

Hiawatha Energy Development EIS Project

If a land use plan amendment becomes necessary, the following potential planning criteria would be applied.

Potential Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the constraints, or ground rules, that will guide the potential plan amendment that may result from Hiawatha Energy Development project. These criteria will guide the scope of the various management prescriptions and alternatives to be considered and analyzed associated with a plan amendment to the Green River Resource Management Plan (RMP). Planning criteria serve the following purposes:

1. To ensure that the planning effort is focused on the issues, follows and incorporates legal requirements, and addresses management of all public land resources and land uses in the planning area.
2. To ensure that plan preparation is accomplished efficiently.
3. To identify the scope and parameters of the planning effort for the decision maker, the interdisciplinary team, and the public.

The EIS will analyze the potential environmental consequences of energy development and its effects in the project area. The Operators propose to drill as many as 3,911 new wells beyond the number of wells that currently exist within the Project Area. The 3,911 wells proposed to be analyzed in the EIS represent full field development. The Operators estimate that approximately two-thirds (2,607) of the potential wells could be located within the Wyoming portion of the project area and the remaining one-third (1,304) could be located within the Colorado portion of the Project Area. These criteria apply to the Wyoming portion of the Project Area administered by BLM Rock Springs Field Office and to the related planning document, the Green River RMP.

Criteria for Use of Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines

A consistent aspect of the plan amendment process will be considering the application of mitigation or protective measures for surface disturbing or disruptive activities. These would be based on the “Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities.” Mitigation or protective measures would be applied as conditions of land and resource use for the following purposes:

1. To minimize soil movement
2. To minimize disturbance of vegetation in sensitive areas, such as riparian areas
3. To protect important cultural and paleontological resources, recreational values, wildlife and wildlife habitat resources, and threatened or endangered plant and animal species
4. To protect visual quality.

Criteria for Healthy Rangelands

Another consistent aspect of the plan amendment process will be to consider the application of measures to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health. These would be based on the

“Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands.” Appropriate management prescriptions and protection measures would be applied. The four fundamentals are as follows:

1. Watersheds are functioning properly
2. Water, nutrients, and energy are cycling properly
3. Water quality meets state standards
4. Habitat for special status species is protected.

General Criteria and Considerations for Alternative Formulation

The following factors will be considered in one or more of the alternatives of the EIS:

- Intensive management of cultural and historic resources, including rock art occurrences, historic trails, and Native American respected places
- Fire management and fire suppression options
- Various types and levels of vegetation uses, including wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and livestock grazing
- Minerals exploration and development, authorizations related to rights-of-way and other land and realty actions, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and other activities that may result in surface disturbance
- Modification of right-of-way concentration areas, exclusion areas, and avoidance areas to provide for development needs and protection of resource values
- Protecting unique and nonrenewable geological, cultural, paleontological, and recreational values
- Management options for protecting or enhancing wetlands and riparian areas
- Protection and enhancement of habitat for sensitive or important wildlife and plant species
- Maintenance of appropriate management level of wild horses
- Maintenance of habitat and forage to meet big game population goals of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD)
- Application of Best Management Practices to reduce surface disturbance
- Protection of recovery habitat and essential habitat for threatened or endangered wildlife and plant species
- Maintenance of the important resource values of the Pine Mountain Management Area

Criteria for Effects to be Considered

Effects in all alternatives generally use existing data for analysis. The following types of effects will be addressed in identifying and analyzing the environmental consequences of the planning alternatives:

- Effects of surface disturbing land uses and other disruptive human activities on air quality, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, watershed, and wildlife resources

- Effects caused by livestock grazing and OHV use or restrictions on OHV use
- Effects of all types of land and resource uses on the vegetation resource
- Economic impacts of land use restrictions on economic sectors that are heavily dependent on the use of public lands and resources.
- Effects in all alternatives generally use existing data for analysis.

Criteria for a Potential Plan Amendment

Answers to the following questions will be used to guide selection of the proposed amendment.:

- Does/Do the alternative(s) meet guidelines for reduction of sedimentation and salinity, as stated in water quality plans of the State of Wyoming and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)?
- What levels of land use restrictions are needed to provide adequate protection of resource values?
- Does/Do the alternative(s) retain reasonable accessibility of public lands for purposes of public access, public land use, and resource development?
- Is/Are the alternative(s) consistent with plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes?
- Is/Are the alternative(s) consistent with the objectives established in the Green River RMP?
- Are the resource values in the Pine Mountain Management Area, including Four J Basin, maintained?
- Are the effects generally within the scope of the existing analysis of the final EIS for the Green River RMP?