

# **Environmental Assessment**

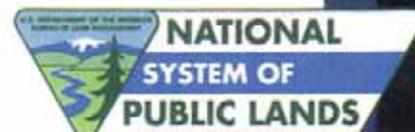
**for**

## **Rock Springs Field Office Administrative Site Withdrawal**

**WY-040-EA12-135**

**Bureau of Land Management  
Rock Springs Field Office  
Rock Springs, Wyoming**

April 2012



The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

WY-040-EA12-135

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**Proposed Action Title:** Rock Springs Field Office Administrative Site Withdrawal

**Proposed Action Type:** The proposed action is to recommend an additional 4.93 acre withdrawal for the authorization of a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administration site in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

**Location of Proposed Action:** The Rock Springs administrative site is located outside the town of Rock Springs, located in Lot 19 of section 14, T. 19 N., R. 105 W., 6<sup>th</sup> Principle Meridian, Sweetwater County, Wyoming.

**Applicant:** Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office; PO Box 1828; Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828

**Subject Function/Lease/Serial/Case File No:** WYW149499

### 1.1 Background

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is requesting the Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management to approve a Public Land Order (PLO) that withdraws 4.93 acres of public land from surface entry and mining for a period of 20 years to protect the Rock Springs Administrative Site Withdrawal in Sweetwater County, Wyoming. This withdrawal would be in addition and adjacent to the already existing 14.43 acres withdrawn, which was approved on May 26, 1952, serial number WYW17259, Public Land Order 10355, (17 F.R. 4831). This withdrawal was issued with a perpetual term.

The withdrawal is needed to protect the capital investments of the site. There are no suitable alternative sites as the land contains permanent Federal facilities. Structures and improvements on the site include the new office building, parking lot and other public needs associated with the construction and operation of the new building. The BLM requests the withdrawal to protect the Federal investment in facilities. WY040-EA03-213 was completed for the original withdrawal for this site, no decision was issued.

### 1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to withdraw the Rock Springs Field Office Administrative Site (4.93 acres) from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws, including mining laws subject to valid existing rights for a period of 20 years.

The need for the project is to protect the capital investment associated with the Bureau of Land Management, Rock Springs Field Office's administrative site. The need is established by BLM responsibilities under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

## **Decisions to be made:**

The BLM will decide whether or not to recommend the 4.93 acre Rock Springs Administrative Site for withdrawal. The approval of the withdrawal is subject to final approval by the US Secretary of Interior.

### **1.3 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Plans or Other Environmental Analyses**

Regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-3 require actions to be in conformance with the approved land use plan. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the following plan: Record of Decision (ROD) for the Green River RMP, page 10, Lands and Realty Management: Withdrawals/Classifications (BLM, 1997): "The BLM Rock Springs Administrative Site withdrawal will be retained."

A maintenance action will be required to update the RMP to include the additional acreage. Relevant descriptions and analyses in the "Withdrawal of Public Lands for the Bureau of Land Management Rock Springs Field Office Administrative Site".

Regulation 43 CFR 2310.3-4 authorizes the secretary to grant a withdrawal "for a period of not more than twenty years for any other use, including but not limited to use for administrative sites, location of facilities, and other proprietary purposes".

### **1.4 Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues**

The Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting was published in the Federal Register (65 FR 59464 (2000)) on October 5, 2000 as well as in a local newspaper, the Rocket Miner, Rock Springs, Wyoming on October 14, 2000.

Additionally, the action has been reviewed by appropriate BLM specialists. Issues were identified by BLM specialists and as a result the following resources were identified as requiring additional analysis (see Table 1): cultural, minerals, lands/access, and wildlife.

## **2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

### **2.1 Alternative I – No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, the withdrawal would be denied and no action will be taken. This alternative would not protect the proposed withdrawal area from entry, sale or development, therefore jeopardizing the BLM administrative site. This alternative would not remove the lands from settlement, sale or entry under the general land laws.

### **2.2 Alternative II – Proposed Action**

The Rock Springs Field Office is responsible for management of approximately 3.6 million acres of public lands surface and 3.5 million acres of Federal mineral estate. The administrative boundaries of the Rock Springs Field Office include parts of Sweetwater, Lincoln, Sublette,

Fremont and Uinta Counties. The workforce for the Rock Springs Field Office fluctuates between 75-90 employees at any given time. The administrative site also serves as the High Desert District office for the Rock Springs, Rawlins, Kemmerer and Pinedale Field Offices and provides support for civil engineering/force account, personnel, budget, wild horse and fire management.

There is currently a withdrawal for the existing administrative site (14.43 acres) which was approved on May 26, 1952, serial number WYW17259, Public Land Order 10355, (17 F.R. 4831). This withdrawal was issued with a perpetual term. The proposed action is to withdraw an additional 4.93 acres of public lands adjacent to the existing Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office administrative site to protect the capital investments of the new site which include a portion of the new building and parking lot.

On September 15, 2000, the Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior, approved a petition which would allow the Bureau of Land Management to file an application to withdraw 4.93 acres for the protection of the capital investment of the expanded administrative site.

The administrative site is located outside the town of Rock Springs, in Sweetwater County, Wyoming. The withdrawn public land is described as: Sixth Principal Meridian, Wyoming, T.19N., R. 105 W., Lot 19 of Section 14.

### 2.3 Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

No other alternatives were considered.

### 3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The proposed withdrawal is adjacent to the existing BLM administrative withdrawal site. The parcel involved with the proposed action is directly south of the existing BLM administrative site. The existing and proposed withdrawal are less than one-quarter mile north of the corporate boundary of the City of Rock Springs. The proposed action is within the checkerboard land ownership pattern. The parcel is accessible from Highway 191 North. The elevation is approximately 6,340 feet above sea level. The terrain is gently sloping hillside.

**Table 1. Affected Resources Overview**

<b>Affected Resources Overview</b>		
<b>Determination<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Rationale for Determination</b>
NI	Air Quality/ Green House Gas Emissions	A withdrawal would not contribute to additional air emissions.

### Affected Resources Overview

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	No ACECs are located within the project area.
PI	Cultural Resources	See Chapters 3 & 4. Eligible for inclusion in the National Register and Historic Places.
NI	Environmental Justice	The action alternatives were reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12898 and no impacts to minority and low-income populations are expected.
NP	Farmlands: Prime or Unique	No Prime or Unique farmlands are present.
NP	Floodplains	No floodplains are present.
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	This not a fuels management area.
PI	Geology/Mineral Resources	See Chapters 3 & 4. Certain minerals within the parcel have a high potential for occurrence.
NI	Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds	No impact expected
PI	Lands/Access	See Chapters 3 & 4. There are two authorized rights-of way within the project area.
NI	Livestock Grazing	The parcel is not allocated for grazing use, therefore, no reduction in Animal Unit Month (AUMs) will occur.
NP	Native American Religious Concerns	A review of the area did not identify Native American religious concerns.
NP	Paleontology	No impact expected
NI	Public Health & Safety	No public health or safety concerns were identified.
NI	Rangeland Health Standards	The scope of the project is described in Chapter 2.2.
NI	Recreation	No recreation sites were identified
NI	Socio-Economics	No impact expected
NI	Soils	No impact expected
NP	Special Status Species	Not located within the proposed withdrawal area.
NP	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species	No Threatened, Endangered or Candidate plant species or associated Critical Habitat are present.
NP	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal	Not located within the proposed withdrawal area.

Affected Resources Overview		
Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
	Species	
NI	Wastes (hazardous or solid)	Impacts are predicted to be minimal and will not exceed those analyzed in the Green River Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM, 1996) which is incorporated by reference.
NP	Water Resources/Quality (drinking/surface/ground)	Not Present.
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Not present.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	Not present.
NP	Wilderness	Not present.
NP	Woodland/Forestry	Not present.
NI	Vegetation	An inventory of the area of proposed withdrawal along with a review of the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database revealed that there are no Special Status or Threatened plant species within the parcel.
NI	Visual Resources	The proposed withdrawal of the administrative site would be in compliance with the VRM rating as it is within a Class IV.
NP	Wild Horses and Burros	The parcel is not within a Wild Horse Management Area.
PI	Wildlife	See Chapters 3 & 4. Within Antelope crucial winter range.
<b>Determination:</b> <b>PI:</b> Potential Impact due to one or more action alternatives; therefore, analyzed in the NEPA document. <b>NP:</b> Not Present in the area impacted by the action alternatives. <b>NI:</b> No Impact expected from action alternatives.		

### 3.1 Cultural

An intensive (Class III) inventory was conducted of the proposed building site for the Rock Springs Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management on July 31, 2000. The inventory records Site 48SW6222 identified a prehistoric campsite. The inventory recorded a variety of lithics including Pelican Lake projectile points, fire-cracked rock, and chipping debris. The site had been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register and Historic Places (NRHP).

### **3.2 Minerals**

A mineral report was conducted in June of 2001 to determine the mineral potential of lands proposed for the Rock Springs Field Office Administrative Site. The mineral estate for the proposed withdrawal area is Federal. Known mineral deposits within the Greater Green River Basin consists of coal, oil and gas, trona, construction materials and oil shale. The potential for coal occurrence is considered to be high. Historical records indicate mining activity has occurred, but it is believed that the existence of a commercial deposit is unlikely. Although the potential for oil and gas occurrence is considered to be high, the parcel is not open to oil and gas leasing, because it is within the expansion area for the City of Rock Springs. Large construction materials are typically associated with the tertiary terrace gravels along the Green River. No large deposits exist within the project area.

Known prospects, mineral occurrences, and mineralized areas within the Greater Green River Basin consist of diamonds, uranium, gold, and coalbed methane. The report does not contain the formations that have known diamond and gold deposits. Uranium deposits that have been identified are not present in economical quantities. The potential for coalbed methane is moderate. Development of coalbed methane would be subject to the same consideration as development of conventional oil/gas wells. No mining claims exist on the subject parcel. No critical or strategic minerals are known to occur within the proposed withdrawal area.

### **3.3 Lands/Access**

There are two authorized rights-of-way within the project area. These rights-of-way have been issued to Pacific Power and Light for overhead power lines. One of the power lines services the new BLM facility. There are no other authorized uses within the project area.

### **3.4 Wildlife**

An evaluation of impacts on wildlife and plants including threatened or endangered species was conducted on the proposed withdrawal area on December 5, 2000 and again on March 19, 2012. The evaluation found the proposed action is within Antelope crucial winter range. There are no Special Status or Threatened species identified within the parcel.

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

### **4.1 Cultural Resources**

#### **Alternative I – No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the segregation would be allowed to expire and no withdrawal would exist for the 4.93-acre administrative site. This alternative would not provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the Rock Springs Field Office administrative site. This alternative may also compromise the financial and capital investments made on the project area.

### Alternative II – Proposed Action

According to the Class III survey of 2000, the proposed action will have no impact on historic properties identified within the project area. Additionally, according to section VIII (D) of the Wyoming Statewide Programmatic Agreement, it has been determined that the proposed action will not have an adverse effect upon historic properties since the proposed action occurs within non-contributing portions of the resource.

## **4.2 Mineral**

### Alternative I – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, the segregation would be allowed to expire and no withdrawal would exist for the 4.93-acre administrative site. This alternative would not provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the Rock Springs Field Office administrative site. This alternative may also compromise the financial and capital investments made on the project area.

### Alternative II – Proposed Action

Based on data obtained in the June 2001 minerals report, the 4.93 acre administrative site area is highly unlikely for development of any minerals that have been determined may have a high potential for occurrence.

## **4.3 Lands/Access**

### Alternative I – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, the segregation would be allowed to expire and no withdrawal would exist for the 4.93-acre administrative site. This alternative would not provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the Rock Springs Field Office administrative site. This alternative may also compromise the financial and capital investments made on the project area.

### Alternative II – Proposed Action

There are two rights-of-way issued to Pacific Power & Light for overhead power lines. A withdrawal within the project area would have no impact on these existing rights-of-way.

## **4.4 Wildlife**

### Alternative I – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, the segregation would be allowed to expire and no withdrawal would exist for the 4.93-acre administrative site. This alternative would not provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the Rock Springs Field Office administrative site. This alternative may also compromise the financial and capital investments made on the project area.

**Alternative II – Proposed Action**

Under the Proposed Action, no impacts to wildlife other than those already authorized in the project area would occur. The withdrawal will provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the project area.

**4.5 Cumulative and Residual Effects**

**Alternative I – No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the segregation would be allowed to expire and no withdrawal would exist for the 4.93-acre administrative site. This alternative would not provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the Rock Springs Field Office administrative site. This alternative may also compromise the financial and capital investments made on the project area.

**Alternative II – Proposed Action**

The withdrawal will provide protection from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general laws including mining laws for the Rock Springs administrative site. Therefore, no cumulative or residual effects are anticipated.

**5.0 TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, or AGENCIES CONSULTED**

On October 5, 2000, the BLM published the Notice of Proposed Withdrawal in the Federal Register and the local newspaper (Rocket-Miner) on October 14, 2000, requesting public comment. During that time, no comments were received.

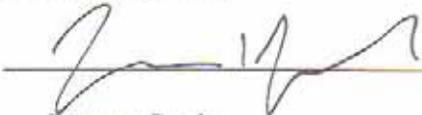
No Tribes, organizations, or other agencies were consulted outside of the public scoping period.

**Other Persons/Agencies Consulted:**

**Consulted:** Terry DelBene (BLM)- Archeologist; Andy Tenney (BLM)- Outdoor Recreation Planner; Scott Sanner (BLM)- Mining Engineer; John Henderson (BLM)- Fishery Biologist; Dennis Doncaster (BLM)- Hydrologist; Jim Glennon (BLM)- Botanist; Lance Porter (BLM)- Range Management Specialist; Thor Stephenson (BLM)- Wild Horse Specialist; Renee Dana (BLM)- Resource Advisor; Jan Booth (BLM)- Realty Specialist; R.D. York (Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office)- Archeologist; Patricia Hamilton (BLM)- Realty Specialist; Jim Speck (BLM)- Planning and Environmental Coordinator; Jeromy Caldwell (BLM)- Supervisory Wildlife Specialist;

**6.0 LIST OF PREPARERS**

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

4/13/12

Preparer: Darren Cook

Date: April 12, 2012

## 7.0 REFERENCES

- Del Bene, Terry Ph. D. The BLM Inventory Memorandum "A Cultural Resources Inventory of a Proposed Bureau of Land Management office Building, Sweetwater County, Southwestern Wyoming". (BLM, 2001).
- DOI, BLM. June 29, 2001. Mineral Report for the Rock Springs Field Office Administrative Site Withdrawal. 23 pages.
- DOI, BLM. July 25, 2001. Special Status Plant Clearance: Survey Review and Recommendations. 1 page.
- DOI, BLM. 2003. WY040-EA03-213.
- Dunder, J., Caldwell, J. The BLM Wildlife Memorandum "Evaluation of Impacts on Wildlife and Plants Including Threatened or Endangered Species" Revised March 19, 2012.
- Green River Resource Area Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM, 1996).