

Hiawatha Regional Energy Development: Project Update

Introduction

Thank you for your previous interest in the Hiawatha Regional Energy Development Project (Project), which is being analyzed in an environmental impact statement (EIS) prepared out of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Rock Springs and Little Snake Field Offices. This newsletter provides you with updated information on the latest plan of development, project schedule, contact information, and other resources related to the Project.

Project Description

In 2006, QEP Energy Company and Wexpro Company (Operators) proposed to drill exploratory and development wells on mixed federal, state, and private land in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, and Moffat County, Colorado. The Project includes operations in the Hiawatha Field, and consists of approximately 157,361 acres of mixed federal (91% of the project area is managed by the BLM), state, and private lands. As proposed by the Operators, the Project would include as many as 4,208 new wells within the Project Area, with two-thirds (2,805) of the wells located in Wyoming and the remaining one-third (1,403) located in Colorado. Based on advances in drilling technology, the Operators have updated their Proposed Action to include 30% directionally drilled and 70% conventionally drilled (vertical) wells. The proposed Project would include associated roads, pipelines, production facilities (e.g., separation, dehydration, metering, treating, fluid storage, compression, processing), disposal well and/or surface disposal facilities, and equipment storage facilities.

Approval of the project would be a major federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Therefore, the BLM is responsible for considering the Project's impacts on the environment through an EIS, the results of which will allow the BLM to make an informed decision regarding the Proposed Action. Following preparation of the EIS, the BLM (as the lead federal agency for the Project) will decide whether to allow—and if so under what conditions—the development, operation, maintenance, and reclamation of expanded development and surface disturbances on federal land within the Project Area.



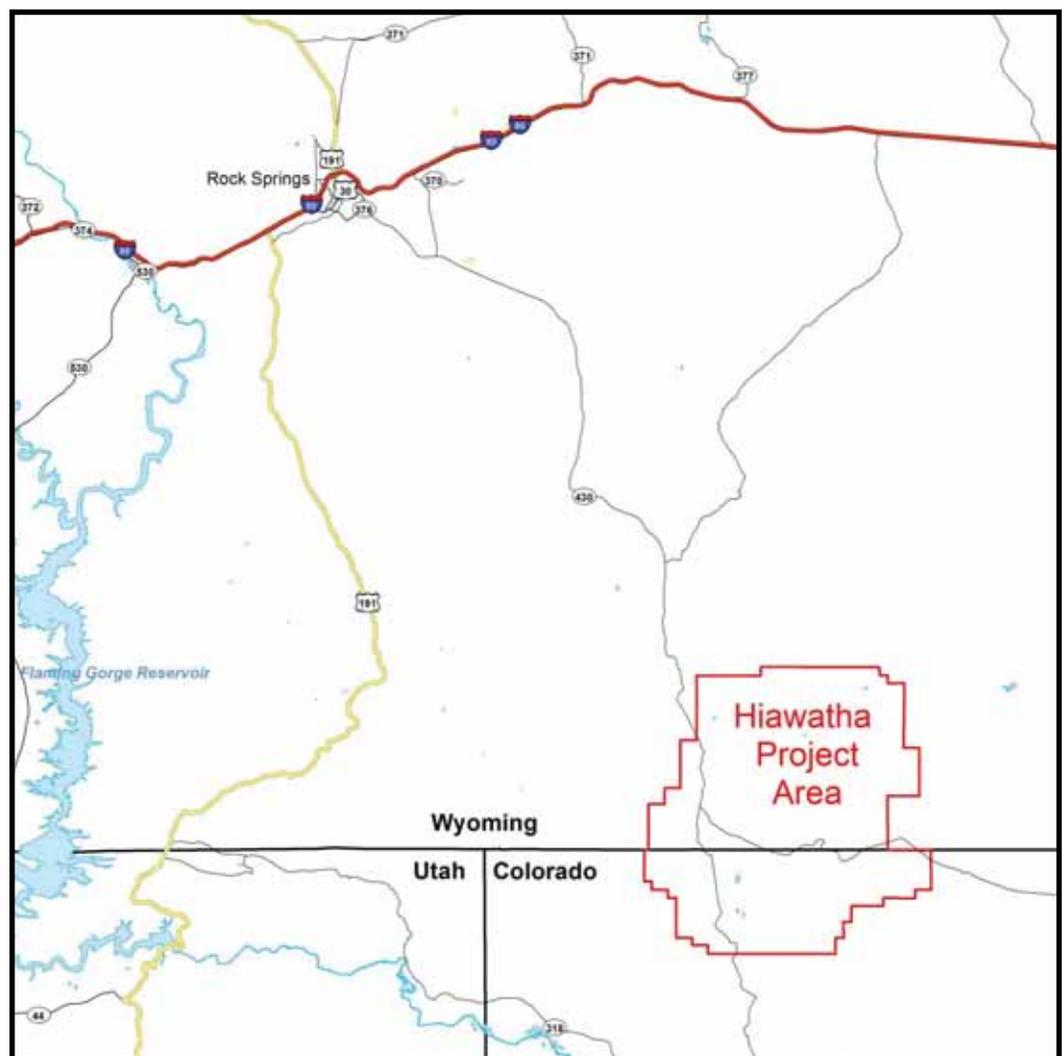
Project Background/NEPA Process

The EIS will evaluate the Operators' Proposed Action and a No Action Alternative. The BLM has also identified a range of alternatives based on the issues, concerns, and opportunities identified from public scoping comments, interdisciplinary interaction between resource specialists, and collaboration with cooperating agencies. Currently, the BLM is working with the cooperating agencies to verify that the range of alternatives that will be evaluated in the Draft EIS is reasonable and addresses recent developments in technology, resource considerations, and agency regulations.

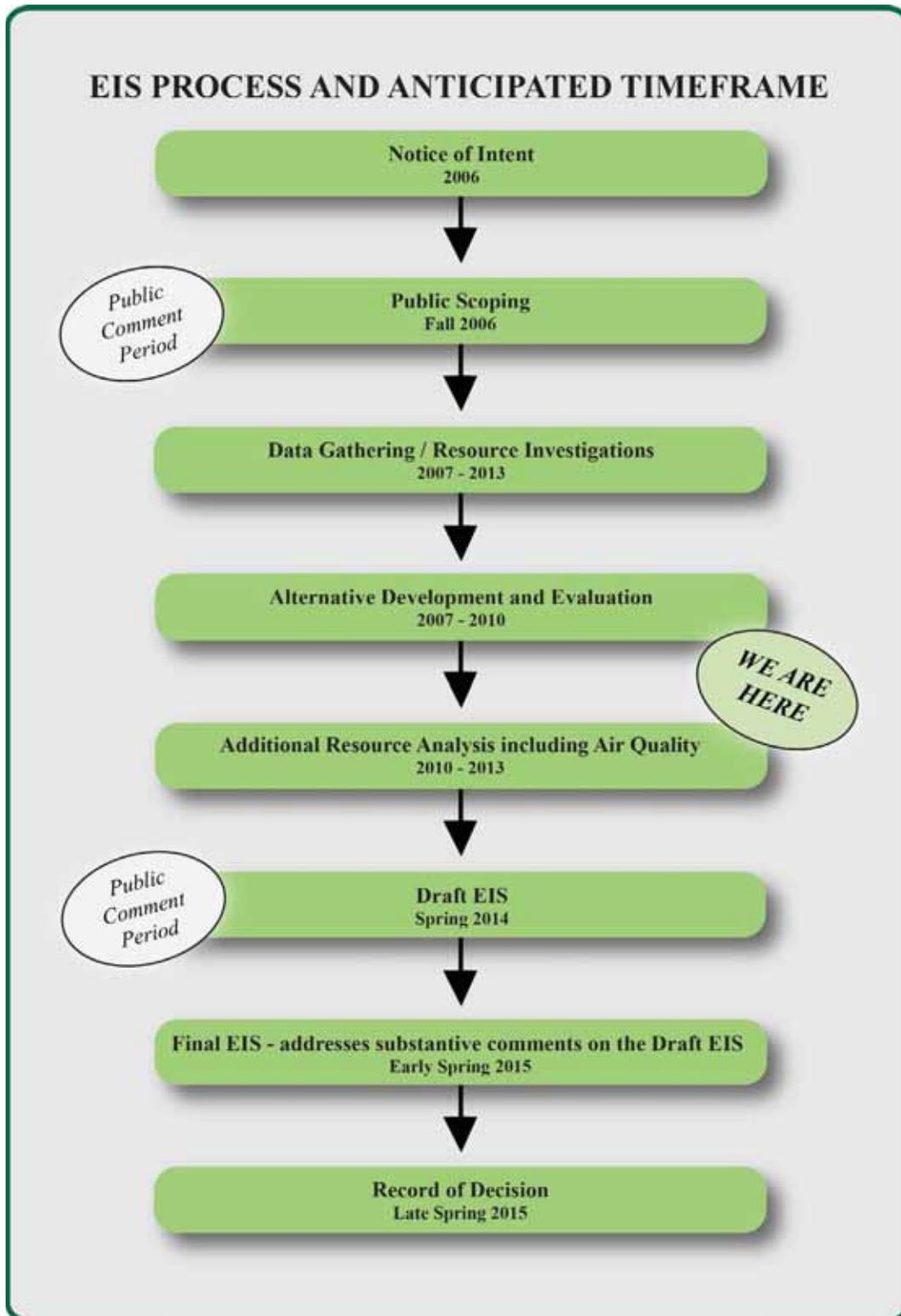
Public scoping was conducted in September 2006 to collect input related to the proposed Project and develop a range of alternatives to address the issues. During this time, comments were collected from agencies and members of the public during the comment period (see link to the Scoping Report in the "Opportunities to Learn More & Contact Us" section of this newsletter). After the formal scoping period, the BLM began preparation of a Draft EIS in coordination with cooperating agencies.

Since scoping in 2006, the EIS schedule has been delayed so that BLM could conduct agency coordination and additional analysis needed to address air quality concerns.

The BLM is moving forward with preparation of the Draft EIS, and will incorporate current air quality modeling technologies to evaluate impacts to ozone and other chemical interactions. In addition, recent Colorado and Wyoming state wildlife guidelines pertaining to development in sage-grouse habitat are being incorporated in the Draft EIS. Also, the resource management plan (RMP) for the Little Snake Field Office has been recently updated and the BLM is incorporating these updates and their current resource data into the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is expected to be published for public review and comment in Spring 2014.



EIS PROCESS AND ANTICIPATED TIMEFRAME



How can I Participate?

Formal opportunities for public participation are illustrated in the diagram above. BLM anticipates that the public comment period for the Draft EIS will occur in spring 2014. During the 45-day comment period, BLM will make the Draft EIS available for public review, host public meetings, and solicit comments for response and incorporation in the Final EIS. Please note that the BLM is not actively soliciting comments at this time. BLM contact information is provided below.

Hiawatha Regional Energy Development Project

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



Opportunities to Learn More & Contact Us

- Website (includes links to the scoping report):
<http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/rsfo/hiawatha.html>
- For more information about the Project please use the following contact information:

- By mail:
Hiawatha Regional Energy Development Project
ATTN: Jim Speck
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

or

Hiawatha Regional Energy Development Project
ATTN: Kathy McKinstry
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- By email: jspeck@blm.gov or kmckinst@blm.gov

