prohibited during the revegetation period.

Response

Please see the stated goal of the Reclamation Plan attached to the Preferred Alternative. The ROD will finalize any and all decisions arising out of the analysis of the impacts associated with each alternative.

Comment Number LA-1-12-RC-2

Comment

If site stabilization is the first priority, then SC & SCCD recommend use of native-sterile seed mixture. *See e.g. Plans for Reclamation of the Surface - Draft Template* (July 2007).

SC & SCCD also support the concept of using a quick growing seed mix rather than a pure native seed mix initially.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The PFO is currently exploring the use of sterile plants for temporary stabilization which is different from interim reclamation requirements.

Comment Number LA-1-13-VG-1

Comment

SC & SCCD support development of a vegetation and rangeland resource monitoring program to identify changes in vegetation, soil, and water systems on the affected public lands. Monitoring should include livestock and wildlife utilization studies as well.

Response

Utilization studies are conducted under the BLM's rangeland management program.

Comment Number LA-1-14-T-1

Comment

The Revised DSEIS is written without regard to the county transportation plan or transportation issues raised in comments on the draft SEIS in April 2007 or comments on the preliminary revised draft in October 2007.

Response

The BLM respectfully disagrees. Mitigation to transportation issues is included in the alternatives of the SEIS as well as the additional mitigation opportunities.

Comment Number LA-1-15-T-2

Comment

The PAPA FEIS ROD provided for maintenance agreements for the roads and transportation planning. PAPA FEIS ROD at 15-16. There is no evidence that this resulted in addressing the significant costs to the county for ongoing maintenance and repair. The county roads that run through the field should be part of a maintenance agreement.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-1-16-T-3

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS Transportation plan needs to address
Repair and maintenance of county roads. Reduction in litter and garbage that attracts predators and represents sanitary issues. Dust and air particulates due to heavy industrial traffic, especially where PAPA collector system connects to county roads and county roads connect to Highways 191 and 351. SC & SCCD have documented the wear and tear on county roads due to the heavy volume of truck traffic. See Comments on Draft SEIS, Nos. 2, 6, 10. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS refers to state funding for state highways but nothing about funding for county roads. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 2-8, 2-52.

Response

Mitigation for transportation issues (liquids gathering system, computer assisted monitoring) is included in the alternatives of the SEIS as well as the additional mitigation opportunities.

Comment Number LA-1-16-T-4

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS assumes decline in traffic at the end of the drilling period. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 2-21. This is unlikely unless it is at the end of the production period when wells are being abandoned. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS assumes no drop in work force during production period. *Rev'd*. DSEIS Table 2-4-17. Thus, traffic is unlikely to decline during production phase.

Response

The amount of traffic at the production phase (end of development) varies with alternative due to the liquids gathering system.

Comment Number LA-1-17-T-5

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS calls for obliteration of roads but this needs to be limited to BLM roads and exclude all county roads. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 4-124.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-1-18-T-6

Comment

The revised DSEIS also describes a possible liquids pipeline gathering system to reduce truck traffic separate from the system installed by Questar. *Rev'd*. DSEIS at 1-9, 2-18, Table at 3-36,

Table at 4-38. This is not discussed in sufficient detail regarding location, length, to determine whether it will reduce the burdens on county roads. It appears more likely that it will only reduce traffic on the collector roads located on public lands between well pad sites and will not address the adverse impacts on county roads.

Response

It is not known at this time the exact location of the well pads that would be needed to develop the PAPA. However it can be assumed that the existing well pads as presented in the various maps throughout Chapter 3 would be the major infrastructure to which the liquids gathering system would serve.

Comment Number LA-1-19-T-7

Comment

Rev'd. DSEIS states: "Proponents will reclaim any road not required for routine operation and maintenance of producing wells or ancillary facilities as directed by the BLM, State Land Board, or private landowner." *Rev'd*. DSEIS App. D-2 ¶11. The county should also be involved.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-1-20-T-8

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS states "In consultation with BLM and WG&FD, Proponents will install gates as appropriate and supply other needed material in crucial winter range and sage grouse concentration areas to encourage compliance with traffic restrictions." *Rev'd*. DSEIS App. 5-3, ¶18. This paragraph needs to be revised to include consultation with landowners, permittees, and the county.

Response

Consultation with affected parties would continue.

Comment Number LA-1-21-GW-1

Comment

The revised DSEIS appears to cancel the water quality monitoring program that SCCD has conducted for more than four years without communicating with SCCD. The rationale to do so is contradicted by the *Rev'd*. DSEIS, other public statements from BLM, and by the facts. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS §4.13.3.1 must be revised to conform to the facts.

Response

The BLM is not canceling the monitoring program but is collecting additional data in order to more clearly focus our efforts. The BLM is unable to secure SCCD's position as the Operators' contractor for performing the requirements of the document. The document has been revised to clarify that the monitoring shall continue in its current state until such time as the Framework Process indicates necessary changes to the program.

Comment Number LA-1-22-GW-2

Comment

The DSEIS incorrectly states: "As discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.15.1.5, groundwater monitoring is conducted by SCCD on behalf of the Operators. The BLM initiated this program in 2005, and the number of sampled wells has grown to over 200 in 2007." Rev'd DSEIS at 4-101. BLM did not initiate the groundwater monitoring program.

Response

The BLM is unaware of this being incorrect. The SCCD is contracted by the operators to carryout the monitoring program as required by the PAPA ROD.

Comment Number LA-1-23-GW-3

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS is written to imply that SCCD improperly conducted and designed the program. This is inaccurate.

Response

The document has been fixed to identify that the WDEQ voiced concern with the BLM administered monitoring program. We meant no offense to the SCCD and applaud the dedication they have shown.

Comment Number LA-1-24-GW-4

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS incorrectly states that SCCD was appointed pursuant to the ROD for the Pinedale Anticline FEIS (2000) and has worked through the Pinedale Anticline Working Group, a FACA chartered advisory committee, to monitor water quality. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 3-81.

Response

The BLM is unable to locate the referenced comment. We understand that the SCCD was contracted by the Operators to perform the PAPA ROD required groundwater monitoring.

Comment Number LA-1-25-GW-5

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS states that SCCD selected the sites to be monitored improperly. *Rev'd*. DSEIS at 4-103. The sampling procedures were developed and recommended by PAWG and approved by BLM. Based on the WDEQ criticism, BLM now proposes to initiate a *Regional Framework for Water Resources Monitoring to Energy Exploration and Development*. This framework is neither described or otherwise publicly available.[3]
It is not possible to determine how the Regional Framework would change the current sampling and analysis plan and procedures.

Response

The BLM is unable to locate the referenced comment. We understand that the SCCD was contracted by the Operators to perform the PAPA ROD required groundwater monitoring with sampling overseen by the PAWG-WRTG as well as the BLM. The Framework document has been posted the Pinedale PAWG-WRTG website.

Comment Number LA-1-26-GW-6

Comment

BLM lacks regulatory authority over groundwater and thus lacks the authority to impose monitoring criteria for groundwater.

Response

The State of Wyoming will be acknowledged as having purview with regards to water quality. All SAP's as they relate to water resources have been coordinated with the WDEQ-WQD.

Comment Number LA-1-27-SW-1

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS includes ephemeral or intermittent channels as waters of the United States. *Rev'd*. DSEIS App. 4-13. The definition of 'waters of the United States' needs to be revised to conform to more recent Supreme Court decisions and EPA guidance.

Response

The document has been updated to address your comment. Thank you.

Comment Number LA-1-28-GW-7

Comment

SCCD identified TPH and other pollutants in the ground water as a result of its monitoring efforts in 2006.

Response

Please see Chapter 3, Section 3.15.1.5. Your assertion is not disputed. Thank you for your comment

Comment Number LA-1-29-GW-8

Comment

BLM needs to work with the State Engineer's Office with respect to aquifer use and overall impacts. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS assumes that all of the aquifers are connected to surface water systems, when other discussions of the aquifer geology in the *Rev'd*. DSEIS clearly state that much of the water is not connected.

Response

This assumption was made for the initial analysis. The modeling will be adjusted as additional data becomes available through the Framework Process.

Comment Number LA-1-30-G-6

Comment

The liquids gathering system is a connected action that will only occur as a result of additional development and identified mitigation program. Under the CEQ rules, the *Rev'd*. DSEIS needs to discuss this related action as well. 40 C.F.R. §1508.27(b). If it is to be considered as part of the mitigation of impacts then the *Rev'd*. DSEIS must expand the facts relating to the pipeline and its environmental impacts.
The *Rev'd*. DSEIS introduces the idea of expanding the current liquids gathering system by Questar to mitigate adverse environmental impacts relating to use of roads, air quality and truck traffic, especially relating to hauling of water. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 1-9, 4-34, 4-82, 4-85. In some parts of the *Rev'd*. DSEIS it is a possible future action and elsewhere it is an Operator-committed action.
The *Rev'd*. DSEIS does not identify the location, number of miles, or related impacts of the liquids gathering system. The proposed liquids gathering pipeline system is said to reduce these environmental impacts. The construction will, however, cause additional adverse environmental impacts in the form of surface disturbance, noxious weed opportunities, visual quality impacts, and nonpoint source water pollution due to the surface disturbance and construction. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS does not discuss these additional environmental impacts or whether these impacts too must be mitigated..
The construction of additional liquids gathering systems to reduce truck hauling within the project area is relevant. It affects traffic, air quality, and water quality. *Rev'd*. DSEIS needs to be revised to address same. See *Rev'd*. DSEIS 4-34.

Response

The exact location of the pipelines cannot be determined at this stage, but the length of the pipeline and the associated surface disturbance was analyzed in the SEIS. See Revised Draft SEIS Table 2.4-2, 2.4-5, and 2.4-11, and page 4-5, 4-13, 4-34. The additional surface disturbance for the liquids gathering system is included in the surface disturbance analysis, such as Table 4.16-1.

Comment Number LA-1-31-G-7

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS, Appendix 5, incorporates the proposed liquids gathering system into the preferred alternative transportation plan. *Rev'd*. DSEIS, App. 5D 1-26. But the *Rev'd*. DSEIS discussion of these pipelines does not evaluate the truck hauling of produced water outside of the project area, use of county and state roads, and related impacts on air quality, water, and particulates. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS does not address the capacity of the existing produced waste water systems to handle the water from expanded development, the adequacy of the existing treatment facilities, or the need for additional facility.
The *Rev'd*. DSEIS correctly states that some produced water can be treated and reused. *Rev'd*. DSEIS at 92. Other produced water, even if treated, cannot be reused. Regardless the waste products from treatment must still be disposed of. The additional and relevant information regarding the capacity of existing facilities, the need to build an additional facility, should be addressed in the *Rev'd*. DSEIS.

Response

The type, location, and size of any additional water disposal facility is not known at this time. Page 4-106 discusses disposal of produced water. The SEIS discloses the anticipated number of truck trips that would be reduced by the liquids gathering system.

Comment Number LA-1-32-GR-3

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS Alternative D identifies mitigation measures for livestock grazing. *Rev'd*. DSEIS §4.17.5 Grazing Resources Additional Mitigation Opportunities. They are insufficient or not responsive. All of the mitigation measures are set out as possible, without any requirement that they actually occur. Thus, they are not actually mitigation measures, just possible actions. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS fails to identify how these measures might be funded. BLM range funds are very limited (less than $10 million a year or not less than half of the grazing fees received to be allocated among the western states, , 43 U.S.C. §1904). BLM staff lack the time to prepare the NEPA document and other program priorities override the grazing program.

Response

Since the SEIS analyzes options, or proposals, the use of the words "would" or "should" are acceptable. The use of the word "shall" is reserved for the Record of Decision. The BLM will consider your input in making a decision.

Comment Number LA-1-33-GR-4

Comment

The Green River Stock Drift is a stock driveway which is an R.S. 2477 right-of-way. This route was established by use on unreserved public lands, thus making it a public right-of-way. *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Bureau of Land Management*, 425 F.3d 735, 776 (10th Cir. 2005). The concept of a buffer is sound but it also needs to be wide enough to accommodate the number of livestock actually using the driveway. Parts of the route are narrow where it runs through subdivisions but it widens elsewhere. BLM would not approve a well within a county right-of-way and so it cannot approve a well within the stock driveway either.

Response

A stock drift does not make a stock driveway. There are no stock driveways within the Pinedale Anticline SEIS area. All recognized stock driveways within the Pinedale Field Office are under withdrawals (43 CFR 2300).

Comment Number LA-1-34-GR-5

Comment

SC & SCCD support Measures Nos. 2 and 3, to build fences and develop additional water to improve livestock distribution. Cattle suffer harm and even death when they fall into trenches or evaporation pits. It is reasonable to fence these hazards. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS needs to specify that the Operators will pay for the projects. The BLM range improvement fund budget is very limited and range projects are often delayed due to the combination of lack of funds and personnel to complete the NEPA review.
The *Rev'd*. DSEIS also needs to provide that these projects will be considered mitigation, even if they do not directly or primarily benefit wildlife. They will mitigate impacts on vegetation, soil, and water and thus provide compensatory resources within the project area (onsite compensatory mitigation.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The BLM will consider your input in issuing a decision.

Comment Number LA-1-35-GR-6

Comment

In the case of compensation for death of livestock, the Operators are legally required to compensate the livestock owner. Moreover, the compensation needs to reflect the value of that animal to the ranch operation, rather than the market price per pound on the date of death.

Response

The compensatory mitigation program you are referring to operates under State Authority. The BLM cannot enter into third party agreements.

Comment Number LA-1-36-GR-7

Comment

SC & SCCD also support compensation in the form of alternative pasture for the livestock or direct compensation to take non-use. Supplemental feeding is prohibited unless there is special approval. 43 C.F.R. 4140.1 (prohibited without proper authorization). Providing alternative pasture can be problematic, unless it is tailored to the operation of the affected ranch and would not displace an existing active ranch.

Response

The compensatory mitigation program you are referring to operates under State Authority. The BLM cannot enter into third party agreements.

Comment Number LA-1-37-AP-1

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS only provides for annual meeting participation by Operators, federal, state and local government agencies. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 2-19. The livestock operators and other landowners need to be involved in the annual meetings.

Response

This would require a FACA charter. The PAWG is expected to continue under all alternatives and the BLM will continue to coordinate with landowners and permittees.

Comment Number LA-1-38-GR-8

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS, Appendix 4, limits mitigation for grazing to "All range improvements (stock water tanks, pipelines, corrals, etc.) should be avoided by 500 feet unless no other alternative is available and impacts can be mitigated as per the BLM Authorized Officer." *Rev'd*. DSEIS App. 4-14. This omits mitigation regarding impacts on forage, vegetation, stock driveways, and livestock collisions.

Response

Mitigation for vegetation resources is included in the Revised Draft SEIS. All recognized stock driveways within the Pinedale Field Office are under withdrawals (43 CFR 2300). The BLM can not require compensation for livestock collisions.

Comment Number LA-1-39-GR-9

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS focuses on the number of AUMs related to the number of acres disturbed. *Rev'd*. DSEIS at 3-103 to 3-106. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS also needs to quantify the impacts on livestock operations. Most of the grazing allotments are used in May and June, which coincides with the peak of construction and drilling, notwithstanding provisions for year-round oil and gas operations.

Response

Chapter 3 discusses the affected environment and is not the place to discuss impacts of the various alternatives.

Comment Number LA-1-40-GR-10

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS does not address how traffic might interfere with livestock herding onto and off the allotments or through pastures, or how construction through an allotment will disrupt pasture movements and herding. These are significant impacts because the construction and related traffic will require each operator to spend more time and money keeping livestock out of harm's way and in their prescribed pasture. BLM imposes potentially severe penalties when livestock movement does not follow the prescribed grazing plan.

Response

Continued coordination between permittees and livestock operators is anticipated.

Comment Number LA-1-41-G-8

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS uses the term avoid frequently but does not define it in the Glossary. In September 2007, BLM adopted common definitions. IB Wyo2007-29. The definition for avoidance or avoidance area is:…. This definition should be included in the *Rev'd*. DSEIS, Glossary. In other places, the *Rev'd*. DSEIS uses the verb prohibit.

Response

Avoid has been added to the glossary.

Comment Number LA-1-42-G-9

Comment

Appendix 9D identifies the purchase of short-term conservation easements as one mitigation measure for wildlife habitat. App. 9C-6-7 (Alt. D). The *Rev'd*. DSEIS misuses the term.

Response

Thank you for your comment. There is enough context provided so the reader understands the intent.

Comment Number LA-1-43-W-1

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS calls for avoidance of sage grouse habitat (leks and brooding areas). *Rev'd*. DSEIS 2-14. This requirement appears to be difficult to implement if the map of sage grouse habitat is overlaid with the planned core development areas. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 2-16; *Compare* Map 2.4.8, 3-40, Map 3.22-4, 3-130, 3.22-5, 3-133. If avoidance means relocate or redesign, this may not be feasible in the core areas.

Response

The BLM believes that the SEIS considers appropriate mitigation as disclosed in Chapter 4, and the BLM concurs that monitoring is important to the success of mitigation efforts where full avoidance cannot be accomplished. Please see the Reclamation Plans and the Wildlife and Habitat Mitigation Plans for more details.

Comment Number LA-1-44-W-2

Comment

Over the last four years, BLM has issued specific sage grouse management in Wyoming, IM Wyo-2004-054, national guidance, IM 2005-024, and the State of Wyoming has developed conservation plans. *Upper Green River Basin Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan* (May 24, 2007). The *Rev'd*. DSEIS does not address these additional guidance, although the Wyoming and the national IMS are expired and the most recent conservation plan, while not contradictory, is not identical either.
SC & SCCD recommend clarifying the guidance and the source. The upcoming status review of the sage grouse, which is due December 2008 will also affect the conservation measures and is relevant to the *Rev'd*. DSEIS.

Response

One reason why the BLM is doing the SEIS is to formally deviate from the BLM's guidance and IM's. The alternatives describe how the BLM would operate in the future, the designation of the preferred alternative provides the reader with the BLM's preference and the ROD will formalize the operating procedures that will be allowed in the PAPA. The BLM recognizes that the upcoming USFWS status review of the sage grouse may affect management of the species but cannot speculate how that would manifest now.

Comment Number LA-1-45-W-3

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS omits an important opportunity to reduce predation on sage grouse by reducing garbage and litter….Revise Appendix 4-16 to include litter prohibition and requirement to cover dumpsters. The *Rev'd*. DSEIS needs to address the fact that the county landfill is already overtaxed.

Response

The requirement for trash cages is included in Appendix 4 of the Revised Draft SEIS but has been clarified in the Final SEIS.

Comment Number LA-1-46-S-1

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS states "Stipulations and mitigating measures are provided on a case-by-case basis to ensure soil conservation and practical management." *Rev'd*. DSEIS App.4-5. Lease stipulations cannot be changed so the term stipulation is confusing. Revise *Rev'd*. DSEIS to use term "best management practice" or condition.

Response

Additional timing limit stipulations and conditions of approval can be applied at any time prior to approval of a proposed action if an impact is expected.

Comment Number LA-1-47-V-1

Comment

The discussion imposes VRM Class II criteria, without regard to whether the lease stipulations. Unless the lease stipulation provides for VRM Class II, BLM cannot impose the criteria. As written description blurs the differences.

Response

Text has been revised.

Comment Number LA-1-48-T-9

Comment

Rev'd. DSEIS Appendix 5 calls for hosted workers to count traffic, without explaining the need for a person rather than traffic counter. *Rev'd*. DSEIS App. 5D-2.

Response

The commenter is correct.

Comment Number LA-1-49-SE-1

Comment

To estimate the socio-economic consequences of increased economic activity, the *Rev'd*. DSEIS needs to compare the costs and benefits of growth. This includes estimating the increases in demand for housing based on population estimates, and comparing it with existing services identified in Chapter 3. Because the *Rev'd*. DSEIS measures the effects of the population and has a full inventory of services and capacity, it is possible to estimate demand shortfalls, and surpluses. Demand for housing and services could then be compared with the costs of increasing services or expanding capacity.
Because the *Rev'd*. DSEIS estimates taxes and how they are distributed, it would be possible to assess revenue shortfalls. It is important to note that increased economic activity will directly and indirectly generate jobs and increase revenues through increased taxes and severance payments. While not all effects will be negative, to identify and mitigate potential problems, it is necessary to understand what the net effects will be.

Response

Employment tables in Chapter 4 have been modified to show direct, indirect and induced employment (AJE) and earnings. The document already includes charts showing population, employment (jobs and workers), and earnings by year for each alternative. Methodological constructs dictate that the workforce estimates include PAPA workers only. Direct and indirect employment estimates are derived from the IMPLAN model. These employment impacts are not measured as jobs, but as annual job equivalents, and are not useful for estimating the number of new workers required to support the project's workforce.

Comment Number LA-1-50-SE-2

Comment

To mitigate negative effects from growth, it is necessary to calculate net costs and/or benefits. The BLM should use the population projections developed in Chapter 4, to estimate effects to the counties based on current service and housing levels identified in Chapter 3. Where net effects are negative, the BLM could identify potential solutions to avoid such effects, or to reduce the impact.
The following are areas with potential impact:
• Housing demand and supply: Estimate the type of housing needed as compared to workforce demographics (workforce: temporary, permanent; housing needs: multi-family, single unit, work camp)
Demand for education: Using population estimates, calculate the projected increases/decreases for K-12 education including enrollment capacity and increased demand for infrastructure and staffing.
• Emergency, medical, and civic services: Using the per capita ratios calculated in Chapter 3, the BLM, could estimate the increased demand and costs for services, based on population

estimates. This may entail estimating the increased demand for staffing and physical facilities based on current capacity.
• Bus crews for all services year round to reduce risk to local traffic, to relieve tired workers, and to reduce the number of vehicles on roads.

Response

Employment tables in Chapter 4 have been modified to show direct, indirect and induced employment (AJE) and earnings. The document already includes charts showing population, employment (jobs and workers), and earnings by year for each alternative. Methodological constructs dictate that the workforce estimates include PAPA workers only. Direct and indirect employment estimates are derived from the IMPLAN model. These employment impacts are not measured as jobs, but as annual job equivalents, and are not useful for estimating the number of new workers required to support the project's workforce.

Comment Number LA-1-51-SE-3

Comment

The *Rev'd*. DSEIS assumes that the production work force will remain the same throughout the life of the project. *Rev'd*. DSEIS 2-61. Other data in the *Rev'd*. DSEIS assumes the work force will decline 2009 to 2026 from 381 to 0. These are inconsistent and unrealistic.

Response

Workforce estimates are consistent throughout the Final EIS. The comment appears to confuse estimated development and production employment (expressed in "annual job equivalents") with project workforce estimates.

Comment Number LA-1-52-SE-4

Comment

Due to the inconsistencies in work force estimates, the housing demand in the area is understated. If there are more workers during the production phase, then housing demand will remain higher than shown.

Response

The discussion of the project's development and production workforce has been changed to be consistent throughout the FEIS. The FEIS estimates employment and potential population changes related to the proposed project, but does not attempt to conduct a county-wide housing assessment. Operator support for a Sublette County Housing Assessment is offered as an additional mitigation opportunity.

Comment Number LA-1-53-G-10

Comment

SC & SCCD previously commented that to be effective mitigation, the compensatory mitigation should address conservation of soil, water, and vegetation, rather than focusing solely on wildlife habitat. The compensatory mitigation plan set forth in Appendix 9 continues to suffer from significant omissions.
The SC & SCCD comments are resubmitted because they remain equally valid. The mitigation measures set out in the *Rev'd*. DSEIS do not address impacts on vegetation, soil and water as well as livestock grazing operations. These are environmentally significant gaps in the existing mitigation plan and measures discussed in the *Rev'd*. DSEIS. Whenever a cooperating agency's comments identify additional mitigation measures, the agency must consider them and, if not adopted, must explain the reason for not doing so. 40 C.F.R. §1503.3(d).

Response

Please see Appendix 11 page 11-2 which states that " Proceeds from the Fund can be used both on-site and off-site in the general PAPA area for air quality monitoring, wildlife, livestock, vegetation and reclamation research, analysis, monitoring, mitigation and agencies' PAPA-project essential full time equivalent (FTE) positions as a result of PAPA activities.

Comment Number LA-2-1-G-1

Comment

It seems imperative that the BLM would require in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Pinedale Anticline:
1) Clearly outlined Best Management Practices required of all industry operators;
2) Directional drilling as the normal mode for industry development;
3) Conditions and firm thresholds that need to be addressed as part of the Adaptive Environmental Management system, in order to respond to any unforeseen or unaddressed negative effects from the increased energy extraction and activities. Requirements need to be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project that will put enforcement power into the Adaptive Environmental Management System, something that is not present under the current system.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-2-G-2

Comment

4) The best possible mitigation and monitoring of all activities and impacts. Provisions in the Final EIS that make mitigation a reality and not simply something referred to in planning documents.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-3-SE-1

Comment

5) A slower and more staged pace of energy development to allow Sublette County towns to respond to the impacts we are already incurring from the rapid gas field development, and to allow for our towns to stabilize these influences and to avoid a repeat of the "boom and bust" cycle that is of no ultimate long-term benefit to our communities.

Response

The FSEIS will present the cumulative impacts of all the anticipated and known oil and gas activity within the study area. This expanded narrative will include a table showing the historical employment, earnings and population dating back to 1980 and extending through the most current data available. There will also be a new table added to the cumulative analysis in Chapter 4 that depicts the projected cumulative earnings, employment and population by year through the life of the FSEIS. And finally, there will be an expanded narrative added to the Cumulative analysis that discusses the projections shown in the new cumulative table.

Comment Number LA-2-4-SE-2

Comment

Town of Pinedale officials ask under regulation CEQ 1501.6, referring to Cooperating Agencies, a designation given to the Town of Pinedale, that the BLM respond to and include in the final EIS, the detailed socioeconomic analysis, entitled, "The Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1 Final Report," dated January 2008, that has been submitted to the BLM on behalf of Sublette County by the Sublette County Board of County Commissioners to the BLM.

Response

The Town of Pinedale is not a cooperating agency on the PAPA SEIS. However, the Town of Pinedale is a cooperating agency on the Pinedale Resource Management Plan Revision EIS. This report has been referenced in the Final SEIS.

Comment Number LA-2-5-SE-3

Comment

We ask that this document and the socioeconomic affects noted in this report be specifically addressed in the BLM's final EIS for the Pinedale Anticline, per CEQ Seq. 1503.4, which legally requires BLM to specifically respond to Cooperating Agencies expressed concerns. We will expect to have the BLM's responses to Pinedale's documented socioeconomic issues in the final EIS.

Response

The Town of Pinedale is not a cooperating agency on the PAPA SEIS. However, the Town of Pinedale is a cooperating agency on the Pinedale Resource Management Plan Revision EIS.

Comment Number LA-2-6-SE-4

Comment

The Town asks that the concerns and information contained in this report be considered on behalf of the Town for the Revised Draft of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

Response

Information from "The Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report Phase I Final Report" was used in the preparation of the SEIS.

Comment Number LA-2-6-CU-1

Comment

The Town asks that BLM in their final EIS for the Pinedale Anticline, expected later this year, would specifically address mitigation actions for the cumulative affects of continued energy development on the Anticline and throughout the Pinedale Field Office's management area.

Response

Mitigation actions have been identified throughout the Revised Draft SEIS for the PAPA. Mitigation actions outside the PAPA are considered off-site mitigation that the BLM cannot require, unless offered and accepted by the BLM in the Record of Decision.

Comment Number LA-2-7-SE-5

Comment

Since the RMP is the overarching document for uses on BLM lands in our area, including the Anticline, we request that the BLM include the "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1," findings specific to the Town of Pinedale into the final SEIS. Town of Pinedale officials ask that the BLM include in the final SEIS, specific and quantifiable actions to mitigate the documented socioeconomic impacts to our town.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The commenter appears to be confused between the PAPA SEIS and the Pinedale RMP. Impacts have been disclosed and mitigation opportunities have been identified although the BLM's authority to require these mitigation measures in the Record of Decision is limited.

Comment Number LA-2-8-SE-6

Comment

We urge the BLM to slow down, or at least more evenly pace energy development to allow the affected towns, such as Pinedale, to adequately plan for infrastructure capacities, increased traffic, to allow market forces to increase the amount of housing available, allow our school systems to plan for a greater population and the myriad of other effects to our community due to a rapid population influx.

Response

The Revised Draft SEIS included tables showing the annual estimated earnings, employment and population by alternative. The Revised Draft SEIS also calls for annual and 10 year development projections. The BLM will make this data public and provide it to the state and local governments. The state and local governments can use this data to form a foundation for updating the annual population and royalty and tax estimates.

Comment Number LA-2-9-SE-7

Comment

If the BLM approves a planning document, which, in reality, allows for the fastest possible energy development on lands surrounding Pinedale, the Town of Pinedale asks BLM managers to create provisions in the final EIS which would provide on-the-ground resources for the Town of Pinedale to address the social and economic impacts that we will continue to bear with rapid energy development.

Response

The Final SEIS includes such a statement.

Comment Number LA-2-10-SE-8

Comment

Meaningful, ongoing monitoring is necessary to make the SEIS a useful document. The Town of Pinedale supports Adaptive Environmental Management as one method for doing this, and asks the BLM to respect, consider, and implement the recommendations of the Pinedale Working Group, the entity charged with this task.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The AEM process continues to be of great importance to the BLM.

Comment Number LA-2-11-SE-9

Comment

Since the BLM is approving the growth, we believe it is the BLM's responsibility (as noted in the NEPA) to analyze the growth the BLM is allowing. A "Revenue minus Costs" analysis in the Final Pinedale Anticline SEIS would be helpful for our municipal planning.

Response

This comment represents an opinion that cannot be specifically addressed.

Comment Number LA-2-12-SE-10

Comment

Negative social-economic impacts of dramatically increased employment opportunities stemming from the large increase in gas production should be analyzed.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The analysis captures the concerns expressed in the comment.

Comment Number LA-2-13-CU-2

Comment

…the SEIS needs to provide greater detail about the long-term and cumulative affects of this expanded field development.

Response

The cumulative impact assessment areas were properly defined and impacts analyzed by the BLM.

Comment Number LA-2-14-SE-11

Comment

It is important for our municipal planning that we have accurate population growth estimates. The BLM should supply this information in its Final SEIS.

Response

The Revised Draft SEIS calls for annual and 10 year projections to be provided by the Operators. This information would aide in municipal planning and would provide more accurate information that what can be predicted at this point.

Comment Number LA-2-15-G-3

Comment

Town of Pinedale officials ask that:
At the end of the two-year time period from when year-round drilling is permitted by the BLM, that it be required in the Final SEIS that the BLM will conduct an in-depth analysis that will verify that specific objectives noted in the SEIS have been met. If these objectives are found from this analysis not to have been met, we ask that the BLM place provisions in the Final SEIS that will mandate that these objectives be addressed. Issues Town of Pinedale officials would like to be examined in this process include: Overall-have the negative socioeconomic impacts to towns, such as Pinedale, been mitigated, or improved?

Response

As part of adaptive management review of information on the impacts of management actions would occur and needed management changes identified.

Comment Number LA-2-16-AM-1

Comment

The current Adaptive Management system has been in place, rather unsuccessfully, under current BLM Anticline Record of Decision. Specific limits on impacts from the increase in energy development need to be included in the final SEIS for the Anticline, with specific actions required when those limits are reached.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The ROD will finalize all requirements for this project to proceed.

Comment Number LA-2-17-MF-1/SE-11

Comment

However, it appears that there is no direct mitigation commitment for the substantial socioeconomic impacts that our town will sustain from the proposed dramatic increase of the current amount of energy development today.

Response

Please see the revised draft SEIS, mitigation opportunities have been identified.

Comment Number LA-2-18-MF-2

Comment

To realistically address the town's social and economic impacts from such dramatic industrial impacts, a separate mitigation fund for Pinedale should be established that will be used to pay for addressing the impacts from the Anticline development.

Response

Thank you for your comments. All compensatory off-site mitigation must be voluntarily proffered. At this time, the BLM has no such proposal.

Comment Number LA-2-19-T-1

Comment

…the twin bridges on Tyler Ave. were not constructed for the amount, or the weight of traffic that those two bridges are subjected to now. This unexpected truck traffic needs to be addressed by BLM planners finalizing the SEIS.

Response

Please see the Revised Draft SEIS, mitigation opportunities have been identified. Further, the BLM has provided a right-of-way to the county access across BLM land on the northern portion of the PAPA, off the industrial site road.

Comment Number LA-2-20-T-2

Comment

The Town of Pinedale asks BLM officials to identify and help construct an alternate route for gas field traffic to access the Anticline, to remove this sort of industrial traffic from Tyler Ave. and elsewhere in town.

Response

Please see the Revised Draft SEIS, mitigation opportunities have been identified. Further, the BLM has provided a right-of-way to the county access across BLM land on the northern portion of the PAPA, off the industrial site road.

Comment Number LA-2-21-T-3

Comment

The Town of Pinedale requests that BLM policy managers consider very carefully all traffic impacts to the Town of Pinedale with the huge increase in well development that is being proposed on the Anticline.

Response

Please see the Revised Draft SEIS, mitigation opportunities have been identified. Further, the BLM has provided a right-of-way to the county access across BLM land on the northern portion of the PAPA, off the industrial site road.

Comment Number LA-2-22-T-4

Comment

We ask as part of the consideration of future impacts to our area's transportation abilities and needs, as the Pinedale Anticline field is developed, that the BLM would encourage the serious analysis of rail line development, to provide for overall transportation development in our area, as well as offset the negative affects of the traffic from the Anticline field.

Response

The BLM will consider this if the need arises, it is economically and technically feasible, and the impacts of the rail line result in fewer impacts than those from the analysis provided in the Revised Draft SEIS. The BLM believes that at this point, none of these conditions have been met.

Comment Number LA-2-23-SE-12

Comment

Housing…The Town also defers to the socioeconomic data provided in the "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase I," in these matters.
We need to protect our economic diversity. One way to do that is by having various prices of housing available, to provide housing for all sectors of our community.

Response

This comment represents an opinion that cannot be specifically addressed.

Comment Number LA-2-24-SE-13

Comment

Pinedale and Sublette County's other directly-impacted towns need guaranteed financial assistance with direct impacts such as:
Road maintenance
Increased traffic impacts (to improve the safety of our downtown roads)
Upgrades and expansions to aging infrastructure such as water and sewer lines
Cost sharing for future expansions to our infrastructure to respond to the increased population
Cost impacts to our school system
Cost and manpower impacts to our law enforcement, emergency and medical services

Additionally, while Pinedale has been able to upgrade our municipal sewer treatment plant, the unplanned population increases are placing pressure on that system..
The Environmental Protection Agency will also require the Town of Pinedale to implement an advance water filtration system by 2014 at an estimated cost of more than 2.2 million. In addition, the Town of Pinedale needs to implement millions of dollars of infrastructure upgrades.

Response

The BLM understands the strain on the infrastructure of the Town of Pinedale and has presented the anticipated additional growth under the various alternatives in the Revised Draft SEIS and has identified additional mitigation opportunities, though the BLM's authority to require these measures is limited.

Comment Number LA-2-25-LS-1

Comment

The Town of Pinedale asks that the BLM protect the view areas of Pinedale and immediate environs.
Specifically, we ask that the BLM keep development off the eastern flank/edge of the Anticline Crest, either by not leasing the area, or only allowing development with a "no surface occupancy" stipulation.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-26-SE-14

Comment

The Town again defers to the specific data supplied in: "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1"…….. These impacts need to be addressed in the final SEIS.

Response

While this comment represents an opinion that cannot be specifically addressed, the "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1" will be referenced in the FSEIS.

Comment Number LA-2-27-SE-15

Comment

The Town again defers to the specific data supplied in "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1"…..... These impacts need to be addressed in the final SEIS.

Response

While this comment represents an opinion that cannot be specifically addressed, the "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1" will be referenced in the FSEIS.

Comment Number LA-2-28-SE-16

Comment

The Town again defers to the specific data supplied in "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1."..... Currently, these services are struggling to keep service at effective levels. These services need additional equipment and funding to do so.

Response

While this comment represents an opinion that cannot be specifically addressed, the "Sublette County Socioeconomic Impact Report, Phase 1" will be referenced in the FSEIS.

Comment Number LA-2-29-W-1

Comment

While we applaud efforts to reduce habitat destruction, we ask that detailed actions be required in the final SEIS that will:
1.) Specify how and when mitigation will be conducted
2.) Require permanent restrictions in the final SEIS to reduce habitat destruction and disturbance (perhaps combining solutions outlined in Alternatives D and E in the draft SEIS
3.) Remove plan aspects that would allow the slow spread of habitat destruction while not requiring proven mitigation actions

Response

The BLM has set forth Practices and Restrictions for the PAPA in Appendix 4 of the Revised Draft SEIS. The Operators have prepared a Wildlife and Habitat Mitigation Plan for Alternative B in Appendix 9A and, in consultation with the WGFD, prepared a Wildlife and Habitat Mitigation Plan for Alternative D in Appendix 9C.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-2

Comment

Operators and the BLM need to insure adequate mitigation and appropriate monitoring to assure their desired results.

Response

Currently there is a monitoring plan in place that has been inventorying and mapping wildlife locations for the last 9 years. Many of the proposed mitigations in the SEIS such as directional

drilling, liquids gathering system, and remote monitoring are proposed for onsite mitigation to avoid impacts. In addition, the reclamation requirements are being designed to ensure sustainability and survival of the species that inhabit the PAPA.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-3

Comment

…we ask that the final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) include a way to effectively monitor and restrict impacts of this increased gas field development to insure there are no additional declines in wildlife populations.

Response

Currently there is a monitoring plan in place that has been inventorying and mapping wildlife locations for the last 9 years. Many of the proposed mitigations in the SEIS such as directional drilling, liquids gathering system, and remote monitoring are proposed for onsite mitigation to avoid impacts. In addition, the reclamation requirements are being designed to ensure sustainability and survival of the species that inhabit the PAPA.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-4

Comment

The final SEIS should include a mechanism for maintaining big game distributions on or adjacent to, the current project area crucial big game winter habitats

Response

The comment suggests that the BLM can influence big game behavior, which they cannot. Impacts to big game habitats have been observed since implementation of the 2000 PAPA ROD Chapters 3 and 4 of the Revised Draft SEIS discloses the anticipated impacts of the various alternatives. Various approaches to maintaining big game use of the PAPA have been advanced and incorporated in the alternatives. Implementation of any of the alternatives is anticipated to have an impact on big game.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-5

Comment

The final SEIS should include protections to maintain big game migration routes so that traditional year-round seasonal ranges continue to be used.

Response

Appendix 4 of the Revised Draft SEIS contains a provision to avoid barriers to seasonal movement of big game.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-6

Comment

It is important that the final SEIS provide adequate amounts of suitable undisturbed crucial winter range to maintain big game distribution at any point in time during development.

Response

Alternative D was developed by the BLM based upon comments received on the Draft SEIS including comments from the Proponents and the State of Wyoming. Mitigation measures offered by the Proponents, applicable to Alternative D, include suspending surface activity on certain leases outside of the Alternative D core area and Potential Development Area for at least 5 years. As disclosed in the Revised Draft SEIS, the reduced use of habitats and diminished distribution of wildlife as a result of impact, including use of leks by sage-grouse or winter range by big game, is expected to lead to greater risk of stochastic events adversely affecting the more confined population. A more confined population is also subject to density-dependent effects, which eventually cause declines. There will be undisturbed winter range on-site and off-site, but as noted in other responses to commenters, the BLM cannot legally require provisions for off-site mitigation.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-7

Comment

The final SEIS needs to address drilling stipulations outside of the Anticline crest. No exceptions to seasonal wildlife stipulations should be permitted outside of Concentrated Development Areas.

Response

Exceptions are allowed for in the Pinedale Resource Management Plan. Such a restriction would not be in conformance with the existing 1988 Pinedale RMP.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-8

Comment

Delineation should be limited by number and to areas near "Concentrated Development Areas," and restricted by all seasonal wildlife stipulations.

Response

Delineation drilling restrictions outside of Concentrated Development Areas would be addressed on an annual basis by the Review Team.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-9

Comment

The final SEIS needs to provide specific requirements to protect water quantity, water quality, aquatic habitat components (including riparian areas), habitat connectivity and distribution of sensitive fish.

Response

The BLM has set forth Practices and Restrictions for the PAPA in Appendix 4 of the Revised Draft SEIS. The Operators have prepared a Wildlife and Habitat Mitigation Plan for Alternative B in Appendix 9A and, in consultation with the WGFD, prepared a Wildlife and Habitat Mitigation Plan for Alternative D in Appendix 9C.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-10

Comment

Insure occupied habitat for shrub-dependent species is well distributed throughout the project area.

Response

The comment suggests that the BLM can influence behavior of shrub-dependent species, which they cannot. Mitigation measures developed by the Proponents, applicable to Alternative D, include suspending surface activity on certain leases outside of the Alternative D core area and Potential Development Area for at least 5 years. In the PAPA EIS of 2000, the BLM recognized the difficulties in re-establishing sagebrush. In Section 4.16.3.1 of the revised Draft SEIS, the BLM stated that the continued direct impact to sagebrush and other native vegetation types is expected under each alternative due to removal of vegetative cover and the long re-growth timeframe of shrubs.

Comment Number LA-2-30-W-11

Comment

It makes sense to have a continued commitment from industry operators to continue funding mule deer, pronghorn, and sage grouse studies for the life of the field.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-30-RC-1

Comment

Reclamation must be substantial, effective and timely. The BLM should require sufficient bonding from operators as insurance that this will be done, regardless of changes in operators.

Response

Bonding is not a NEPA issue. Additional mitigation opportunities have been identified through the NEPA process and will be applied as appropriate.

Comment Number LA-2-30-CU-3

Comment

The BLM must address the cumulative impacts leading to the decreased regional habitat function.

Response

The cumulative impact assessment areas were properly defined and impacts analyzed by the BLM.

Comment Number LA-2-31-GW-1/SW-1

Comment

The final SEIS must provide for adequate ground and surface water protection and monitoring.

Response

The State of Wyoming has jurisdiction with regards to water quality. The BLM will work cooperatively with the State of Wyoming to protect water resources.

Comment Number LA-2-32-GW-2

Comment

With the major drain energy development may have on groundwater, (since current energy development pulls thousands of gallons of water from our regional aquifer each week) coupled with a severe ongoing drought in our region, is BLM planning addressing two severe impacts on the area's aquifer?

Response

The State of Wyoming has jurisdiction with regards to water quality. The BLM will work cooperatively with the State of Wyoming to protect water resources.

Comment Number LA-2-33-AQ-1

Comment

The U.S. Forest Service monitors this phenomenon in the high mountain lakes in the Wind River Mountains, but we ask that the USFS also monitor the lower part of Fremont Lake to analyze how air pollution may be affecting our town's water supply.

Response

This issue should be raised with the USFS.

Comment Number LA-2-34-GW-3/SW-2

Comment

We strongly support a ground and surface water monitoring plan in the final SEIS.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-35-AQ-2

Comment

We support the request from the Governor's office that the SEIS require zero days of visibility impairment and an 80 percent NO_X reduction in five years.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-35-AQ-3

Comment

The Town of Pinedale supports the most stringent monitoring and control of our area's air quality, which historically, has been pristine.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-35-AQ-4

Comment

We are concerned, as noted by the Air Quality Task Group that in the DSEIS there is not mechanism to track completions of proposed control measures.

Response

Thank you for your comment. Please note that in Chapter 4, Section 4.9.3.4 (Alternative C) and Section 4.9.3.5 (Alternative D) NO_X emissions mitigation is discussed as well as Implementation: pages 4-85 to 4-87. Within this section under Points 2, 3 and 4 regular yearly planning sessions between the Operators, WDEQ-AQD, and the BLM in consultation with EPA would collaboratively identify methods to reduce air emissions beyond the 80 percent drilling rig engine NO_X emissions goal. These methods (and implementation) would reduce visibility impairment but also help reduce ozone formation.

Comment Number LA-2-36-AQ-5

Comment

We ask that the final SEIS include specific time periods for air quality mitigation measures to be fulfilled

Response

Thank you for your comment. Please see response to Comment LA-2-35-AQ-4.

Comment Number LA-2-36-G-4

Comment

Identification of the responsible parties to complete these mitigation measures and identify personnel who will keep track of the required monitoring and mitigation.

Response

This is one of the reasons that Alternative D contains funding for the WDEQ-AQD. The Record of Decision will identify required mitigation measures and likely identify responsible parties.

Comment Number LA-2-36-G-5

Comment

Specifics outlining how that information will be reported back to involved agencies and the general public.

Response

This is one of the reasons the PAWG is expected to continue under all alternatives.

Comment Number LA-2-36-AQ-6

Comment

…specific parties be identified for completing modeling visibility impacts. And that monitoring information be as timely and relevant as possible. We support the recommendation of at least one model being run annually.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-36-AQ-7

Comment

Since so much of the increased Anticline development is being requested in exchange for the benefit of reduced air emissions and fewer negative impacts on wildlife and habitat, it is important for the BLM to identify in the SEIS, how specifically this will be done and reported back to the public that these measures were actually fulfilled.

Response

Thank you for your comment. The BLM will work cooperatively with state and other federal agencies, and with industry, to track emissions in the Pinedale Field Office area.

Comment Number LA-2-36-AQ-8

Comment

Who will be keeping track to insure that all specified actions are being done? We support the recommendation of the Task Group to follow the example of the Jonah Infill ROD, Appendix A, Air Quality Item 2.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-36-AQ-9/MO-3

Comment

We also support the PAWG recommendations pertaining to the Southwest Wyoming Monitoring Network Assessment, in addition to all Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality standards.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-37-G-6

Comment

New drilling, pad construction and road building should be limited to the industry-identified "concentrated development area" along the crest of the Pinedale Anticline for the life of the field.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-2-38-G-7

Comment

We would like to see a limit placed on the allowance for negative results from the greatly expanded (over two decades) drilling period. When thresholds for negative impacts to air and water quality and wildlife, and socioeconomic impacts are reached, the immediate reduction in the pace of development on the Anticline would be required.

Response

The Pace of Development is identified as a mitigation measure for wildlife and air quality. Further, Appendix 3 of the Revised Draft SEIS contains a discussion on the impacts of various levels of drilling to socioeconomic, air quality, and wildlife resources.

Comment Number LA-2-39-SE-17/CU-4

Comment

The Town of Pinedale urges the BLM to make every effort to mitigate the negative boom-bust impacts on our community. We also urge the BLM to consider the cumulative effects of rapid development on our *entire* region, of which the Pinedale Anticline is just one part.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-3-1-G-1

Comment

The City supports its conclusion that with these components, all of the acreage included in year-round access areas can be developed while protecting the environment, benefiting local communities, and advancing other economic interests.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-4-1-G-1

Comment

We believe that these operators have fulfilled their responsibility to keep an open line of communication by informing the public of their operations. We urge the BLM to move forward with year-round access using the operators' mitigation commitments. We trust that their plan will ensure the economic success of Sublette County's future.

Response

Thank you for your comment.

Comment Number LA-5-1-G-1

Comment

As local leaders, we are confident that the operators' plan will recover the energy that our nation needs while maximizing benefits to our communities. It is important to note that the points we have made above cannot be achieved without the certainty of year-round access. We would like to reaffirm our support for responsible year-round development with the operators' carefully planned mitigation commitments.

Response

Thank you for your comment.