
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Report

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Rawlins Field Office is currently managing BLM-administered land within the Rawlins Field Office area according to the management prescriptions provided in the existing Great Divide Resource Area Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP), which was published in November 1990. The BLM Rawlins Field Office is preparing an amended RMP since the management prescriptions described in the existing RMP are outdated. The increase in resource development within the Rawlins Field Office area in the last 12 years has led to associated environmental impacts beyond those analyzed or anticipated in the existing RMP. As part of the RMP process, the BLM is required to prepare a Mineral Occurrence and Development Potential Report, which provides specific information regarding mineral occurrences and development potential within the Resource Management Plan Planning Area (RMPPA) (i.e., Rawlins Field Office Area). This report provides an intermediate level of detail for mineral assessment as prescribed in BLM Manual 3031. Information provided in this report would be incorporated into the Management Situation Analysis as part of the RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which would be completed for the RMPPA.

Since the completion of the existing RMP and EIS, oil and gas development has substantially increased within the RMPPA, which has affected the management of natural, human, and other physical resources. Oil and gas development is likely to continue to increase in the RMPPA throughout the 20-year planning period (2001 to 2020), based on information provided in the Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) Report for oil and gas written by the Wyoming State Office Reservoir Management Group (RMG) in Casper, Wyoming. The RFD and discussion of hydrocarbon resource development potential in Chapter 4.0 (Sections 4.1.1 through 4.1.4) were provided by the RMG. All maps, graphs, and discussion are the product of the RMG and it is solely responsible for the content and the conclusions contained therein. In addition, portions of text and graphs in Chapter 3.0 (description of hydrocarbon resources) and the entire text of Section A6.0 (New Technologies) of Appendix A were also provided by the RMG. Demand for other minerals also will likely increase as a result of oil and gas development and population growth within the RMPPA.

A summary of the following chapters in this report is provided below:

- Chapter 2.0, Description of Geology, provides a description of the geologic resources as they relate to historical and future development or use of leasable, locatable, and salable minerals within the RMPPA. Information provided in this chapter includes physiography, stratigraphy, structural geology and tectonics, and historical geology.

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- Chapter 3.0, Description of Mineral Resources, describes the leasable, locatable, and salable minerals that have historically occurred and/or currently occur within the RMPPA.
 - Chapter 4.0, Mineral Resource Potential, describes the potential development of the leasable, locatable, and salable minerals within the 20-year planning period.
 - Chapter 5.0, Recommendations, provides a description of recommendations and prescriptions developed by BLM staff based on the future development of leasable, locatable, and salable minerals for the proper management of natural, human, and other physical resources for the 20-year planning period.
 - Chapter 6.0, References, lists the references that were utilized to develop this report.
 - Appendix A, Oil and Gas Operations, provides a detailed report regarding future oil and gas development within the RMPPA.

1.2 Lands Involved and Record Data

The RMPPA is located in southeastern Wyoming and includes approximately 3.5 million acres of public surface and 4.7 million acres of federal mineral estate (**Figure 1-1**). The RMPPA boundary includes all or nearly all of Laramie, Albany, and Carbon Counties and a substantial portion of Sweetwater County. Other land categories present within the general RMPPA boundary include land managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), State of Wyoming, and private land. In addition, USFS lands are present at various locations adjacent to and/or within the delineated RMPPA boundaries. Since BLM does not manage USFS lands, this report does not include an assessment of mineral occurrence or development potential for those minerals present on or beneath USFS lands.

Information provided in this report was obtained from published geologic reports and maps, various technical files and maps, the RFD provided by the Wyoming State Office RMG, computer databases, field review of current mineral development operations within the RMPPA, and personal communications with technical experts.

Figure 1-1 General Location Map of the RMPPA