



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

High Desert District
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901



MODIFIED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DESOLATION ROAD EXPLORATORY GAS PROJECT

Lease Number: WYW147885

EA NUMBER: DOI-BLM-WYD40-2010-43-EA

Introduction and Background:

On May 10, 2010, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office (RSFO) issued the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Desolation Road Exploratory Gas Project. Due to an appeal of the Decision Record to a State Director Review, the Environmental Assessment (EA) was remanded back to the RSFO for the following issues:

- The Desolation Road EA does not support a reasoned conclusion that the subject project area does not contain wilderness characteristics. It appears from the record that a wilderness character determination of the subject area has not been formally made within the RSFO boundary.
- If the RSFO determines that the subject project area contains wilderness characteristics, the RSFO will need to determine whether the proposed action will have significant impacts to wilderness quality and public recreation.
- RSFO is directed to amend as necessary Appendix 1 of the Decision Record (Appendix E of the EA) to provide consistency with IM No. 2010-012 as discussed within the EA, or to prepare additional analysis in support of the Conditions of Approval, which would provide a greater level of protection than the provisions provided for in the Land Use Plan (LUP).
- Once the issue of wilderness characteristics within the project area is verified, the RSFO must determine whether heliportable drilling is a reasonable alternative to protect wilderness characteristics.

All remaining arguments of the appeal were affirmed in the State Director Review.

Proposed Action Title/Type: The proposed action includes two new well pads and a new access road. The South Well (DRU #31-28) would be constructed on BLM-administered public land to drill into the Federal mineral estate. The North Well (DRU #34-21) would be constructed on privately owned surface land to drill into privately owned mineral estate. The purpose of both wells would be to test the feasibility of oil and gas development. The proposed location of the South Well (DRU #31-28) and portions of the access route for both proposed wells are within the Monument Valley Management Area. Both locations and the access route are outside of the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area (WSA), with the southern well located approximately 1.5 miles north of the Adobe Town WSA boundary.

Location: The Desolation Road Project is located in T. 16 N., R. 96 W., NWNE in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, approximately 30 miles south of Wamsutter, Wyoming.

Applicant: Samson Investment Company

Amended EA:

The Desolation Road Exploratory Gas Project EA has been amended to address the issues identified above from the State Director Review. The following sections were amended:

- Section 3.1.2 Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area was amended to reflect the most recent data available from the RSFO. This data verifies that the lands within the project area do not meet the criteria for wilderness characteristics regarding naturalness and solitude. Therefore, the management of the lands within the project area has not changed since the LUP was signed in 1997, which allows for oil and gas leasing and development within the project area. The project is in compliance with management objectives for this area in the LUP.
- A map (Figure 3-0) was added to Section 3.1.2 for better clarification.
- Section 7.0 References Cited was updated to include the citation for the BLM field data sheets referenced in Section 3.1.2.
- Appendix B Public Comments and Response to Comments: #4 Response has been amended to clarify that the use of heliportable drilling is not a reasonable alternative.
- Appendix E Applicant Committed Environmental Protection Measures: #3 was amended to reflect disruptive activities as provided by IM No. WY-2010-012 and defined by WY IB 2007-029. The seasonal restriction dates of March 1 to July 15 provide greater protection than those provided by IM No. WY-2010-012 and are consistent with seasonal restriction dates provided by the Green River Resource Management Plan (RMP) of March 1-May 15 (Sage-grouse leks) and March 15-July 15 (Sage-grouse lek and nesting area use).
- Appendix E Applicant Committed Environmental Protection Measures: #4 was amended to reflect 'disrupting activities' as defined in the Green River RMP.

No other changes were made to the EA document.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the information contained in the attached amended EA and all other information available to the BLM, it is the determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant impacts beyond those already addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Green River RMP; (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Green River RMP; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA or as articulated in the letters of comment.

Approval:


Lance C. Porter
Field Manager

19 Oct. 2010
Date