SCOPING NOTICE
DESOLATION FLATS NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Bureau of Land Management
Rawlins Field Office
Rock Springs Field Office

Description of Project

Marathon Oil Company (Marathon) has notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Offices that Marathon and other operators, including EOG Resources, Inc, Tom Brown, Inc., Basin Exploration, Inc., Yates Petroleum Corporation, Questar Exploration and Production Company, Merit Energy Company, and Santa Fe Snyder Corporation, intend to drill additional exploration and development wells in and adjacent to the Willow Reservoir, Wedge, Mulligan Draw, Powder Mountain, Desolation Flats, Ruger, Dripping Rock, Cedar Chest, Triton, and Lookout Wash Units and the surrounding areas (collectively referred to as the Desolation Flats Area). The proposed Desolation Flats project area is generally located in Townships 13 through 16 North and Ranges 93 through 96 West in Carbon and Sweetwater Counties, Wyoming as shown on the attached Exhibit 1. The project area overlaps the Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Offices.

The Desolation Flats project area presently contains several active fields which are predominantly spaced at one well per section for drilling in the Almond Formation. In addition, this area contains several active Federal Units, some of which are subject to current drilling programs. The Desolation Flats Area has 68 active producing wells, with accompanying production-related facilities, roads, and pipelines.

The BLM has advised Marathon and the other operators that an environmental impact statement (EIS) of the proposed development project will be necessary.

For purposes of conducting an environmental analysis, Marathon and the other operators have indicated that an additional 385 wells at 361 well locations may be drilled in the Desolation Flats project area. Some of these wells may be classified as exploration or delineation wells because natural gas production potential has not been fully defined due to geological complexities. Where production potential is better known, wells would be classified as in-fill or development wells. Drilling is expected to last for approximately 20 years, with a life-of-project (LOP) of 30-50 years.

The Desolation Flats Area is currently accessed by an existing road network developed to service existing drilling and production activities. Marathon and the other operators anticipate that the drilling of any additional wells within the analysis area would require the construction of additional roads. The gas produced within the analysis area would be transported by existing pipelines and new pipelines including new gathering lines with tie-ins to existing interstate pipelines.

Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents

Great Divide Resource Management Plan (November 8, 1990) - The Great Divide Resource Management Plan (GDRMP) provides management direction for resources contained within the

Rawlins Field Office area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources, as stated in the GDRMP, is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. The proposed Desolation Flats development is in conformance with the GDRMP. The environmental analysis that will be prepared on the Desolation Flats proposal will incorporate appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the GDRMP.

Green River Resource Management Plan (approved August 8, 1997) - The Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP) provides management direction for resources contained within the Rock Springs Field Office area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. The proposed Desolation Flats project is in conformance with the GRRMP. The environmental analysis done for this project will incorporate appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the GRRMP.

If during the environmental impact analysis it is found that the development project would not be in conformance with certain aspects of the Green River RMP, the data gathered for, and the analysis conducted in, the EIS for this project will provide the analytical basis to amend, update, or maintain the RMP accordingly.

Mulligan Draw Gas Field Project Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (September 1992)

The Record of Decision (ROD) authorized Celsius Energy Company to drill 45 natural gas wells on 640-acre spacing. The ROD conditioned approval upon protective measures set forth in the Celsius Energy Proposed Action and mitigation and monitoring measures specified in the EIS.

The Mulligan Draw project area is located within the proposed Desolation Flats project area boundary. The intent of including the Mulligan Draw area within the Desolation Flats project area as described by the operators is to determine the feasibility and environmental impacts of a drilling density greater than the authorized one-well per 640-acre spacing.

Dripping Rock Unit/Cedar Breaks Area Environmental Assessment and Decision Record

The 1985 Decision Record (DR) authorized Celsius Energy Company and other operators to drill a total of 58 natural gas wells on 640-acre spacing. The DR conditioned approval upon protective measures set forth in the EA and additional site-specific mitigation identified during the Application for Permit to Drill (APD) approval process.

The Dripping Rock Unit/Cedar Breaks project area also is located within the Desolation Flats project area boundary. The intent of including the Dripping Rock Unit/Cedar Breaks area within the Desolation Flats project area is to determine the feasibility and environmental impacts of a drilling density greater than the authorized one well per 640-acre spacing.

Use Authorizations - Use authorizations (i.e., rights-of -way, permits, etc.) for roads, powerlines, pipelines, and well site facilities would be processed through the BLM Application for Permit to Drill (APD) and Sundry Notice permitting process.

Lease Stipulations - Some leases within the proposed area include special stipulations on occupancy. These are in addition to the standard lease terms. These stipulations are designed to protect surface resources such as soils, water, and wildlife by restricting periods of activity and areas of disturbance. Application of these lease stipulations will be handled on a case-by-case basis for each APD submitted to the BLM.

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

On reviewing the Operator's proposal, the BLM has determined that permitting this project would constitute a major federal action that could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Pursuant to NEPA and Council on Environmental Quality regulations on implementing NEPA, the BLM is preparing an EIS that will describe and evaluate the probable impacts of the Desolation Flats Proposed Action and alternatives. The purpose of an EIS is to provide the public and decision-makers with sufficient information to understand the environmental consequences of the proposal and to identify and develop appropriate mitigation measures to minimize environmental impacts.

One element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to:

- identify reasonable development alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS;
- identify environmental/socio-economic issues of concern related to the proposed project; and
- determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the EIS.

Additionally, NEPA requires that a "no action" alternative be considered in all environmental documents. This will allow a comparison of the economic and environmental consequences of the proposed and alternative development levels versus current development levels and existing environmental conditions. Under the No Action Alternative, no further natural gas development would occur on federal lands in the project area beyond that which has already been approved by the Mulligan Draw Gas Field Project EIS/ROD or the Dripping Rock EA/DR. This assumption, however, does not mean denial of natural gas exploration or development in the area, since all federal lands within the project area have been leased for oil and gas production or are available for lease and the area is identified as suitable for gas production in the Green River and Great Divide Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

Identified Resource Management Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

The following issues and concerns have been identified by the BLM to date. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather a starting point for public input and a means of identifying the resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis.

- Potential impacts to wildlife habitats within the analysis area, including big game crucial winter range, sage grouse, and raptors.
- Road development, Increased traffic and associated impacts on existing County, State, and BLM roads. Road use designations (Rock Springs Field Office area).
- Social and economic impacts.
- Impacts to surface and groundwater resources, including sedimentation/salinity to the Colorado River system.
- Potential impacts to steep slopes and sensitive soils within the project area.
- Impacts from emissions resulting from additional drilling and production activities.
- Reclamation of disturbed areas and control of noxious weed invasions.
- Potential conflicts with livestock management operations in the analysis area, including possible impacts to range improvements.
- Potential impacts to cultural and historical values within the analysis area.
- Potential impacts to Native American sacred sites and Traditional Cultural Properties
- Potential impact to listed, or proposed for listing, plant and animal species, including potential Colorado River depletion and effects of downstream listed fish species.
- Cumulative effects of drilling and development activities when combined with other ongoing and proposed developments on lands adjacent to the Desolation Flats project area.
- Impacts to recreation.
- Potential impacts to paleontological resources
- Impacts to Adobe Town Wild Horse Herd Management Area.
- Visual Resource Management and potential impact to the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area (WSA).
- Monument Valley Management Area (Rock Springs Field Office area).

Interim Drilling Activities

While the Desolation Flats environmental analysis is being conducted, the BLM will allow limited drilling of exploration, delineation/confirmation wells within the proposed project area. Interim drilling will be monitored by the BLM to ensure activities do no significantly affect the environment or prejudice the completion of the Desolation Flats environmental analysis.

Timing Needs or Requirements

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate during the scoping process to help identify the scope of the analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your comments are due by June 23, 2000 Please submit your comments to:

Address: John Spehar, Project Manager
BLM - Rawlins Field Office
1300 North Third Street
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-4376

Email: rawlins_wymail@blm.gov (Please refer to Desolation Flats in your email response)

Public meetings to discuss the proposed project are scheduled for 7:00 p.m., June 7 and 8, 2000 at the following locations.

June 7, 2000 in Rock Springs, Wyoming:

Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

June 8, 2000 in Rawlins, Wyoming

Bureau of Land Management
Rawlins Field Office
1300 North Third Street
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

Public Participation

The following individuals and organizations will receive a copy of this scoping statement:

FEDERAL OFFICES

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
BLM Wyoming State Office
U.S. Representative Barbara Cubin
U.S. Senator Mike Enzi
U.S. Senator Craig Thomas
U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service
U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Department. of Energy
U.S. DOI Office of the Solicitor

STATE AGENCIES

Governor Jim Geringer
State Engineer's Office
State Senators
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
Wyoming Business Council
Little Snake Conservation District
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
State Representatives
Wyoming State Planning Coordinator
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
Wyoming Department. of Agriculture

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Carbon County Commissioners
Sweetwater County Commissioners
Carbon County Planning Commission
Sweetwater County Planning Commission

MUNICIPALITIES

Mayor-Baggs
Mayor-Rawlins
Mayor-Green River
Mayor-Wamsutter
Mayor-Rock Springs
Mayor-Superior

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

Northern Arapahoe Tribal Council
Ute Mountain Tribe
Shoshone-Arapahoe Joint Tribal Council
Shoshone Tribal Council
Ute Tribal Council
Uinta-Ouray Tribal Council

GRAZING PERMITTEES

Adams and Adams
Andy Peroulis
Purple Sage LLC
Salisbury Livestock Company
Mike Sheehan
Eliza Solace
Three Mill Iron Ranch
Elza Eversole
Big Sandy & Green River Lvstck Co.
Blair and Hay Land & Lvstck Co.
Crosson Ranches, Inc.
Douglas Hamel
Don Mines
Mud Springs Livestock Company
James W. Ramsay
George R. Evans
John Peroulis and Sons
Raftopoulos Brothers Livestock
Smith Rancho
Sheehan Ranches
Stratton Sheep Company
Rock Springs Grazing Association
Martin Aimone
John C. Wilde
William Bonomo
Robert Gamble
John W. Hofeldt
Donald Moon
Quarter Circle Three Bar Ranch, LCC
Sage Creek Ranch, LCC

William Thoman
Don Vercimak
William Tripp
Clark Weber

LEASE AND ROW HOLDERS

Marathon Oil Company
Merit Energy Company
Sante Fe Snyder Corporation
Tom Brown, Inc.
BP Amoco
Colorado Interstate Gas Company
San Marco Petroleum
Thomas Erickson
Celsius Energy Company
ABO Petroleum Corporation
Andex Resources, LLC
Aztex Gas and Oil Corporation
Van K. Bullock
Captiva Resources, Inc.
Centennial Venture III, LLC
CIG Exploration, Inc.
CNG Producing Company
John L. Cox
Davis Oil Company
Double Eagle Petroleum & Mining Company
Energen Resources Corporation
Margaret M. Farinholt
Forcenergy, Inc.
Gunlikson Petroleum, Inc.
H. B. Hillman Trust
HILR, Trust
Hollis Oil and Gas Company
Industrial Gas Service, Inc.
William E. Jeffers
K N Production Company
Key Production Company, Inc.
Lario Oil and Gas Company
Liberty Petroleum Corporation
Lyco Energy Corporation
Markus Production, Inc.
McCulliss Resources Company, Inc.
W. A. Moncrief Jr.
Mull Drilling Company
Niwot Resources, LLC
Northern Geophysical
Odyssey Exploration, Inc.
Don Parsons

EOG Resources, Inc.
Basin Exploration, Inc.
Questar Exploration and Production Co.
Pennzoil Company
Williams Gas Processing Company
Westport Oil and Gas Company, Inc.
Kerr-McGee
Exxon USA
Questar Pipeline Company
Allen and Kirmse, Ltd.
Armstrong Resources
Big West Oil and Gas, Inc.
Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation
Cellular, Inc. Network
Chevron USA Production Company
Clayton William Energy
Concho Resources, Inc.
Coyote Oil and Gas
Devon Energy Corporation
Emerald Operating Company
Enron Oil and Gas Company
Fidelity Oil Holding
Gundry-White D.
William G. Helis Est.
D. B. Hillman
Carol Ann Hoffman
HPC, Inc.
Intrepid Production Company
Journey's End, Inc.
Kaisar-Francis Oil
KLT Gas, Inc.
Larry Barnes Petroleum
Los Chicos
Marico Exploration, Inc.
J. H. Marshall II Trust
Medallion Exploration
William Moss
MYCO Industries, Inc.
North American Resources Co.
Ocean Energy, Inc.
OXY USA Company
Pepco, Inc.

Phillips Petroleum Company

Plains Petroleum Operating Company
Quantum Geophysical
John B. Roden Jr.
Samedan Oil Corporation
San Marco Petroleum, Inc.
Seagull Energy E & P, Inc.
South Pass Resources, Inc.
Stovall Oil Company
Texaco Exploration and Production, Inc.
Texas Eastern Skyline
Tindall Operating Company
Topaz Mineralogical
Union Pacific Wyoming Gathering, Inc.
Vegas Production Company
Westport Oil and Gas Company, Inc.
Windsor Oil and Gas, Inc.
WYGAP
Xeric Oil and Gas Corporation
Lillie M. Yates Est.
Apache Corporation
Forest Oil Corporation
ConWest Exploration (Delaware) Inc.
W.A.. Moncrief Jr.
IT Properties
Corbin J. Robertson
Roemer Oil Company
Bar Gas LLC
Irwin Rubenstein

Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc.
Prima Exploration, Inc.
Resources Strategies
Sacramento Partners, LP
Samson Resources Company
Santa Fe Snyder Corporation
Sharbro Oil, Ltd. Company
Stanley Energy, Inc.
T. H. McElvain Oil and Gas, Ltd.
Texas Oil and Gas Corporation
The Gary Williams Company
Topanga, LLC
True Oil Company
Union Pacific Resources Company
Veritas DGC Land, Inc.
White Energy Corporation
Arthur W. Winter Trust
Wyoming Exploration, Ltd.
Yates Petroleum Corporation
Yates Drillling Company
Alenco Oil and Gas (ND) Inc.
John P. Strang
H S Resources, Inc.
Costilla Energy, Inc.
John F. Sheridan O & G Properties
Lamar B. Roemer
Intrepid Oil and Gas LLC
Merit Partners LP

LANDOWNERS

All private landowners are included under one of the above categories.

LOCAL MEDIA

Casper Star-Tribune
Rock Springs Rocket Miner
KGWC TV - Casper
KRAI - Craig, Colorado
KQSW/KRKK - Rock Springs
KTWO - Casper
KUWR - University of Wyoming
Meeker Herald
Craig Daily Press

Rawlins Daily Times
Wyoming State Tribune/Eagle
Green River Star
KRAL - Rawlins
KSIT - Rock Springs
KTWO TV - Casper
Northwest Colorado Daily News
Rangely Times
KMKX - Rock Springs

KUGR - Green River
Channel 27 - Craig, Colorado
KYCS - Rock Springs

OTHER AGENCIES, INDUSTRY REPRENSENTATIVES, INDIVIDUALS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

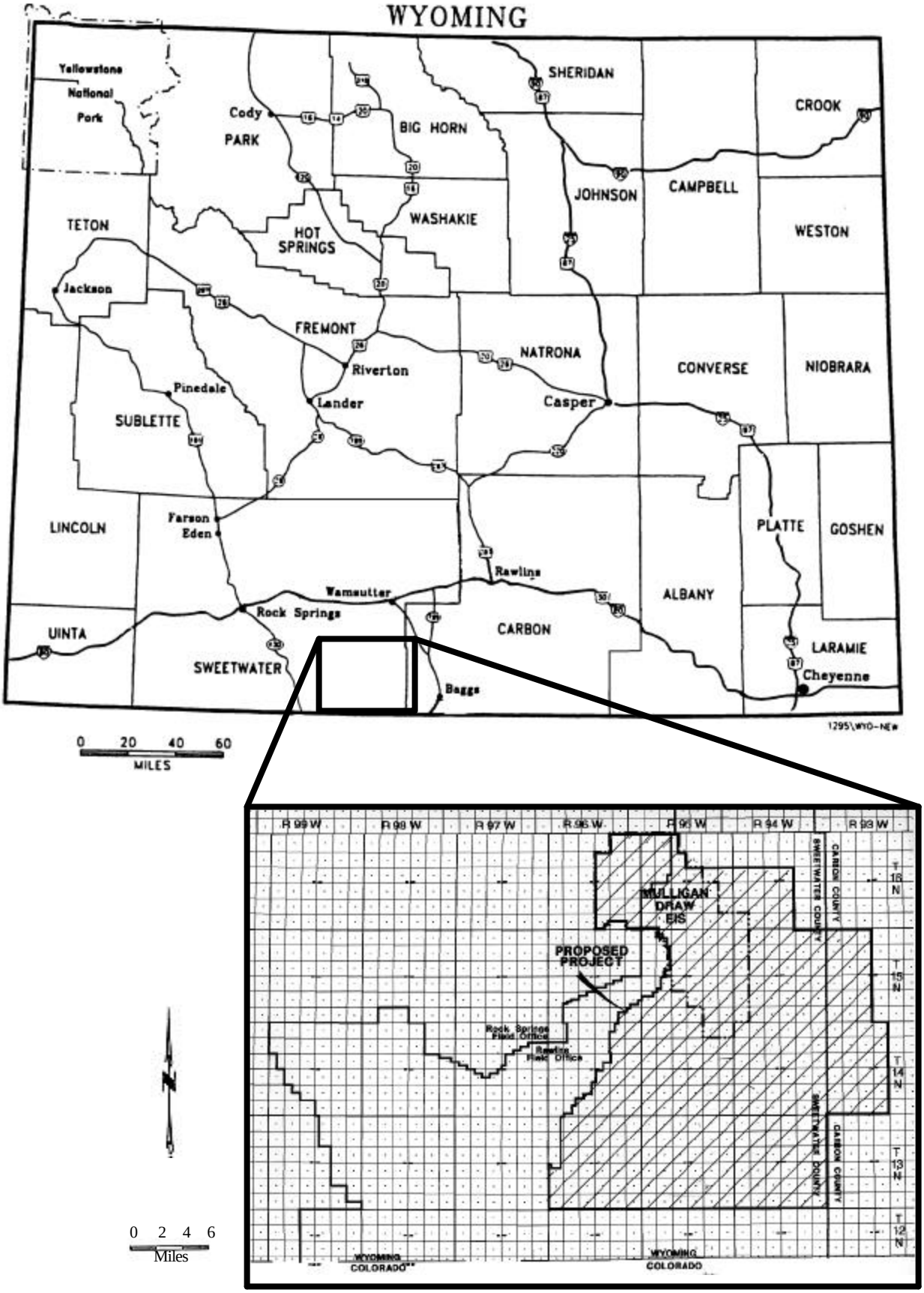
Audubon Society
Wilderness Society
The Nature Conservancy

Field Museum of Natural History
Department of Geology
Charmaine Delmatier
Murie Audubon Society
Petroleum Association of Wyoming
Sierra Club
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Stockgrowers Association
Wyoming Woolgrowers Association
Karen Larsen
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Kelly Crane
Northwest Colo. Wild Horse Assoc.

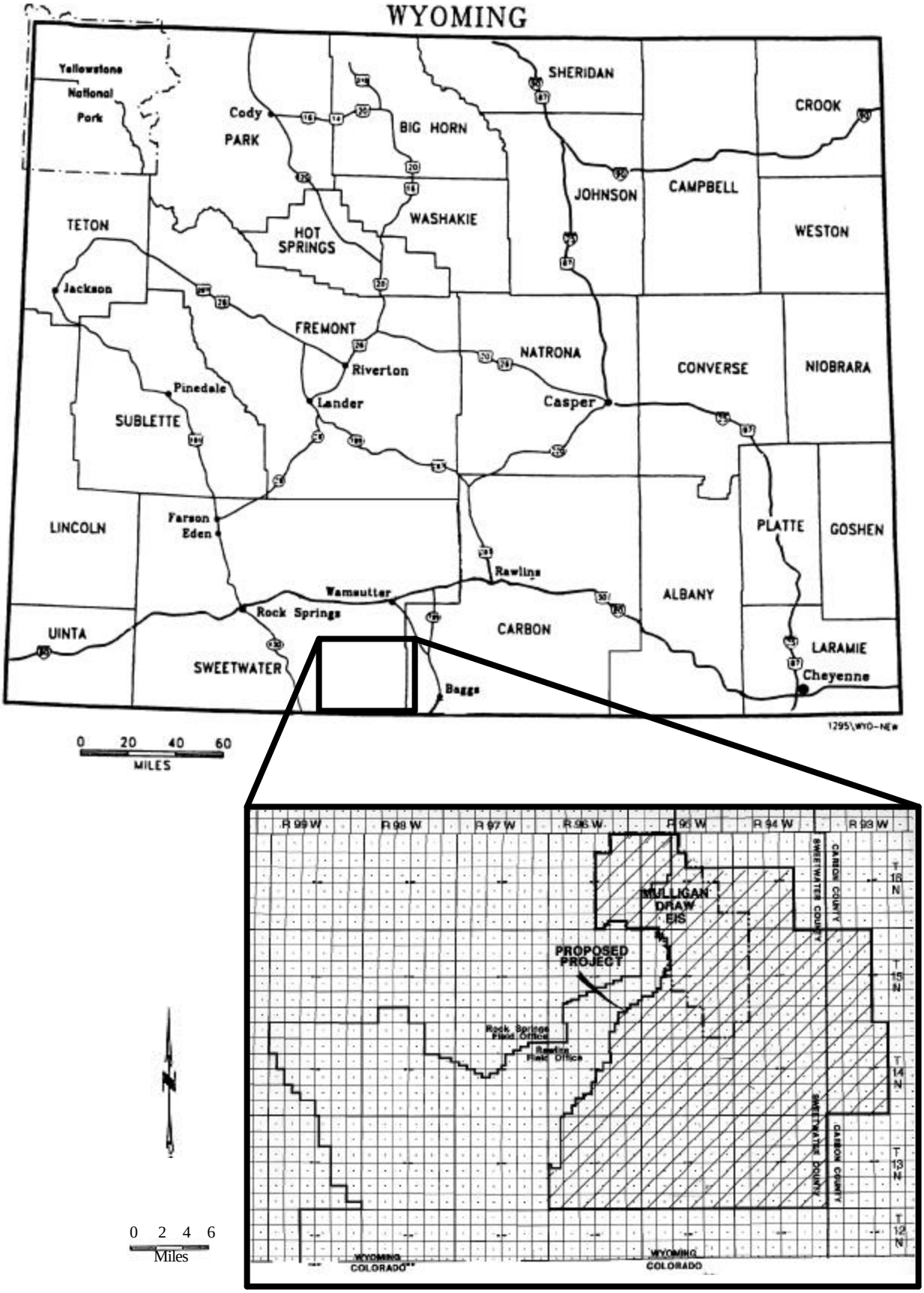
Andrea Lococo
ISPM & B
Animal Protection Institute
Biodiversity Associates-Friends of the Bow

National Wildlife Federation
Carbon County Stockgrowers
Wyoming Association of Professional Archeologists
Wind River Multiple Use Advocates
Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States
The Nature Conservancy
Public Lands Advocacy
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming Public Lands Council
Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Dolar Oil Properties
Barbara Parsons
Sinapu
Dr. Patricia M. Fazio
Humane Equine Rescue and Development Society
Wyoming Advocates for Animals
Humane Society of United States,
Gary Zakotnik
Predator Project

Approximately 100 additional “Other Agencies, Industry Representatives, Individuals, and Organizations” received a copy of the Scoping Notice



General Location of the Desolation Flats Project, Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming 2000.



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