

Conversation Contents

Roan Plateau Comments

Steven Fuller <rellufnevets@gmail.com>

From: Steven Fuller <rellufnevets@gmail.com>
Sent: Mon Nov 30 2015 13:44:58 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau Comments

Good day!

Thanking you for allowing citizens to comment on the draft SEIS for the Roan Plateau. As a citizen of Rifle, CO, I use the area below the Roan known as Hubbard Mesa weekly for trail running, hiking, cycling, and target shooting. Obviously I prefer not to do all of these activities at the same time, but recently it is becoming more difficult to enjoy most activities in this area without other people's shooting becoming a part of my afternoon.

I have an interest in the BLM addressing its own rules (laws?) that are already in place regarding shooting. This includes but is not limited to location/orientation to trails, litter, and other common sense safety practices. If these regulations were followed by users, I believe that Hubbard Mesa would be a much safer environment.

I do not feel that BLM needs to change any of its policies, only that the policies need to be enforced. Manpower and resources are certainly always pertinent issues, and as a user of these lands I would gladly pay user fees to help realize these goals.

Thank you.

Steven Fuller

0001-1 Opinion - Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

| 0001-1

Conversation Contents

Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Re: Roan Plateau public comment sessions

"Roanplateau, BLM_CO" <blm_co_roanplateau@blm.gov>

From: "Roanplateau, BLM_CO" <blm_co_roanplateau@blm.gov>
Sent: Tue Nov 17 2015 16:28:44 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: dana.wood06@gmail.com
Subject: Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Re: Roan Plateau public comment sessions

Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Supplemental EIS/RMPA.

--
Roan Plateau SEIS Planning Team

Dana Wood <dana.wood06@gmail.com>

From: Dana Wood <dana.wood06@gmail.com>
Sent: Tue Dec 01 2015 12:46:56 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: "Roanplateau, BLM_CO" <blm_co_roanplateau@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Re: Roan Plateau public comment sessions

Hi,

Can you please tell me when the public comment meetings will be held in January?

Thanks!

On Tue, Nov 17, 2015 at 4:28 PM, Roanplateau, BLM_CO <blm_co_roanplateau@blm.gov> wrote:
Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Supplemental EIS/RMPA.

--
Roan Plateau SEIS Planning Team

--
Dana Wood
970.389.9510

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - *Margaret Mead*

Conversation Contents

Oil and Gas Leases

0003-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Terry Lianzi <terlia@hotmail.com>

From: Terry Lianzi <terlia@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 15:59:08 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: "roanplateau@blm.gov" <roanplateau@blm.gov>
Subject: Oil and Gas Leases

Please do not allow any more drilling for oil or gas on the Roan Plateau. Please retire any unused oil and gas leases. If we are to slow the effects of Global Warming, we need to keep most of our reserves of fossil fuels in the ground.

Terry Lianzi

1400 South Ocean Drive

Apt. 1504

Hollywood, Fl 33019

| 0003-1

Conversation Contents

Roan Plateau

0004-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

"freesage3@cs.com" <freesage3@cs.com>

From: "freesage3@cs.com" <freesage3@cs.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 12:26:15 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau

Please, protect to the utmost, the Roan Plateau for future generations. Do not let unwise decisions and the greedy interests of some persons rob our kids and grand kids of what should be passed to them in pristine condition. I have flown every month for fifteen years from Denver to Salt Lake and back. The decimation and ugliness from energy development goes as far as the eye can see from the air in many areas. I have reasonable fears that this land will never be restored. Don't let this continue to happen.

Marcia Sage

| 0004-1

Conversation Contents

No drilling on our children's legacy lands!

0005-1 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

LESLIE SCOPES <lescopes@msn.com>

From: LESLIE SCOPES <lescopes@msn.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 11:55:35 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: "roanplateau@blm.gov" <roanplateau@blm.gov>
Subject: No drilling on our children's legacy lands!

Please preserve this pristine area to inspire future generations! Once it's violated, it is gone! Let it be!! Don't sell out our scenic wonders to Big Oil! Stand up for our rights to beauty and tranquility!

Leslie Scopes

Salt Lake City, UT

| 0005-1

Conversation Contents

Draft SEIS

0006-1 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

K Pierce <kpierc08@gmail.com>

From: K Pierce <kpierc08@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 09:48:33 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Draft SEIS

These projections to continue to drill for oil and gas are antiquated and need to end.

I don't think the report accurately depicts the impacts, they're projections that suit a particular interest- the gas and oil industry. The government benefits charging for the water and land use and therein lies the problem of bias.

Who paid what company to put this together? Who benefits? It entices the locals with jobs and money in the community. The real money goes to the ultra rich industry corporations and does not 'trickle down' to the community, except through jobs that waste our natural resources and pollute/ruin the ecosystems within the environment.

Leave the natural oil and gas resources where they are and focus on cleaner energy alternatives that lend to preservation of our natural resources. This is our children's future at stake. I say no to this oil and gas industry development of my home state of CO where I was born and raised!

Sincerely,

Kary Pierce

0006-1

Conversation Contents

comment

0007-1 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Jim Drevescraft <drevesj@ionsky.com>

From: Jim Drevescraft <drevesj@ionsky.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 08:57:04 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: comment

It is my opinion that any proposed oil and gas leasing on the Roan Plateau not go forward, and that the area be set aside from any development.

Jim Drevescraft
PO Box 266
Nederland, CO 80466-0266

| 0007-1

Conversation Contents

RE: Roan Plateau Planning Area 'Clean Air & Energy'

0008-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

"J.W. Pavlic" <jaungeskaune@hotmail.com>

From: "J.W. Pavlic" <jaungeskaune@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 04:47:52 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: RE: Roan Plateau Planning Area 'Clean Air & Energy'

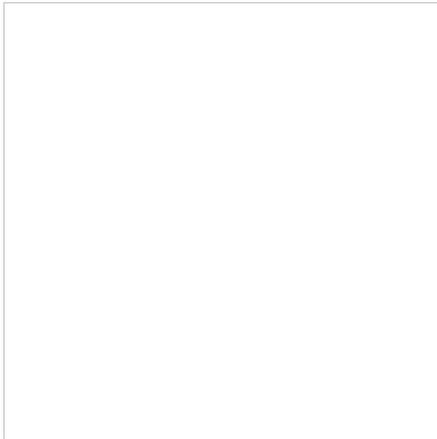
November 19th, 2015

To: 'Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management'

Title: 'Clean Air & Energy'

Hon'ble Consulate, wouldn't it be nice to move into the next century with no worries towards the "thousands of water producing filtration plants" that could be found dotting the rising shoreline or the creatively productive monorails that transport commodities and materials to different ports run by safe and efficient electricity. . . ? The productivity of safe transport and water filtration systems of the future could be used with a variety of tidal wave or wind power generators (and parabolic solar disk) that combined would raise the standard of our creative living environment. . .

P.S. As it's concerning about today's learning or the impersonal attitudes taken sometimes in creating a better tomorrow. The possibilities of creating a better world or the attitudes of an infinite learning should be aligned with the knowledge of a self-instilled reasoning and motivation of creativeness. The impersonal understanding of todays world's sometimes found to be unsure of its creativeness or that it's a creature of creative thought and reasonable understanding. The behavior of a materialist society or its impersonalist understanding's not based upon an infinite learning or a part of the human stature. The impersonal knowledge of todays' materialist world's based upon the dualism of a symbiotic reasoning that's particled by a dependent degree of learning or its materialist understanding. The edifice of human understanding in today's materialist world is found in the reasoning of "what enters the conscious enters the mind" as the consciousness is the consciousness of truth, and forgiveness. Thus realizing the human constitution's based upon honesty, and is not above nature's law. The infinite realization of trust and human understanding in the world today's part of the Universal cosmos and destined perhaps by a higher degree of reasoning. . .



Hari-ji Baba (J.W. Pavlic)

399 ½ Main St. 44281-1349

1+(330) 334-4284 U.S.A.

0008-1

<http://jaunev.tripod.com/>

From: BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office [mailto:roanplateau@blm.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 5:58 PM
To: jaungeskaune@hotmail.com
Subject: Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft SEIS/RMPA is available

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment is now available at www.blm.gov/co/crvfo for public review and comment. Public meetings are expected to take place in January and will be announced at least 15 days prior. Comments need to be received by February 18, 2016 and may be sent to:

E-mail: roanplateau@blm.gov

Fax: 970-876-9090

Mail: BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office, Attn: Roan Plateau SEIS, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652.

□

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BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office | 2300 River Frontage Road | Silt | CO | 81652

Conversation Contents

re: natural gas leases in the Roan Plateau

0009-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Lindy Marrington <lindymarrington@sbcglobal.net>

From: Lindy Marrington <lindymarrington@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tue Nov 17 2015 20:39:19 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: re: natural gas leases in the Roan Plateau

To Whom It May Concern:

For the record, I am adamantly opposed to any leases being given for the extraction of natural gas in the Roan Plateau. The whole world is attempting to get off the addiction to fossil fuels. It is time now for governments to release squelched and/or shelved patents that provide clean energy of which there have been many! We do not need more natural gas, we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground from now on. We have entered a new age and the planet must be given the utmost care and protection.

Lindy Marrington
Carmel, CA 93921

0009-1

Conversation Contents

Roan Plateau SEIS

Roslynn Brain <roslynn.brain@usu.edu>

From: Roslynn Brain <roslynn.brain@usu.edu>
Sent: Tue Nov 17 2015 17:20:44 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: "roanplateau@blm.gov" <roanplateau@blm.gov>
Subject: Roan Plateau SEIS

Oil is listed 90 times in the Roan Plateau SEIS. Should this really be the focus? I recommend all future oil and gas leasing be cut, and current oil and gas projects follow strict air quality emissions (EPA standards) given Utah's well-known air quality problem.
Ros

Roslynn G.H. Brain
Assistant Professor, Sustainable Communities Extension Specialist
<https://extensionsustainability.usu.edu>
Utah State University Moab
125 W 200 S, Moab, UT 84532
(435) 797-5116 Work
(303) 514-8738 Mobile

0010-1 Climate and Air Quality
BLM requires that oil and gas operators comply with state and Federal standards. The air quality analyses in the SEIS assume that the oil and gas industry will comply with state and Federal standards for all future oil and gas projects, including emission control measures required under state permits. Please refer to Section 4.2.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

0010-1

Conversation Contents

Roan Plateau

0011-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

nanlc999@optonline.net

From: nanlc999@optonline.net
Sent: Tue Nov 17 2015 16:53:01 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau

Further development and drilling on the Roan Plateau will have long term devastating results for the immediate and surrounding regions. Air and water quality will be compromised as will habitats of flora, fauna and the nearby human dwellings and soil. Do not sell out to greed. Save our earth...

Nancy Chismar USA

| 0011-1

0012-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

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The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment is now available at www.blm.gov/co/crvfo for public review and comment. Public meetings are expected to take place in January and will be announced at least 15 days prior. Comments need to be received by February 18, 2016 and may be sent to:
E-mail: roanplateau@blm.gov
Fax: 970-876-9090

Lynne Johnson <ljohnmdtx@yahoo.com>

From: Lynne Johnson <ljohnmdtx@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 11:26:37 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: "roanplateau@blm.gov" <roanplateau@blm.gov>
Subject: Re: Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft SEIS/RMPA is available

Are you planning on killing more horses or other wildlife. I find your activities despicable.

| 0012-1

On Tuesday, November 17, 2015 4:00 PM, BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office <roanplateau@blm.gov> wrote:

0013-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Fredric Griffin <fredricgriffin@yahoo.com>

From: Fredric Griffin <fredricgriffin@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wed Nov 18 2015 15:59:42 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Re: Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft SEIS/RMPA is available

Hi Roger,

I figure you kinda like the Roan Plateau and might be interested in this.

Certain powers in CO have plans to increase fracking and oil drilling by ten times their existing infrastructure.

That sucks! Roan Plateau has already be impacted enough at this date!

Fredric Griffin

fredricgriffin@yahoo.com
720-623-4820

On Nov 18, 2015, at 2:52 PM, BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office <roanplateau@blm.gov> wrote:

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment is now available at www.blm.gov/co/cryfo for public review and comment. Public meetings are expected to take place in January and will be announced at least 15 days prior. Comments need to be received by February 18, 2016 and may be sent to:

E-mail: roanplateau@blm.gov

Fax: 970-876-9090

Mail: BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office, Attn: Roan Plateau SEIS, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652.

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| 0013-1

Conversation Contents

[Auto-Reply] Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft SEIS/RMPA is available

0014-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Hi Roger,

On Nov 18, 2015, at 2:52 PM, BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office <roanplateau@blm.gov> wrote:

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment is now available at www.blm.gov/co/cryfo for public review and comment. Public meetings are expected to take place in January and will be announced at least 15 days prior. Comments need to be received by February 18, 2016 and may be sent to:

E-mail: roanplateau@blm.gov

Fax: 970-876-9090

Mail: BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office, Attn: Roan Plateau SEIS, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652.

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jean public <jeanpublic1@gmail.com>

From: jean public <jeanpublic1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thu Nov 19 2015 17:09:32 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov, foe@foe.org, The Pew Charitable Trusts <info@pewtrusts.org>, info <info@defenders.org>, humanelines <humanelines@hsus.org>, info <info@idausa.org>
Subject: Re: Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft SEIS/RMPA is available

public comment on above colorado river valley and roan plateau sites which are national lands - not state lands and nor private lands, which means they should be managed for the benefit of 325 million people and not just for local pal "stakeholder" are bribes being taken here by blm, they have a history of taking bribes in this level govt agency that is after killing all wild horse in every place they try to live. the evil doings of this agency are enough to make most americans vomit.

deny all 65 oil and gas leases.

0014-1

deny all christmas tree taking from national lands. grow them on private land if you want to make money on christmas trees, stop stealing from the nations citizens/workers/taxpayers.

deny all grazing allotments by robber baron cattleranchers. all americans are sick of the clive bundy types who make money on our public lands and destroy them with their cattle, and drive off and kill all wildlife so it can't stay alive on these national lands. those lands belong to 325 million people and letting clive bundy types use them does not help us. these clive bundy types pay low low low or zero rates to use our land and destroy them. we want nature on our lands, not clive bundy robber baron cattle ranchers.

deny suti ranch land exchange. it's certainly not to help national taxpayers that this land exchange has been proposed.

deny all applications to drill. this comment is for the public record. please receipt. jean public jeanpublic1@gmail.com

On Tue, Nov 17, 2015 at 5:58 PM, BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office <roanplateau@blm.gov> wrote:

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment is now available at www.blm.gov/co/crvfo for public review and comment. Public meetings are expected to take place in January and will be announced at least 15 days prior. Comments need to be received by February 18, 2016 and may be sent to:

E-mail: roanplateau@blm.gov

Fax: [970-876-9090](tel:970-876-9090)

Mail: BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office, Attn: Roan Plateau SEIS, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652.

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BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office | 2300 River Frontage Road | Silt | CO | 81652

0014-2 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

From: O'Shea-Stone_Maureen
 To: O'Shea-Stone_Maureen
 Subject: FW: Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative 4) in your new RMP for the Roan
 Date: Monday, January 11, 2016 4:47:01 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Hensley Peterson** <mailagent@thesoftedge.com>
 Date: Sat, Jan 9, 2016 at 9:41 AM
 Subject: Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative 4) in your new RMP for the Roan
 To: roanplateau@blm.gov

Dear BLM Roan Plateau:

I urge you to adopt the Settlement Alternative (Alternative 4 in the draft supplemental environmental impact statement) in your final RMP decision.

After more than a decade of controversy over the Roan and six years of litigation, the 2014 settlement reached an agreement that is highly protective of the Roan, - canceling almost all the oil and gas leases on top of the plateau. The Settlement Alternative as defined in that agreement, moreover, would close those lands to future leasing while requiring numerous measures to minimize the footprint and environmental impacts where oil and gas development is allowed to occur.

Remarkably, the Roan settlement also enjoys broad support from a wide range of stakeholders. The agreement was reached with support from Governor Hickenlooper, several members of the Colorado Congressional delegation and local governments, conservation and sportsmen's groups, and the energy companies that had purchased leases on the Plateau.

The Settlement Alternative is critical to that agreement because it represents a consensus proposal for future management of the Roan. This proposal was hammered out in detailed negotiations between the federal government, conservation and sportsmen's groups, oil and gas lessees, and numerous other stakeholders. Adopting the Settlement Alternative should avoid further litigation over the Roan and finally bring the long-running controversy to a close with a highly protective management plan for these lands.

Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative 4) in your new RMP for the Roan as well as adopting a final management plan that protectively manages all of the lands with wilderness characteristics on the Roan Plateau, which the agency considers elsewhere in the draft plan.

Sincerely,

Hensley Peterson
 P.O. Box 1714
 Aspen, CO 81612-1714

0015-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0015-2 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMPA/SEIS, presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations and public comment. This alternative is carried-forward as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0015-1

Management and protection of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Several management actions in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS provide indirect protections for these resources. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise portions of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

0015-2

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Roan Plateau SEIS Planning Team

Conversation Contents

0016-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Donald and/or Nancy <dccandn@ca.rr.com>

From: Donald and/or Nancy <dccandn@ca.rr.com>
Sent: Tue Nov 17 2015 22:43:46 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject:

Good luck with the election.

| 0016-1

Conversation Contents

Comment on Draft (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment

0017-1 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Teagen Andrews <t.andrews731@gmail.com>

From: Teagen Andrews <t.andrews731@gmail.com>
Sent: Mon Nov 23 2015 12:28:56 GMT-0700 (MST)
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Comment on Draft (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment

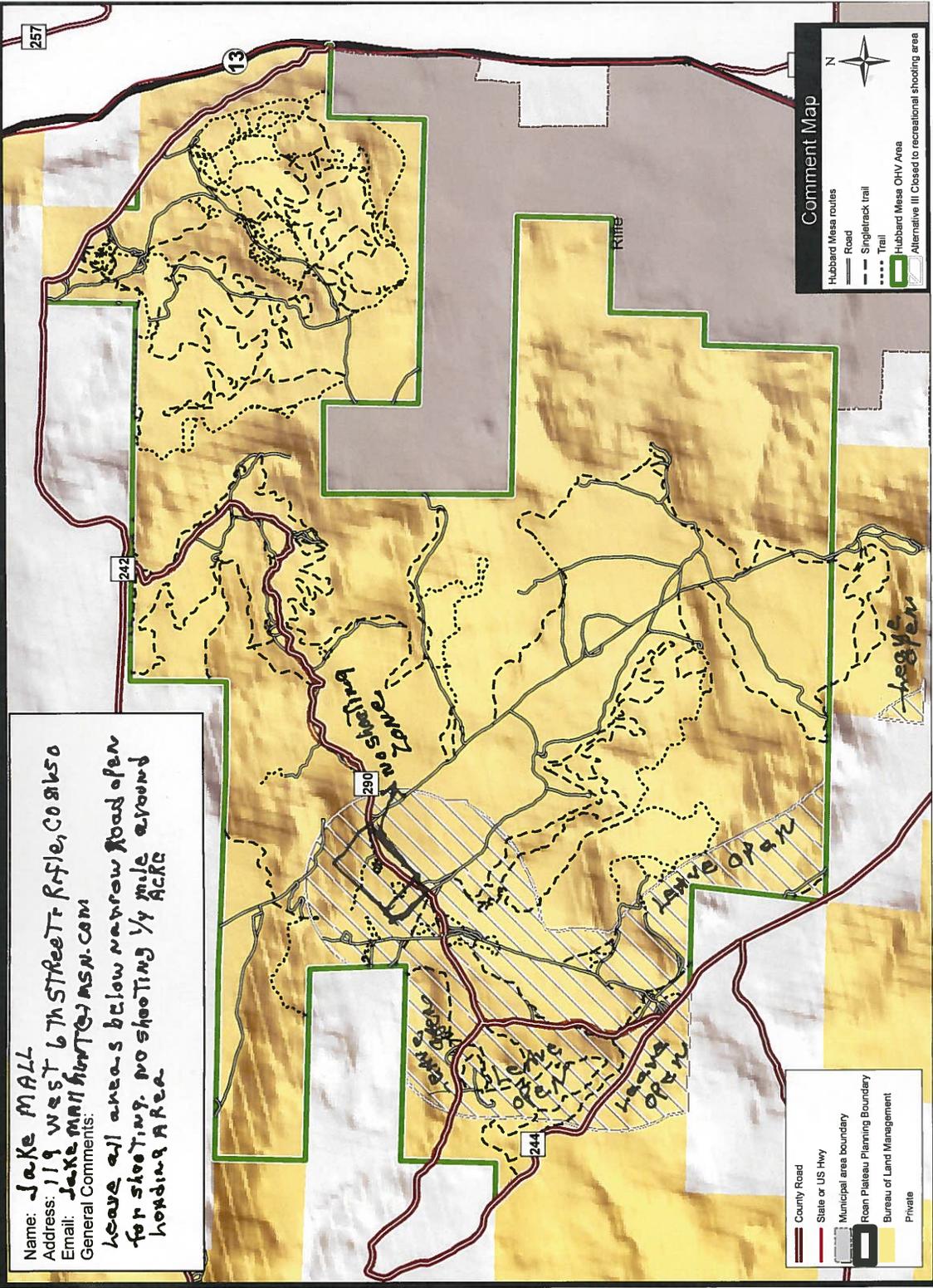
I fully support the conservation and protection of natural wildlife along the Roan Plateau. It is dangerous and costly to open up more mining when there are alternative energy sources that do not include massive devastation to this planet.

Thank you for your support in protecting our home!

--
Teagen Andrews
t.andrews731@gmail.com
847.651.0429

0017-1

Name: **JAKE MALL**
 Address: 119 WEST 6TH STREET Rifle, CO 81650
 Email: **JAKE.MALL@RIFLECO.MN.COM**
 General Comments:
 leave all areas below narrow road open
 for shooting. no shooting 1/4 mile around
 loading area.



0018-1

0018

0018-1 Shooting Sports

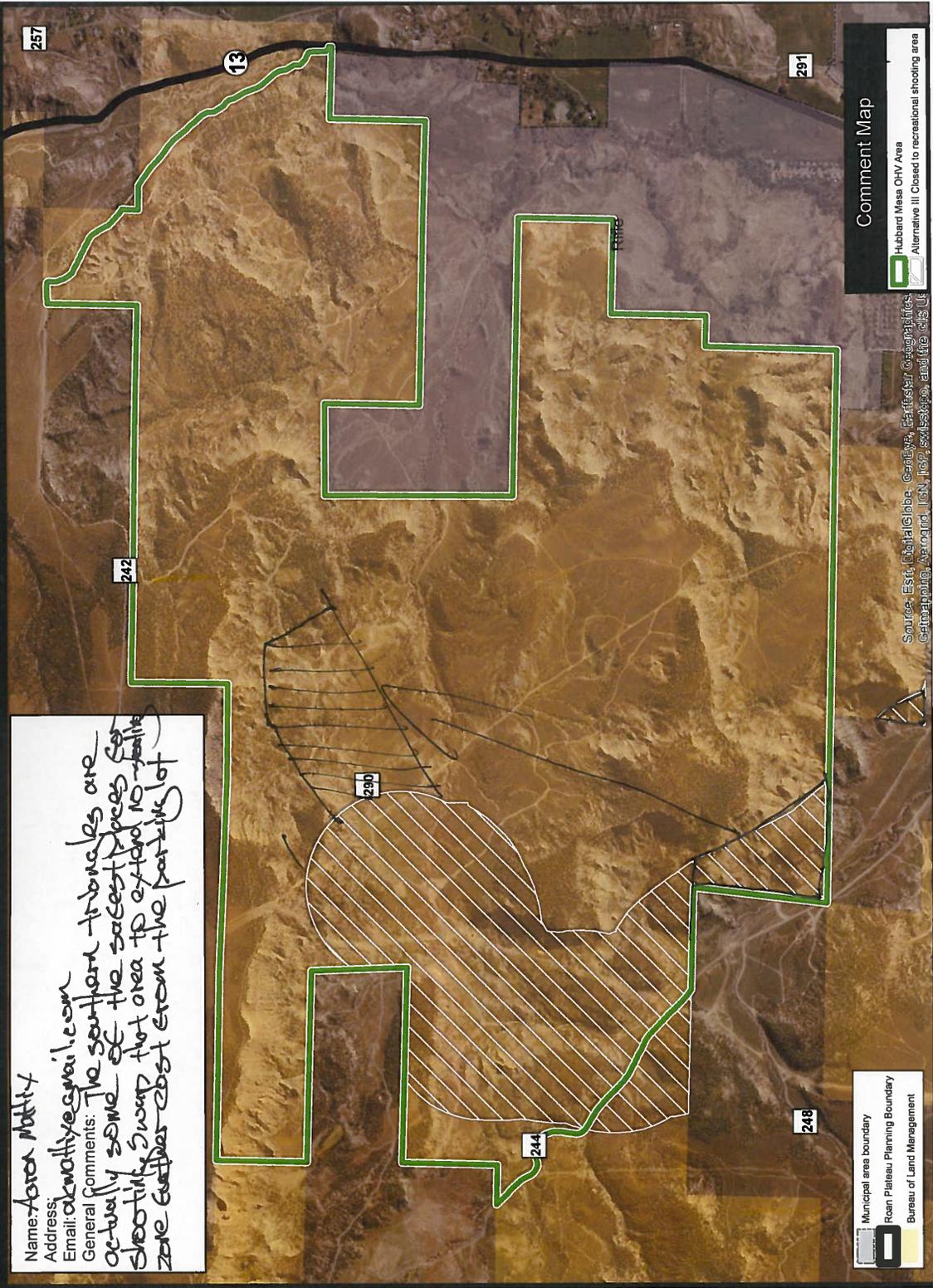
Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components to minimize user conflicts in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components. The suggestion provided falls within the range of alternatives considered in the FSEIS and therefore has not been analyzed specifically.

Name: *Aron Mattix*

Address:

Email: *aromattix@gmail.com*

General comments: *The southern triangles are actually some of the safest places for shooting. Suggest that area to extend no-shoot zone further east from the parking lot*



Municipal area boundary
Roan Plateau Planning Boundary
Bureau of Land Management

Source: Esri, DeLorme, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNR/Aerial, IGN Top, Swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Comment Map
Hubbard Mesa OHV Area
Alternative III Closed to recreational shooting area

0019-1

0019

0019-1 Shooting Sports

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components to minimize user conflicts in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components. The suggestion provided falls within the range of alternatives considered in the FSEIS and therefore has not been analyzed specifically.



Public Comment Form
**Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/
 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement**

0020

We want your comments! If you have any comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, please complete and submit this comment sheet to ensure your input is considered. You can submit this comment sheet at the public meeting, or mail to the following address (49-cent postage required):

Roan Plateau Comments
 BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
 2300 River Frontage Road
 Silt, CO 81652

You may also email comments to roanplateau@blm.gov.

The Draft EIS is available on the BLM's Website at: <http://www.blm.gov/co/crvfo>. Hard copies are available for review at the Parachute, Silt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale public libraries, or at the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO). CDs are available in limited quantities by request from the CRVFO.

Effective Public Commenting: The most helpful comments are those that identify: 1) an error in analysis that may affect the outcome; 2) additional information that would change analysis and conclusions; 3) something that should be clarified; or 4) a substantially different alternative that meets the purpose and need statement and has not been considered. Comments are most effective when they are as specific as possible; contain references to page numbers and sections of the document where applicable; and are backed with explanations, facts, and references, as appropriate.

All public comments are due by February 18, 2016.

If you have no comments or questions, but would like to be on our mailing list, please complete the contact information on the reverse side.

In Review of Alternatives. ~~For~~ I would Strongly oppose any Recreational Shooting closures. It has long been a failed Policy of all federal Government bodies to Implement Restriction; Create Policy etc in order to make up for lack of enforcement. The first and Most important issue would be hiring more law enforcement officers to handle ~~and Mitigate~~ already ~~mit~~ existing rules etc. Garbage trash etc. all could be mitigated with additional enforcement!

0020-1

0020-1 Shooting Sports
 Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS have been revised to consider a range of management components related to shooting sports in order to minimize user conflicts in recreation areas, specifically the Hubbard Mesa Open OVH Area. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additional measures to minimize user conflicts could be considered as part of this on-going management process.

February 4, 2016

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652



RE: Comment to Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment

Recreational Target Shooting in Hubbard Mesa

To whom it may concern:

Please accept this correspondence as a public comment to the *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment*. My comment specifically addresses recreational target shooting within the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area north of Rifle, Colorado ("Hubbard Mesa").

The purpose of this correspondence is to ask you to consider:

- (1) Eliminating target shooting in Hubbard Mesa except in a designated area safely away from roads and trails; *or*
- (2) Eliminating target shooting in Hubbard Mesa.

I also ask that you include this solution in whichever overall alternative (I, II, III or IV) is ultimately chosen.

I am a native of Rifle, Colorado and regularly spend time on Hubbard Mesa. I have recreated in the area for over thirty years. Over the last several years, I have spent most of my time in Hubbard Mesa trail running. I also enjoy the area for hiking with family and mountain biking on occasion. When conditions allow, I run the trails of Hubbard Mesa 3-4 days per week, and I am usually running 1-4 hours each session. I have explored every inch of trail within Hubbard Mesa and know the area intimately. I am also an outdoorsman, a hunter and enjoy shotgun sports.

I believe it is time to rethink the policy of open and unrestricted shooting in Hubbard Mesa. Recreational target shooting is one of the many historic public uses of the Hubbard Mesa area. However, recent improvements have brought more and different users to the area. Mountain bikers, hikers, runners, dirt bikers and other off-road enthusiasts of all ages are enjoying the resource in greater numbers than ever before. As uses of Hubbard Mesa have evolved, more and more users have been exposed to the impacts and potential hazards that can accompany unrestricted shooting. The *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* recognizes this when it states, "recreation users are more frequently asking BLM to

0021-1

0021-1 Shooting Sports

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components related to shooting sports in order to minimize user conflicts in recreation areas, specifically the Hubbard Mesa Open OVH Area. Two sub-alternatives have been included under Alternative III to allow consideration of closure of different parts of the Hubbard Mesa area to recreational target shooting. Under Alternative IIIB, the entire Hubbard Mesa area would be closed. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of the management components related to recreational target shooting under each alternative and Section 4.5 for a discussion of potential impacts to all resources. These management components have been taken into consideration in the selection of the Proposed Plan.

address shooting conflicts and reduce the potential of an accidental shooting.” *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment*, at 3-192.

Based on my personal observations, unrestricted shooting in the area now poses a significant public hazard and a direct threat to the safety of other users. It has also resulted in an accumulation of shooting related-litter and damage to natural features, native plants, as well as government and private property, all of which are routinely used as targets, backstops and target holders.

I sincerely believe most recreational target shooters are conscientious and would not knowingly shoot in an unsafe direction. However, evidence in the area provides conclusive proof that at least some Hubbard Mesa target shooters are shooting from, across, or toward roads, trails and parking areas and are shooting in an unsafe manner and in unsafe directions. Signs along existing roads and trails and in parking areas are routinely shot. Private property signs and gates bordering the OHV have also been targeted.



Even the new restroom facility in the Hubbard Mesa parking lot has been targeted.



In addition to the overwhelming physical evidence of unsafe shooting in the area, I have personally observed target shooters shooting in the direction of designated trails from close and dangerous range on numerous occasions. As you know, many of the trails on Hubbard Mesa are narrow, elevated and extremely hard to see from road level. These shooters may not even know they are shooting at or across a trail or that a biker, hiker or trail runner might emerge from the trees. While shooters can hold their fire if they hear a motorcycle or ATV approaching, the same cannot be said for the quiet approach of a mountain biker, runner or a family of hikers.

Hubbard Mesa attracts many users who concentrate in specific areas along the established OHV trail system. The users of the trails should not be in the line of fire. Nor should those using the roads, parking lot or restroom. Eliminating target shooting in Hubbard Mesa except in an area safely away from roads and trails would greatly reduce the risk to users of the trails and make enforcement much easier.

I doubt I need to mention that unrestricted target shooting in the area has also resulted in a tremendous volume of shooting-related litter, refuse and abandoned personal property. Glass bottles, containers, and other materials that break into small pieces are regularly used for target practice. Spent shells, ammunition boxes, targets, household items used as targets, and other shooting related-litter is widespread and constitutes the majority of litter in the area. One does not have to walk far to find a shell casing or other shooting related debris in the middle of any road, trail or parking lot in the area. I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that more than 90% of the litter within the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area is shooting related.



The amount of shooting-related litter in the area is almost beyond belief and continues to grow. Pictured below are 9 bags full of shooting-related garbage a friend and I picked up on November 2, 2015 in one small location on BLM land in Hubbard Mesa. 100% of the trash we collected was shooting related: shell casings, ammunition boxes, live rounds, paper targets, and an almost unimaginable array of household items used as targets. Unfortunately, we couldn't safely pick up much of the shot-up glass, which still

litters the area. Eliminating target shooting in Hubbard Mesa except in an area safely away from roads and trails would reduce unsightly litter and debris in other parts of the OHV Area.



All of the shooting-related garbage we collected was less than 20 yards from a very popular hiking/running/biking trail. In fact, the BLM "Trigger Trash" sign/target you see in the pictures had been set up as a target directly behind -- (within 2 feet of) -- the trail. It is also worth noting that we pulled numerous targets out of trees. One particularly large old tree, has been blown nearly to pieces from being shot so many times. Yet somehow, it still lives. Sadly, after a 1/2 day's work, we barely made a dent cleaning up the trigger trash in one small area. And, our efforts were undone in less than 24 hours. The pictures below show some of the new shooting garbage I found less than 24 hours after picking up 9 bags of shooting-related garbage at this very spot. (That's a yellow plastic cat litter box shot to pieces in the picture on the right.) At least one of the Hubbard Mesa recreational shooters couldn't even let the area be clean for a single day.



0021-1

Continued 0021-1 cont'd Shooting Sports

Lawful hunting and recreational target shooting are legitimate uses of the public lands. However, shooting at and across designated roads and trails, defacing federal property, using trees as backstops, and leaving shooting-related litter are all violations of existing BLM regulations. The activities evidenced by these pictures are in violation of existing BLM regulations, including but not limited to:

- a. Causing a public disturbance or creating risk to other persons on public lands. (see 43 C.F.R. § 8365.1-4(a));
- b. Defacing, removing or destroying natural features, native plants, cultural resources, historic structures or government and/or private property. (see 43 C.F.R. § 8365.1-5(a)(1));
- c. Facilitating and creating a condition of littering, refuse accumulation and abandoned personal property. (see 43 C.F.R. Sec. 8365.1-1).

I am concerned that shooting activities in the Hubbard Mesa Area are not being adequately monitored to ensure public safety or to curtail littering or refuse accumulation. The current plan of addressing safe shooting and trigger trash through “education signage” is not working, as these signs often become nothing more than targets for recreational shooters.

Current enforcement paradigms are also not working. The *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* states: “the BLM generally relies on the public to find safe locations to shoot, and clean up their targets and other debris.” *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment*, at 3-192 (emphasis supplied).

The evidence of ongoing shooting-related violations in Hubbard Mesa seems overwhelming. And, it is apparent that those in the Hubbard Mesa shooting community who are lawful and safe are either unable or unwilling to influence the behavior of those who are not. It is also apparent that the BLM has done little to enforce its existing regulations in the area. When I inquired with the local field office, I was advised that the law enforcement officer responsible for patrolling the Hubbard Mesa area had not issued any shooting-related citations at Hubbard Mesa.

I understand the BLM has limited resources, but a *laissez-faire* approach to enforcement may not adequately ensure public safety in areas where there are high concentrations of other users, such as within Hubbard Mesa. Without creating a designated shooting area or target range, the BLM can make all areas within Hubbard Mesa which are not safely away from roads and trails off limits to shooting. This would allow easier enforcement of existing regulations related to safe shooting and litter.

A proposal to designate a small “no shooting” area along the lower road corridor does not adequately address actual trail safety, trigger trash, user conflicts, reporting, or enforcement. The “no shooting” area proposed within Alternative III encompasses a tiny fraction of the actual trail system regularly used by bikers, hikers, runners, dirt bikers and other off-road enthusiasts. In fact, the BLM’s Hubbard Mesa Brochure indicates that there are “50 miles of single track, ATV, and jeep trails”, the vast majority of which are outside of the proposed “no shooting” area described.

It is also worth noting that many of the safest places to target shoot in Hubbard Mesa are within the Alternative III restriction area (due to the natural backstops and lack of trails). I believe that the most likely location for safe shooting in Hubbard Mesa is within certain easily identifiable portions of this lower road corridor.

0021-2 Shooting Sports

Alternative III has been revised to include two sub-alternatives, IIIA and IIIB, addressing potential shooting closures in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these sub-alternatives and Section 4.5.3.4 for a discussion of the potential impacts on recreation management. Under the Proposed Plan, Alternative IV, BLM would prohibit recreational target shooting in developed recreation sites (existing and future). In addition, the analysis under all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additional measures to minimize user conflicts could be considered as part of this on-going management process.

0021-2

I am a hunter and enjoy shotgun sports. I do not believe that shooting restrictions within Hubbard Mesa will significantly reduce the available options for recreational shooters in this community. As you know, there is a private (and open to all) target shooting club directly adjacent to the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area. Also, there is a free, public target shooting range a few miles north of Rifle managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. In addition, Colorado has more than 20 million acres of public land, much of which is open to shooting. Even if recreational target shooting were entirely eliminated in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area, the people of this community would still have ample, safe places to target shoot. As recognized by the *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement*, "The addition of shooting restrictions would have limited impact to recreation resources in the Planning Area." *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment*, at 4-266.

It is imperative that the BLM make an effort in the interest of public safety to direct shooting away from all established roads and trails within the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area. Reduction of shooting-related litter is also an important objective. Both can be best achieved by eliminating target shooting in Hubbard Mesa except in an area safely away from roads and trails; or by simply eliminating target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area.

I also urge you to have the flexibility to include a solution addressing target shooting in Hubbard Mesa in whichever overall alternative is ultimately chosen.

Thank you for your consideration.


Daniel LeMoine
Rifle, Colorado

0021-2
Continued

My name is Janice Shepherd and I live in Grand Junction, Colorado. I enjoy fishing, so I buy a yearly license. I'm an avid hiker and am always looking for new places to explore both on and off-trail. I organize about 100 hikes a year for family, friends and members of a 400+ hiking group called the Western Slope Adventurers. I'm a member of the Grand Junction chapter of Great Old Broads for Wilderness for many reasons including my love of opportunities for hiking in solitude and hiking in unconfined areas free of the sounds of the motorized world.

I support the preferred alternative IV but believe through careful analysis of alternative III that the three Lands with Wilderness Characteristics units from pages 3-214 and 3-215 should be included in the final plan and that the final plan should also include the Wild and Scenic River suitability designations as described in Alternative III.

I believe that the analysis presented in Chapter 4 did not take into account the complete set management practices presented in Appendix F when evaluating the environmental impacts differences between Alternative III that contains the three LWC units and Alternative II and IV that do not. Consider the analysis on pages 4-139 and 4-140 where the impact of Transportation and Travel Management and Recreation Management are described for Alternative III as the same as for Alternative II. There is no mention of how the three LWC units in Alternative III would result in much less stress on wildlife in the winter. Appendix F indicates that the management rules for the LWC units in Alternative III would include the rule "All lands are closed to over-snow travel." (page F-3). Thus the analysis on pages 4-139 and 4-140 should have mentioned the great benefit to wildlife in the winter of closing the three LWC units to at the very least snowmobiles. Map 36, by the way, needs correcting to show that the area of Cross Country Snow Machine travel would be smaller under Alternative III because of the presence of the LWCs. Other text in chapter 2 should also be corrected to show to mention over-snow travel is prohibited within the proposed LWCs.

The impact on environmental resources by cross country snow mobile is huge. Not just the noise and human presence causes flight and stress in wildlife but also the impacts to air quality especially when emissions from snowmobiles continue to be excessive. Further there are studies that show that the pollutants from snowmobiles settle into the snowpack and then impact the snow melt water during spring run-off.

From the webpage: <http://winterwildlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Environmental-Impacts-from-Snowmobile-Use.pdf> we see that several studies have shown the impact on aquatic and non-aquatic life from snowmobile emissions. Consider this quote:

"Pollutants from snowmobile emission, including the highly persistent polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), are stored within the snowpack (Ingersoll, 1998). During spring snowmelt, these accumulated pollutants are released causing elevated acidity levels in surrounding waterways and resulting in higher death rates for aquatic insects and amphibians (Charette et al.,1990). The impact of the spring release of pollutants may have far-reaching consequences for surrounding watersheds. Acidity fluctuations can disable a watershed's ability to regulate its own pH level, which could trigger system-wide problems and result in a long-term alteration of an entire ecosystem (Shaver et al., 1998)."

Yet there is no analysis of the benefit of reducing snowmobile use by the presence of East Fork Unit LWC in Alternative III in the sections 4.2.4 Water Resources and 4.2.5. Climate and Air Quality, let alone in the more obvious sections involving flora and fauna, rare and common.

On page 3-93 there is a description of the distressing reduction in the population of Parachute penstemon on the upper slopes near the Anvil Points Road. The analysis does not consider the possibility of acidic run-off from snowmobile pollutants left in the snowpack above the plants. Yet studies have shown that soil acidity

0022-1 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Chapter 2 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes "Management Action: Restrictions on Use: Protect wilderness characteristics and associated supplemental values per the Management and Setting Prescriptions for BLM Lands Outside WSAs Being Managed to Protect Wilderness Characteristics (Appendix F). Map 36 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS was clarified to better illustrate the areas closed to over-snow travel. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes an analysis of over-snow travel in Alternative III in Section 4.2.4.4 for water resources, Section 4.3.2.4 for wildlife, Section 4.3.3.4 for special status plant species, Section 4.3.4.4 for special status wildlife, and Section 4.3.1.4 for vegetation. Alternative III also evaluated oil and gas development from private property.

The document was clarified to show the difference as the comment response references. This was a change between the draft and final SEIS.

0022-2 Travel Management Map 36 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS was clarified to better illustrate the areas closed to over-snow travel. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes an analysis of over-snow travel in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.8, Alternative III.

0022-3 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Chapter 2 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes "Management Action: Restrictions on Use: Protect wilderness characteristics and associated supplemental values per the Management and Setting Prescriptions for BLM Lands Outside WSAs Being Managed to Protect Wilderness Characteristics (Appendix F). Map 36 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS was clarified to better illustrate the areas closed to over-snow travel. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes an analysis of over-snow travel in Alternative III in Section 4.2.4.4 for water resources, Section 4.3.2.4 for wildlife, Section 4.3.3.4 for special status plant species; Section 4.3.4.4 for special status wildlife, and Section 4.3.1.4 for vegetation. Alternative III also evaluated oil and gas development from private property.

0022-4 T&E Species

The declining status of the referenced Parachute penstemon population has been known and followed for numerous years by BLM. Several factors for this decline have been hypothesized and studied by specialists. These are incorporated by reference in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, Section 3.3.3.2. Potential negative impacts from acidic run-off from snowmobile use in the area have not been suggested by these specialists as a potential factor in this population decline. Therefore, while the analysis of potential impacts to Parachute penstemon from alternative management actions in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS considers a large number of potential factors, this specific analysis was not included. BLM does not have the means to quantify potential deposition of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) and/or snowmelt acidification from snowmobile use or apply potential exposure of Parachute penstemon plants to these constituents.

can have a large impact on plants Foy CD.1992. "Soil chemical factors limiting plant root growth. In: Hatfield JL, Stewart BA, eds. Limitations to plant root growth. New York: Springer-Verlag, 97–149. "

Including the 3 LWCs from Alternative III in the final plan would reduce the area where snowpack could contain pollutants from snowmobile exhaust and where snowmobile use could impact other environmental resources and therefore improve the important resources of water quality, air quality and viability of special species in the planning area. Thus the 3 LWCs should be in the final plan.

Section 4.3.2 does have references to the impacts on mule deer, elk and other wildlife from the presence of humans especially in the winter on pages 4-119 and 4-120. It describes that the impact is applicable to any human presence in snow-covered areas, not just humans on snowmobiles. Yet Alternative III was described as having the same impacts on wildlife as Alternative II even though the Appendix F rule would apply to all three LWC units including the Southeast Cliff Unit and the Northeast Cliff Unit which overlap with the mule deer and elk wintering areas. Since the rule in Appendix F "All lands are closed to over-snow travel." (page F-3), as stated, applies equally to motorized and non-motorized travel over snow this would result in significantly less stress to the mule and elk in the winter months.

There have been studies of birds that show that excessive noise, such as that produced by snowmobiles, causes enough of a distraction to birds that they spend less time feeding and therefore are under-size, less-healthy and more suspect to early death. <http://www.colorado.edu/news/releases/2009/07/23/noise-pollution-negatively-affects-woodland-bird-communities-according-cu>

Therefore since the bird studies and the studies presented on pages 4-119 and 4-120 clearly indicate the importance of minimizing human disturbance of wildlife in the winter, the LWCs from Alternative III should be included in the final plan. Within the LWCs human disturbance of wildlife will be eliminated.

The three LWCs in Alternative III cover areas outside the ACECs proposed in Alternative IV. They thus provide needed protection to the landscape and its resources for those areas. Consider for example the two-track road that starts near N 39 53 13.64 W 107 53 41.43 (WGS84). Under alternative IV that road would stay open but it crosses into the East Fork LWC Unit and is not cherry-stemmed (other routes are) so it would need to be closed. That spot drains into Golden Castle Gulch and JQS Gulch so minimizing human presence there is beneficial to water resources as well as wildlife.

0022-4 0022-4 cont'd T&E Species
Continued

0022-5 Biological Resources

Appendix F, Proposed Management and Setting Prescriptions for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the Draft RMPA/SEIS (page F-3), evaluated in Alternative III, does not specify that Lands with Wilderness Characteristics must be closed to over-snow travel. Appendix F clearly states over-snow travel is a management action or allowable use decision. This requires BLM to decide what the action would be for the RMPA/FSEIS. As stated in Chapter 2, all areas are open to over-snow travel. The analyses are correct.

0022-5

0022-6 Biological Resources

Wildlife populations and habitat in the Planning Area would receive a number of protections from surface disturbing activities under the Proposed RMPA as described in Chapter 2, Table 2.1 in the form of NGDs/NSOs, SSRs/CSUs, and Timing Limitations. The impacts of these protections are described in Chapter 4, Sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.4. Wilderness characteristics do not include wildlife or water resources as a criteria to determine whether wilderness characteristics exist. Wilderness characteristics include size, naturalness as observed by the casual observer, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive/unconfined recreation. If these units were managed to protect for wilderness characteristics, wildlife and water resources would indirectly benefit from the management of the area, but there are no specific direct protections for those resources under wilderness characteristics management. The stipulations for wildlife and water resources have direct benefits. The effects of lands with wilderness characteristics management on wildlife are also considered for each alternative (Sections 4.3.2, 4.3.4, and 4.5.8).

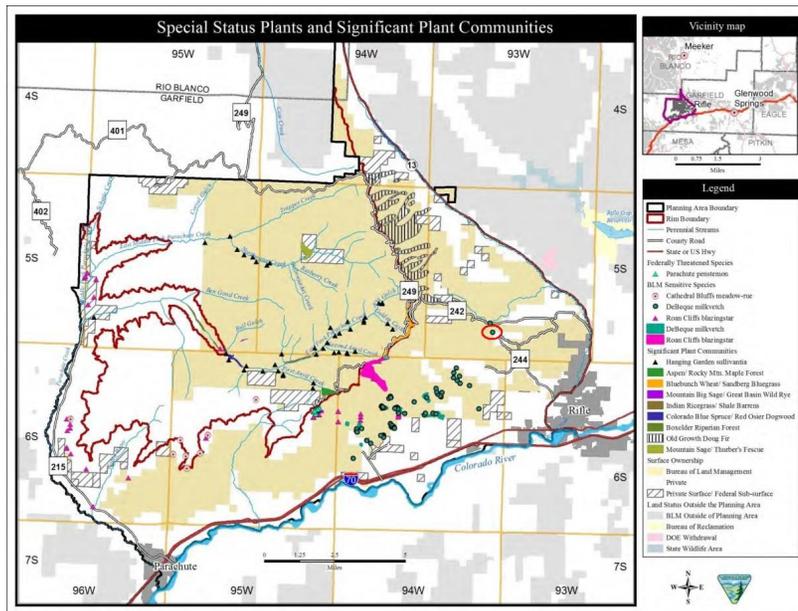
0022-6

primitive/unconfined recreation. If these units were managed to protect for wilderness characteristics, water resources would indirectly benefit from the management of the area (see Section 4.2.4.4), but there are no specific direct protections for these resources under wilderness characteristics management.

0022-10 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Special status plant species receive a number of protections under BLM's stated objective to manage BLM sensitive and significant plant communities consistent with the Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and with BLM policy on Special Status Species Management (BLM Manual 6840). Additionally, there are a number of NGDs/NSOs and SSRs/CSUs to provide protection to special status species. The impacts to special status plant species are described in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3.4. The stipulations for special status plant species have direct benefits.

Special status plant species are not included in the criteria to determine if wilderness characteristics exist. Wilderness characteristics include size, naturalness as observed by the casual observer, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive/unconfined recreation. If these units were managed to protect for wilderness characteristics, special status plant species would indirectly benefit from the management of the area (Section 4.3.3.5), but there are no specific direct protections for these resources under wilderness characteristics management.



Map 23 A red circle shows at least one special status plant/community that would be protected by the LWCs from Alt III that would not be protected by just the Alt IV ACECs. It appears that insufficient analysis has been done to compare special status plants/communities protected by Alt III LWCs that are outside the bounds of Alt IV ACECs as there is no mention of them in Chapter 4. Protecting these special status plants and communities is a crucial step to keeping them off the Federal Endangered list and therefore Alternative III LWCs should be included in the final plan.

Map 20 shows a single migration corridor for mule deer. It is missing a second migration corridor to the east. The game trails on the slope to the east are even visible on Google Earth. The aerial view in the area of N 39 34 01.05 W 107 53 46.73 clearly shows a switchback of game trails. As stated on page 3-73 migration corridors are crucial for the survival of mule deer and elk. "Migration corridors may include a variety of shapes and types, but within the Planning Area consist of the few points where deer and elk (and other large mammals) are able to find access routes through the otherwise impassable Roan Cliffs. These points are critical for allowing animals to move between summer and winter ranges, as well as to/from security areas." The missing corridor should be added to Map 20. Map 21 should also have migration corridors shown as they are equally important to elk. Given the importance of migration corridors to wildlife and since the Southeast Cliff Unit LWC would cover this important not previously documented migration corridor, that LWC along with the other LWCs from Alternative III should be included in the final plan.

0022-11 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
Special status plant species receive a number of protections under BLM's stated objective to manage BLM sensitive and significant plant communities consistent with the Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and with BLM policy on Special Status Species Management (BLM Manual 6840). Additionally, there are a number of NGDs/NSOs and SSRs/CSUs to provide protection to special status species. The impacts to special status plant species are described in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3. The stipulations for special status plant species have direct benefits.

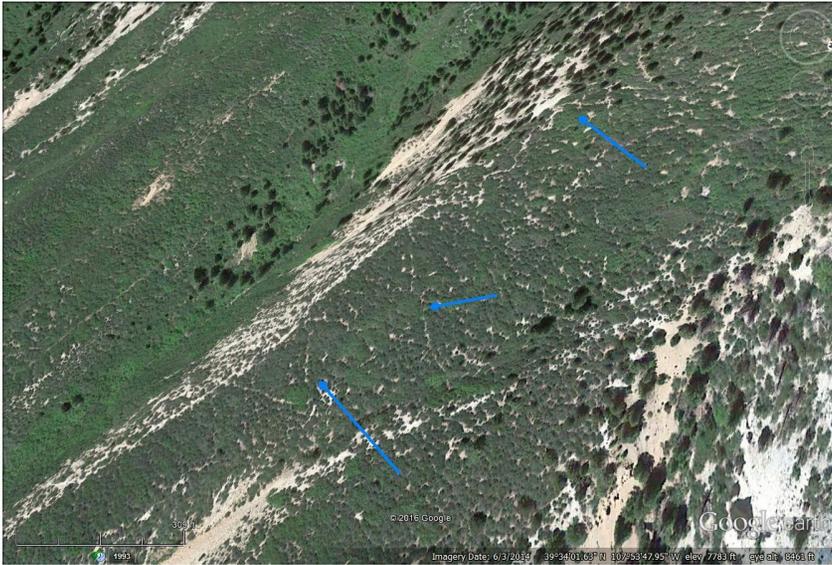
Special status plant species are not included in the criteria to determine if wilderness characteristics exist. Wilderness characteristics include size, naturalness as observed by the casual observer, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive/unconfined recreation. If these units were managed to protect for wilderness characteristics, special status plant species would indirectly benefit from the management of the area (Section 4.3.3.5), but there are no specific direct protections for these resources under wilderness characteristics management.

0022-11

0022-12 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
BLM used data provided by the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to analyze migration corridors for mule deer and other big game. CPW manages these species populations and is a cooperating agency for preparation of the RMPA/SEIS. The information on wildlife migration corridors in the Planning Area is described in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2. The impacts of protections (SSR/CSU) for migration corridors are described in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2. The use of aerial imagery to map an additional potential corridor is inappropriate, particularly at the programmatic level where it cannot be field-verified and corroborated by CPW with tracking-collar or other observations.

0022-12

The presence of wildlife is not a criteria to determine if wilderness characteristics exist. Wilderness characteristics include size, naturalness as observed by the casual observer, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive/unconfined recreation. If these units were managed to protect for wilderness characteristics, wildlife would indirectly benefit from the management of the area, but there are no specific direct protections for wildlife resources under wilderness characteristics management.



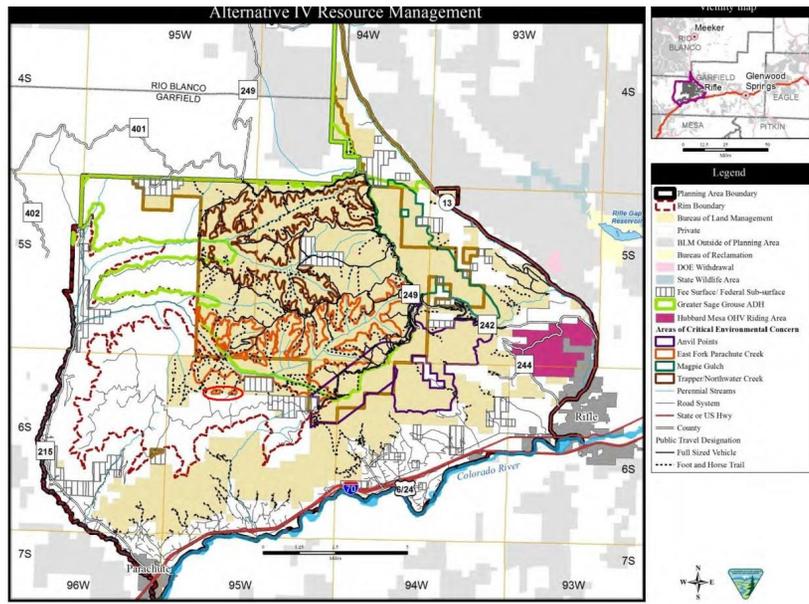
View of the slope well to the east of the documented migration corridor, showing a separate corridor. Blue arrows point to the very visible game trails on the slope. N 39 34 01.05 W 107 53 46.73

The proposed shape of the East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC in Alt IV includes 3 small areas that are not contiguous with the rest of the ACEC. There is also a very small triangle within the boundary of the East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC that is not part of the ACEC. Overall the shape of the ACEC is very jagged. The non-contiguous areas, the excluded triangle and the irregular shape of the ACEC are going to add to the complexity of applying ACEC regulations from Table 2.2 and will add significantly to the managing costs for the Planning area. The public will also be confused as to where certain activities are permitted vs prohibited, such as seed collection. A straight boundary is easier to mark, understand and manage than the jagged boundary proposed. Trapper Northwater Creek ACEC is equally jagged, so the same concerns apply to it.

0022-13 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
 Due to the terms of the settlement agreement, older data were used to define a number of stipulations within the retained leases. Because the ACECs generally overlay the stipulation boundaries that are protective of their relevant and important values, the use of different data sets resulted in the small non-contiguous parcels. The jagged boundary results from the ACEC appropriately following a topographic feature. No changes have thus been made to these boundaries.

ACECs are shown on Map 6 (Alternative II), Map 9 (Alternative III), and Map 12 (Alternative IV).

0022-13



Map 12 with a circle that shows 2 of the 3 non-contiguous segments of East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC as proposed in Alternative IV. The map is too small to show the 3rd non-contiguous segment nor the triangle that is excluded from the ACEC. With such tiny maps in the document readers are not afforded sufficient information to effectively comment on the analysis presented. Presumably at least some of the analysis included in the document was based on the maps provided, in which case that calls into question the opportunity for a thorough analysis afforded to the contributing experts.

0022-14 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
All analysis was done through a geographic information system (GIS). These GIS files were made available to the public for inspection along with the Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0022-14



This view shows the three non-contiguous sections of the East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC as proposed in Alternatives II and IV circled in red. The blue circle shows the triangle that is oddly excluded from the ACEC. The ragged nature of the ACEC is also much clearer with this view. In response to this comment, I imagine that the response might be that the circled areas are a mapping error, but that again begs the question of the quality of the analysis in Chapter 4. Many experts contributed to that chapter and yet none of them noted the circled areas.

There is no map in the document of the proposed “Parachute Creek Watershed Management Area”. How can analysis of the environmental impacts be undertaken without a map of this important proposed WMA? The public comment on the plan will also be compromised without a map of the WMA. The description of the area is given on page 2-14 “The entire area atop the plateau, **excluding a minor portion** draining northward into the Piceance Creek basin, would be designated as the Parachute Creek WMA, with a total area of 33,010 acres.” It might be argued that the description given on page 2-14 is sufficient to guess what parts of the Planning area are included in the WMA, except that the description has a vague reference to an area being excluded. Everyone’s analysis of the benefit of the WMA and of the possible need to protect that excluded area will be compromised without access to a map that shows the WMA.

Further, misleading information in Chapter 2 may have impacted the analysis in Chapter 4. Specifically on page 2-45 the text under Alternative II states

“Within the WMA, prevent disruption, alteration, or interruption of surface and subsurface water flows that support rare and/or significant natural plant communities. Implement WMA management prescriptions, as detailed in Table 2.3. “

Under Alternative III and IV the text is “Same as Alternative II”. Thus someone reading that section might have believed that the WMA management would be the same in Alternatives II, III and IV when Alternative III does not include the WMA. This is in the section titled “Manage listed, proposed, or candidate threatened or endangered species to comply with the provisions of the ESA and promote their recovery. Manage BLM sensitive and significant plant communities consistent

0022-15 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
Due to the terms of the Settlement Agreement, older data were used to define a number of stipulations within the retained leases. Because the ACECs generally overlay the stipulation boundaries that are protective of their relevant and important values, the use of different data sets resulted in the small non-contiguous parcels and non-inclusion of parcels otherwise included under other alternatives. No changes have thus been made to these boundaries.

0022-16 Water Resources

The Parachute Creek Watershed Management Area (WMA) is included in Alternatives II and IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Specific management goals, objectives, and management actions for the WMA are detailed in Table 2.3. The area of the WMA under Alternative II would be 33,010 acres. This area is protected by CRVFO-CSU-Roan 13, shown integrated into the stipulations illustrated on Map 5, as well as the parallel surface use restriction, illustrated in Map 4. Specific management restrictions entailed in this stipulation are detailed on page C2-17. The specific area covered by this CSU under Alternative II is shown on page C2-43. This area, and the specific management under this stipulation are included throughout the impact analysis for Alternative II. The area of the WMA under Alternative IV would be 4,450 acres.

0022-15

0022-16

This reduction in size under Alternative IV is due to the fact that most of the WMA would be closed to leasing under this alternative. This area is protected by CRVFO-CSU-Roan 13, shown integrated into the stipulations illustrated on Map 11. Specific management restrictions entailed in this stipulation are detailed on page C4-18. The specific area covered by this CSU under Alternative IV is shown on page C4-46. This area, and the specific management under this stipulation are included throughout the impact analysis for Alternative IV.

0022-17

0022-17 Water Resources

Table 2.1 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been updated to clarify this point. It is important to note that a WMA is not a component of Alternative III.

with the Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and with BLM policy on Special Status Species Management (BLM Manual 6840).” This implication that Alternative III contains the WMA is repeated in several places in Chapter 2 and is thus confusing to the reader, especially when a map is not provided that clearly shows the WMA is in Alternatives II and IV but not in Alternative III.

The final plan should include the designation of “suitable” for the 8 eligible streams under the assessment of Wild & Scenic Rivers. While I understand that congress must approve the actual designation to the list of Wild & Scenic Rivers the designation of “suitable” would prioritize the health of the streams and their streambanks in the interim.

Livestock grazing can have significant impact on the health of streams which in turn impacts the efforts to establish a viable population of Colorado River cutthroat trout in the planning area. Page 4-163 states “Overall, livestock grazing is one of the more impactful activities to the existing populations of CRCT and their habitats of all the programs BLM manages in the Planning Area.” A designation of “suitable” would better prioritize the health of these important streams and therefore should be included in the final plan.

Further from page 3-219 we see for the CRCT “Because of its genetic purity, it is still an **irreplaceable** Conservation Population of CRCT, which is rare within and outside the range of the Blue Lineage fish. In addition, the occupied streams **require special management attention** to protect the fish and their habitats in the face of potential threats. These facts support the Importance criterion.” Designating the streams as suitable under WSRA would provide the management attention to protect this irreplaceable resource. Once it is gone it is gone forever. We should do the right thing now and designate the 8 streams as “suitable”.

The document does not analyze the economic benefit of listing the eight streams as suitable for Wild & Scenic River designation. Yet other BLM documents such as: http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/co/field_offices/uncompahgre_field/rmp/wsr_docs.Par.98.454.File.dat/Wild%20and%20Scenic%20River%20Designation%20Impacts%20and%20Benefits.pdf extoll the increased tourism that can result from such a designation. In these times of problematic employment in the oil & gas industry improving the local economy from increased tourism should be highly valued. Therefore the eight streams should be listed as suitable in the final plan.

The analysis on page 4-330 seems to be conflicting for in one sentence it is stated “Alternative III focuses on moving grazing away from riparian habitat, a **definite** benefit for WSR ORVs” and yet the conclusion is of only a “minor” beneficial impact. This is especially surprising given the earlier assessment that livestock grazing is one of the more impactful activities to CRCT (page 4-163). The assessment of “minor” benefit underestimates the benefit of the suitable WSR listing where grazing management would result in better outcomes for the ORVs of the streams with only minor inconveniences to the grazing permittees.

Proper analysis of the differences between the alternatives with respect to their definitions of each of their ACECs depends on accurate descriptions of those ACECs and maps for those ACECs. The document mentions the expansion to the ACECs on the Page 2-27 when it states:

“The proposed Anvil Points ACEC was therefore **expanded by 2,100 acres in all action alternatives** to include this Critical Habitat as it is a relevant and important value. Other adjustments, due to updated resource mapping and GIS techniques, **added another 2,200 acres to proposed ACECs** integrated into the action alternatives.”

The reader would expect then that the ACECs would be the same shape and size among Alternatives II, III and IV. This is consistent with the three descriptions on pages 2-14, 2-21 and 2-24. As in:

page 2-14 “Alternative II would designate four ACECs (24,890acres total)” and

0022-18 0022-18 Water Resources
Table 2.1 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been updated. It is important to note that a WMA is not a component of Alternative III.

0022-19

0022-19 Opinion – Wild and Scenic Rivers

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0022-20

Alternative IV provides protection of stream segments that were determined to be eligible under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act through designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, through surface use restrictions, and through multiple stipulations on oil and gas operations that will prevent impacts to eligible stream corridors.

0022-21

0022-20 Opinion – Wild and Scenic Rivers

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0022-22

Alternative IV provides protection of stream segments that were determined to be eligible under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act through designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, through surface use restrictions, and through multiple stipulations on oil and gas operations that will prevent impacts to eligible stream corridors.

0022-23

0022-21 Opinion – Wild and Scenic Rivers

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0022-24

Alternative IV provides protection of stream segments that were determined to be eligible under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act through designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, through surface use restrictions, and through multiple stipulations on oil and gas operations that will prevent impacts to eligible stream corridors.

0022-22 Wild and Scenic Rivers

Table 4.4.13 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS estimated employment effects to Garfield County, including the arts, entertainment, recreation, lodging, and food services industries, of all BLM programs by alternative. Table 4.4.14 summarizes earning effects to Garfield County by industry, including lodging and food services. Text in Section 4.5.9.3 of the FSEIS further clarifies: Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers may not necessarily be marketed or advertised. Increased tourism may occur, but these details would be determined through the River Management Plan that is required once a river is designated.

0022-23 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The statement quoted in this comment regarding a minor beneficial impact did conflict with the conclusions on the next page, which show a negligible to moderate adverse impact. As such, the statement is not included in the FSEIS. BLM's conclusion that grazing and rangeland management would have up to a negligible to moderate adverse effect on fisheries ORVs is consistent with the analysis of the effects of grazing and rangeland management on special status fish species, as per sections 4.3.4.3 and 4.3.4.4.

0022-24 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Descriptions of the relative area of each proposed ACEC under Alternatives II, III, and IV are located in line 278, Table 2.1, of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. These areas are illustrated in Maps 6, 9, and 12, respectively. These relative areas of each ACEC are integrated into the impact analysis of Alternatives II, III, and IV. The statement cited on page 2-24 has been revised to clarify that ACECs under Alternative IV would be "designated and managed the same as in Alternative II, but with a total ACEC acreage of 25,010."

for Alternative III on page 2-21 “Four ACECs would be designated (24,890 acres total)” and

for Alternative IV on page 2-24 “ACECs and WMAs (sic – there is only one WMA in Alt II) would be designated and managed the **same as in Alternative II.**”

Yet later on page 2-81 a different total size is given for the ACECs in Alternative IV of 25,010 acres. While the description above mentions adding acres to the ACECs, nowhere does there appear to be an explanation as to why **acres were removed from East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC** as can be seen in this view where the ACEC for Alternative III is outlined in red and the ACEC for Alternative IV is filled with a transparent white. The areas removed from Alternative III are circled in blue.



While I believe that it is good to have more acres added to the East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC as was done in Alternative IV, the acres from Alternative III should not be lost but be included as well. These extra areas from Alt III are part of the upper tributaries of East Fork Parachute Creek and were likely expected to be included by the experts providing the analysis in Chapter 4 that concluded that East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC be part of the preferred alternative.

There are two areas in Alternative IV that are both in the proposed East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC and in the proposed Anvil Points ACEC. Since the management rules from Table 2.2 are different between these two ACEC units, there needs to be some indication as to which rules take precedence in these two overlapped areas.

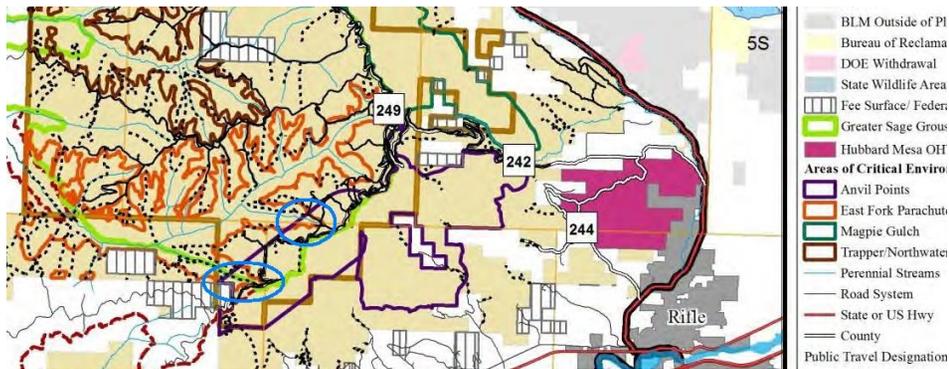
0022-24
Continued 0022-24 cont'd Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

0022-25 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
BLM's process for nominating and evaluating potential ACECs, including the aerial extent of each, involves compiling a list of areas nominated for designation and then evaluating each nominated area in terms of the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. This process is described in Section 3.5.7.1 of the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Due to the terms of the settlement agreement, older data were used to define a number of stipulations within the retained leases. Because the ACECs generally overlay the stipulation boundaries that are protective of their relevant and important values, the use of different data sets resulted in the small discrepancies from the other alternatives. No changes have thus been made to these boundaries.

0022-26 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
ACECs would be managed under the management prescriptions for constituent relevant and important resources detailed in Table 2.2 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. All uses would thus be subject to all applicable management actions, which would generally be the most stringent in cases where prescriptions differed.

0022-25

0022-26



Here is a segment from Map 12 showing the two overlapped areas with blue circles.

Since the proposed East Fork Parachute ACEC in Alt IV and the Anvil Points ACEC in Alt IV both contain known instances of rare plants it is disturbing that they don't have a consistent set of rules about the treatment of rare plants and rare plant habitat in Table 2.2. For example for Anvil Points ACEC there is the directive to maintain: "Apply NGD/NSO restrictions within occupied habitat, critical habitat, identified suitable habitat, or within the immediately adjacent ecosystem processes that support Federally listed plants." That same directive does not appear in Table 2.2 for East Fork Parachute ACEC. It should. Similarly for East Fork Parachute ACEC there is the extra directive "Prohibit collection of rare plants or plant parts, except for scientific research as approved by USFWS in the case of T&E plants, and with a valid collection permit" but that does not appear for the Anvil Points ACEC. Again, it should.

Many of the directives are repeated verbatim across the four ACECs in Table 2.2. There are a few differences; two examples are noted in the previous paragraph. Instead of having different directives in Table 2.2 for each of the ACEC much of which are duplicated it would be more cost effective to manage and easier to remember for the managing staff if a single set of comprehensive directives were adopted for all four ACECs. Those directives would include each of the directives mentioned in the current Table 2.2. This would greatly simplify the management of the ACECs and reduce unnecessary confusion.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Janice Shepherd
Grand Junction, CO

0022-27 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

BLM's process for nominating and evaluating potential ACECs, including the aerial extent of each, involves compiling a list of areas nominated for designation and then evaluating each nominated area in terms of the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. This process is described in Section 3.5.7.1 of the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Due to the terms of the settlement agreement, older data were used to define a number of stipulations within the retained leases. Because the ACECs generally overlay the stipulation boundaries that are protective of their relevant and important values, the use of different data sets resulted in the small discrepancies from the other alternatives. No changes have thus been made to these boundaries. Under all Action Alternatives in the Draft RMPA, analyzed Draft SEIS, all special status plant species receive a number of protections under BLM's stated objective to manage BLM sensitive and significant plant communities consistent with the Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and with BLM policy on Special Status Species Management (BLM Manual 6840). Additional protections are required for plant species listed as under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as candidate, threatened, or endangered. This distinction accounts for the difference in language between the management prescriptions for botanical/ecological resources between ACECs. These protections apply to each set of species, regardless of the specific proposed ACEC in which a population may occur. Additional special management prescriptions would also be applied to all relevant and important botanical/ecological resources within the four ACECs.

0022-27

0022-28

0022-28 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

The format of Table 2.2 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS accommodates the differences in constituent relevant and important resources within each proposed ACEC.

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: glarson@blm.gov on behalf of Roanplateau, BLM_CO <blm_co_roanplateau@blm.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 11:26 AM
To: O'Shea-Stone, Maureen
Subject: Fwd: Roan Plateau SEIS comments
Attachments: GAGE introduction letter 2-12-2016.docx

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Susan Nichols-Alvis** <nicholsfui@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 17, 2016 at 9:53 AM
Subject: Roan Plateau SEIS comments
To: "roanplateau@blm.gov" <roanplateau@blm.gov>

Hello,

Please find attached comments for the above.

Thank you,
Susan

--

Roan Plateau SEIS Planning Team



February 15, 2016

Roan Plateau Comments
BLM Colorado River Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

Dear Mr. Larsen:

Grand Valley Anglers (GVA) is a 300 member chapter of Trout Unlimited dedicated to the conservation of aquatic resources. Our members have a long history of working with the BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to restore Trapper Creek on the Roan Plateau, home to pure strain Colorado River cutthroat trout. Over the past 25 years, GVA members have assisted BLM staff in building two exclosures and a number of rock and log drop structures; and have planted numerous willows and cottonwood seedlings along the creek.

The BLM is currently seeking comments on a Draft Supplemental EIS (SEIS) that would amend the current Resource Management Plan (RMP) in order to re-evaluate the decision to lease the entire planning area for oil and gas development. As the result of a Federal court decision and subsequent settlement agreement, the new preferred alternative (Alternative IV) for the SEIS would cancel 17 of the 19 leases above the rim of the plateau while continuing to allow leases along the slopes. Grand Valley Anglers supports the settlement agreement and preferred alternative, as it protects sensitive stream, riparian and groundwater resources from energy development, but believes that additional protection for sensitive biological resources on top of the plateau is warranted.

The Roan Plateau planning area contains five conservation populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout (90% genetically pure); two of these are core conservation populations (99% pure). East Fork Parachute Creek is a re-introduction site for the Federally-listed threatened strain of Colorado River cutthroat trout. Grand Valley Anglers is working with the BLM and Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff on that re-introduction effort.

Grand Valley Anglers Chapter
Trout Unlimited-Federation of Fly Fishers
P.O. Box 4451
Grand Junction, CO 81502

East Middle Fork of Parachute Creek and all its tributaries and wetlands, including Trapper and Northwater Creeks, are designated "Outstanding Waters" by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission in order to protect critical spawning sites of Colorado River cutthroat trout. Streams with this designation are to be maintained to protect existing water quality.

Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative, protects these streams from oil and gas development by only allowing two leases above the rim of the plateau. However, additional protection of the stream corridors and existing water quality from other potential development or uses would be gained by determining that eight eligible stream reaches are suitable for designation under the Wild and Scenic River Act, as determined in Alternative III. The outstanding scenic values and unique fisheries and hanging gardens warrant this additional protection.

Further protection for the watersheds surrounding these streams would be gained by managing the 8,330 acres within the East Fork Parachute Creek Inventory Unit that were found to have wilderness characteristics to protect and maintain those values, as recommended in Alternative III. This would include 8.6 miles along East Fork Parachute Creek and 16.7 miles along 11 tributaries.

Grand Valley Anglers supports Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative, but recommends adding additional protection by including provisions of Alternative III for eligible stream reaches under the Wild and Scenic River Act, and for management that would maintain wilderness characteristics within the East Fork Parachute Creek Inventory Unit.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft RMP and SEIS and look forward to continuing to work with you to benefit conservation of aquatic resources on the Roan Plateau and throughout the Grand Valley and surrounding area.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill Fenstermaker

Bill Fenstermaker

President, Grand Valley Anglers

0025-1 Wild and Scenic Rivers

Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations and public comment. This alternative is carried-forward as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Management and protections of stream reaches eligible for listing under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.9. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise the eligible stream reaches and units that contain wilderness characteristics.

0025-1

RIFLE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB



P.O. BOX 944 * RIFLE, CO 81650
EMAIL: INFO@RIFLEGUNCLUB.COM

February 16, 2016

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

RE: RSC Comments to BLM Regarding Hubbard Mesa Shooting Restrictions

The Rifle Sportsmen's Club represents over 330 members in the Garfield County area. Our private shooting range is located directly to the north and west of the White River National Forest Rifle Ranger District Office on Fravert Reservoir Road in Rifle, Colorado. The Rifle Sportsmen's Club is strongly opposed to closing any public land to recreational shooting. Please give serious consideration to our comments below.

1. This proposed closure of 610 acres of land in Hubbard Mesa OHV Area to recreational target shooting is a direct result of the 2011 Obama administration directive to the BLM that enables these types of closures. The section of the announcement that concerns millions of shooters across the country reads: "When the authorized officer determines that a site or area on BLM-managed lands used on a regular basis for recreational shooting is creating public disturbance, or is creating risk to other persons on public lands; is contributing to the defacement, removal or destruction of natural features, native plants, cultural resources, historic structures or government and/or private property; is facilitating or creating a condition of littering, refuse accumulation and abandoned personal property is violating existing use restrictions, closure and restriction orders, or supplementary rules notices, and reasonable attempts to reduce or eliminate the violations by the BLM have been unsuccessful, the authorized officer will close the affected area to recreational shooting." At the time the directive was issued a spokesman for the BLM told U.S. News and World Report that the proposed ban was being enacted in response to "urbanites" who "freak out" when they hear shooting on public lands. The spokesman also acknowledged that the impetus for this restriction was not rooted in safety, rather it was introduced to reduce "social conflict." Please reference the attached U.S. News and World Report article by Paul Bedard on November 16, 2011. RSC believes that public lands are held in trust for the public, and that BLM should manage its lands under its multiple-use mandate while not bowing to radical environmental pressure.

0026-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Federal regulation directs BLM to manage public lands, including recreation areas, so they "can be used by the maximum number of people with minimum conflict among users and minimum damage to public lands and resources" (43 CFR 8365.0-2). Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components related to shooting sports in order to minimize user conflicts in recreation areas, specifically the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components.

0026-1

- 2. Recreational shooting has been recognized as a traditional, legitimate activity on Hubbard Mesa for decades. Generations of people have enjoyed shooting on Hubbard Mesa without serious incident.
- 3. The proposed closure area would force shooters from a safe location with many backstops to a less safe area with fewer safe backstops and more roads and trails.
- 4. Closure would push shooters from safe public land onto private property on Hubbard Mesa and to the south of Fravert Reservoir Road.
- 5. Federal regulations already prohibit shooting across roads, trails, bodies of water, and toward areas where people are camped, picnicking, or otherwise gathered. Any violations can be easily self-policed by the public and reported to local law enforcement under existing laws.
- 6. BLM has not met its own Federal Land Policy and Management Act which requires the agency to perform the required balancing of multiple uses to show, specifically in this case, that the benefit of prohibiting target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa OHV area outweighs the substantial benefits of target shooting to the American people.
- 7. In many cases the BLM is justifying its decision to close recreational shooters out of public land because it claims that shooting is a "resource-harming" activity. At the same time, the agency will allow other activities to continue, like camping, mountain biking, off road vehicle use, and grazing that clearly have more impact on the area as a whole.
- 8. BLM does not have the staff to enforce any recreational shooting closures, and enforcement responsibilities will be placed on local law enforcement. Our local law enforcement is already stretched thin covering the 2,947 square miles in Garfield County.
- 9. While hunting and firearms for self-protection would still be allowed in the Hubbard Mesa OHV under the proposed closure, it would set a dangerous precedent for the future of all firearms usage on public lands in the area.
- 10. Public land should be kept open to all recreational activities. Note the BLM motto: "Public Lands USA: Use, Share, Appreciate."

0026-2 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0026-3 Shooting Sports

In response to public concerns regarding shooting sports at Hubbard Mesa, Alternative III in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS has been revised to include two sub-alternatives, IIIA and IIIB, that propose different areas of shooting closures in the vicinity of developed recreation sites and in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, and Section 4.5.3.4 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for a description of these sub-alternatives and potential impacts on recreation management. The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

0026-4 Shooting Sports

The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

0026-5 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0026-6 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The on-going management process would be undertaken with the goal of allowing use of the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area by "the maximum number of people with minimum conflict among users and minimum

0026-2
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damage to public lands and resources" in accordance with Federal law (43 CFR 8365.0-2).

0026-7 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Management actions related to shooting sports have been included under each alternative in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to protect visitor safety by minimizing the potential for accidental shootings, in accordance with Federal regulations (43 CFR 8364.1). Table 2.1, line 173 summarizes these management actions. The impact analysis in Section 4.5 discusses potential indirect impacts to all resources as a result of these management actions.

0026-8 Opinion - Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0026-9 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0026-10 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Federal regulation directs BLM to manage public lands, including recreation areas, so they "can be used by the maximum number of people with minimum conflict among users and minimum damage to public lands and resources" (43

CFR 8365.0-2). Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components related to shooting sports in order to minimize user conflicts in recreation areas, specifically the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components.

While we stand against the proposed closure, we support the multiple uses defined for Hubbard Mesa OHV Area. We will continue to work with other user groups to improve the conditions on Hubbard Mesa. Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew W. Starr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Matthew W. Starr
Executive Officer

Attachments

**U.S. News and World Report Article by:
Paul Bedard on November 16, 2011**

[News](#)[Opinion](#)[National Issues](#)[Best Countries](#)[Cartoons](#)[Photos](#)[The Report](#)[Ken Walsh's Washington](#)[Decision 2016](#)[The Run 2016](#)[The Chase](#)[Washington Whispers](#)[At the Edg](#)

Washington Whispers

News You Can Use From Washington Since 1933



Obama Pushing Shooters Off Public Lands

Officials worried about dog walkers "freaking out" near shooting ranges.

By [Paul Bedard](#) | Nov. 16, 2011, at 9:00 a.m.



+ More

Gun owners who have historically been able to use public lands for target practice would be barred from potentially millions of acres under new rules drafted by the Interior Department, the first major move by the Obama administration to impose limits on firearms.

Officials say the administration is concerned about the potential clash between gun owners and encroaching urban populations who like to use same land for hiking and dog walking.

"It's not so much a safety issue. It's a social conflict issue," said Frank Jenks, a natural resource specialist with Interior's Bureau of Land Management, which oversees 245 million acres. He adds that urbanites "freak out" when they hear shooting on public lands. [[Read about the subpoena issued as a result of Operation Fast and Furious.](#)]

If the draft policy is finally approved, some public access to Bureau lands to hunters would also be limited, potentially reducing areas deer, elk, and bear hunters can use in the West.

Conservationists and hunting groups, however, are mounting a fight. One elite group of conservationists that advises Interior and Agriculture is already pushing BLM to junk the regulations, claiming that shooters are being held to a much higher safety standard than other users of public lands, such as ATV

riders.

"They are just trying to make it so difficult for recreational shooters," said Gary Kania, vice president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. His group is one of several, including the National Wildlife Foundation, Cabela's and Ducks Unlimited, on the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council fighting the new rules. During a two-day meeting ending this afternoon, they are drafting their own changes to the BLM rules.

"What we probably are going to be looking forward to is a reversal," said Kania. Asked about how to handle people who freak out when they hear shots on public lands, Kania said, "I don't know how to quantify 'freaking out,'" and noted that he's seen people panicing when fly fishing in float tubes but nobody wants to ban them from rivers.

BLM actually invited the fight, seeking the council's comments. But officials suggested to Whispers that no changes are being planned to the draft regulations.

Over five pages, the draft BLM regulations raise concerns about how shooting can cause a "public disturbance." They also raise worries about how shooting and shooters can hurt plants and litter public lands.

This is the key paragraph foes say could lead to shooters being kicked off public lands:

"When the authorized officer determines that a site or area on BLM-managed lands used on a regular basis for recreational shooting is creating public disturbance, or is creating risk to other persons on public lands; is contributing to the defacement, removal or destruction of natural features, native plants, cultural resources, historic structures or government and/or private property; is facilitating or creating a condition of littering, refuse accumulation and abandoned personal property is violating existing use restrictions, closure and restriction orders, or supplementary rules notices, and reasonable attempts to reduce or eliminate the violations by the BLM have been unsuccessful, the authorized officer will close the affected area to recreational shooting." [[Check out new Debate Club about whether Congress needs to overhaul gun trafficking laws.](#)]

Squeezing out shooters, says the draft policy, is needed because, "As the West has become more populated, recreational shooters now often find themselves in conflict with other public lands users, and the BLM is frequently called on to mediate these conflicts."

At yesterday's meeting at Interior, the council balked at the BLM draft regulations, adding that the Obama administration was not being fair to shooters on the issue of safety.

In a [draft retort to BLM](#), the council said other users of public land aren't required to be as safe as shooters. They note that shooters have a much lower injury rate than others, like ATV users. "The policy fails to recognize that recreational shooting has one of the lowest incidences of death and injury compared to virtually any other outdoor recreational activity. The policy is prejudicial and discriminatory to target shooters as compared to other recreationists," said the council's draft response, expected to be

finalized today.

What's more, the group charged that the BLM is acting in a contradictory fashion, encouraging the shooting sports while limiting shooting areas.

See: [the month's best political cartoons](#).

Read more: [about Operation Fast and Furious](#).

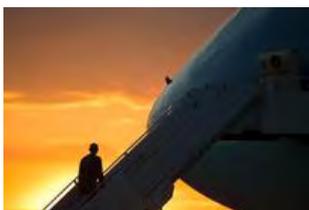
Check out: [our editorial cartoons on President Obama](#).

TAGS: Obama, Barack, gun control and gun rights



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From: gjarson@blm.gov on behalf of [Roanplateau, BLM_CO](#)
To: O'Shea-Stone, Maureen
Subject: Fwd: Recreational Target Shooting Comment
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 1:15:58 PM
Attachments: [Topo_Hubbard_Note.pdf](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Stacy Hardee** <stacy.hardee@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Jan 16, 2016 at 7:35 PM
Subject: Recreational Target Shooting Comment
To: roanplateau@blm.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Rifle, CO and an avid mountain biker. I enjoy riding the responsibly built Hubbard Mesa trails. However, when I invite friends from around the valley to ride I am embarrassed to show them this area due to the excessive amounts of trash and the safety risk. Before a ride I fairly warn my friends of the dangers of going back into this area. Some weekends it is prohibitive to ride out there due to the large amount of irresponsible recreational target shooters. Is it going to take a loss of life before changes are made?

If all recreational target shooters would follow the BLM rules, take gun safety seriously, and shoot responsibly I do not believe this would be a concern. However, this is the culture of our area and is not likely to change soon. With little law enforcement presence in this area there is no incentive to change.

I support restrictions for recreational target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Open Area. The possible 610 acres of closure to target shooting 1/4 mile off the southern entrance to the area is a great start to increased safety. I have one recommendation on the proposed area of closure. The two southern most areas of triangle shape are actually a reasonably safe area to shoot with a sufficient backdrop. Please see attached .pdf file for visual. I feel these acres at the beginning of the road would be better if they were added to the most northeastern portion. Extending the area of closure further northeast will likely be more beneficial as there are less ideal shooting conditions compared to the most southern area.

With that being said, there needs to be sufficient signage notifying the areas of closure, adequate public notification of the changes, and an increased presence of law enforcement. I believe that increased law enforcement visibility and presence will encourage safe conditions.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hardee

3039 Coal Mine Ave, Unit A
Rifle, CO 81650
406.546.4408

0027-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Potential recreation management impacts as a result of closing areas with natural backstops to recreational target shooting under Alternatives IIIA and IIIB have been addressed in Section 4.5.3.4 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0027-2 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0027-1

0027-2

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Roan Plateau SEIS Planning Team



February 3, 2016

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652

Subject: Roan Plateau Supplemental Environment Impact Statement

To Whom It May Concern,

The City of Rifle, as a Cooperating Agency with the Bureau of Land Management, is forwarding comments regarding the proposed alternatives for the Roan Plateau Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). These comments were approved for submittal by the Rifle City Council at its February 3, 2016, regular Council meeting.

The City of Rifle understands the SEIS for the Roan Plateau Management Area was prepared to resolve deficiencies with the 2006 Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and comply with a lawsuit settlement regarding oil and gas leasing. With that understanding, and because the City of Rifle was instrumental in supporting the chosen alternative in the original EIS, the City will continue to support Alternative 4 of the RMPA/SEIS.

Since the original RMPA/EIS was prepared, and the alternatives crafted, conflicts amongst user groups have emerged within the Hubbard Mesa Recreation Area. Alternative 4 within the RMPA/SEIS proposes no change with regard to management of Hubbard Mesa. The City understands why this is the recommendation, and grasps that this planning process was meant to deal with a separate matter. However, the City cannot support the idea that nothing needs to occur with regard to the method of managing the Hubbard Mesa Recreation Area. There are growing safety issues emerging as a result of the areas popularity and the absence of enforcement. The lack of a more formal management plan and evaluation of the overlap of recreational use activities has the appearance of negligence. Currently, this area allows for but does not manage mountain biking, target shooting, off-road vehicle use, trail running, hiking, and seasonal hunting. The ample area and diverse geography provide the opportunity to accommodate each of the use types occurring currently, but oversight by the BLM with input and participation from the user groups is absolutely necessary.

The City of Rifle is requesting the Bureau of Land Management commit to more enforcement and education on how to properly and safely use this unique recreational area. Additionally, the

0028-1 Recreation

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Two sub-alternatives were added to Alternative III to allow consideration of different areas of shooting closures. The on-going management process related to recreational use of the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area could include a collaborative process as suggested.

The Roan Plateau Planning Area is "undesigned" under all alternatives to be consistent with updated planning guidance (IM No. 2008-90). "Undesigned" lands are public lands not designated as Recreation Management Areas. "Undesigned" areas are managed to meet basic recreation and visitor services and resource stewardship needs including visitor health and safety, use and user conflicts and resource protection. This does not preclude different types of recreation from occurring within the Planning Area. However, the Planning Area is not managed to emphasize recreation.

All public lands are required to have OHV area designations (43 CFR Section 8342.1). Areas must be designated as open, limited, or closed to motorized travel activities as defined in 43 CFR Section 8340.0-5, (f), (g), and (h) respectively. Hubbard Mesa is designated as Open to OHV travel under Alternatives II, III, and IV.

0028-1 0028-2 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. A planning study such as the one suggested could be considered as part of this on-going management process.

0028-2

0028-2 cont'd Shooting Sports

City strongly recommends the BLM take on a more specific planning study for the Hubbard Mesa Recreation Area. We believe the user groups are at a place where they can come together and offer BLM constructive ideas on how to better manage this incredible resource.

It is in good faith that the City is recommending Alternative 4 in the Roan Plateau RMPA/SEIS. We understand how complicated and bureaucratic this process is. It is the City's hope that the BLM will honor and reward the City's good faith by revisiting the Hubbard Mesa condition in a timely and responsive manner.

Respectfully,



Randy Winkler,
Mayor

- c. Honorable Cory Gardner, United States Senator
- Honorable Michael Bennet, Unites States Senator
- Honorable Scott Tipton, United States Representative 3rd District
- Garfield County Board of Commissioners

0028-2
Continued

0028-3 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0028-3



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Northwest Regional Center
711 Independent Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81505

February 18, 2016

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Attn: Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road,
Silt, CO 81652.

RE: Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) comments for the Roan Plateau Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

Dear BLM staff:

CPW has been an active Cooperating Agency participant throughout the development of the Roan Plateau Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. We have attended scoping and public comment open house meetings, provided wildlife and wildlife habitat related data, comments, and made recommendations throughout the process. Also, we restate for the record that the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (now Colorado Parks and Wildlife) invested exhaustive staff time and resources throughout the development of the Roan Plateau EIS (from 2005 through 2008).

CPW concurs with the BLM's selection of the "Settlement Alternative", the Preferred Alternative, in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Settlement Alternative contains the underpinnings of the FEIS and addresses CPW's wildlife concerns. CPW offers the following comments for this Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

CPW believes that the Hubbard Mesa shooting closure as proposed in Alternative 3 at page 2-60 is not appropriate; CPW does not support this closure. By BLM's own documentation the proposed area identified for a shooting closure contains the following characteristics that lead to its overall undesirable appearance and condition: poor soils and soil potential, high erosion potential, soils not meeting upland standards, lack of enforcement of illegal dumping, livestock grazing, drainage from roads, trails and constructed facilities and OHV use (at DEIS V1. Page 3-10). Additionally, shooters erroneously get blamed for household dumping because home appliances discarded on Federal lands are used as targets and left in place (at DEIS V1. page 3-192).

Closing recreational target shooting on 1/4 mile of developed recreation sites and the centerline of Fravert Access Road, Township 6 South, Range 93 West to the Hubbard Mesa Trailhead in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area (640 acres total) would create confusion for hunters, target shooters, and the public. It would also prove problematic for law enforcement for the part of the year when small game seasons are open. The following ideas provide a better solution than closing target shooting in the area.

This area receives substantial use from a broad range of user groups, its popularity should reflect in its continuation as a multiple use area. Rather than imposing a shooting closure the

0029-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0029-2 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The Proposed Plan (Alternative IV) has been revised to note the prohibition on recreational target shooting in developed recreation sites (existing and future) per Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.0-2). Please see Table 2.1, line 173 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The analysis of Alternative IV also has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0029-3 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The Proposed Plan (Alternative IV) has been revised to note the prohibition on recreational target shooting in developed recreation sites (existing and future) per Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.0-2). Please see Table 2.1, line 173 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS. The analysis of Alternative IV also has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0029-1

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0029-4 Shooting Sports

The Proposed Plan (Alternative IV) has been revised to note the prohibition on recreational target shooting in developed recreation sites (existing and future) per Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.0-2). Please see Table 2.1, line 173 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The analysis of Alternative IV also has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and



enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0029-5 Shooting Sports

The Roan Plateau Planning Area is "undesigned" under all alternatives to be consistent with updated planning guidance (IM No. 2008-90). "Undesigned" areas are managed to meet basic recreation and visitor services and resource stewardship needs including visitor health and safety, use and user conflicts and resource protection. This does not preclude different types of recreation from occurring within the Planning Area. However, the Planning Area is not managed to emphasize recreation. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to include a greater range of alternatives for addressing shooting sports within the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Two sub-alternatives have been added to Alternative III to allow consideration of different areas of shooting closures. Alternatives I, II, and IV have been revised to note the prohibition on discharge of firearms in present and future developed recreation sites, in accordance with Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.2-5).

In addition, the analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. Please see Table 2-1, line 173, and Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for discussion and analysis related to recreation management.

0029-5 cont'd Shooting Sports

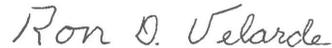
area on Hubbard Mesa, the area would benefit from emphasized user-group self policing (from all individuals and user groups), community clean ups, improved/increased signage, and some additional law enforcement/patrolling.

The shooting safety concern can be addressed by creating a focused shooting area where shooting can continue in an area that is suitable and compatible with other uses in the area. CPW provides grant opportunities for development of shooting ranges. Specific criteria can be found at CPW's web page.
<http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/ShootingRangeGrants.aspx>

CPW encourages BLM in partnership with user groups to find a non regulatory solution to the multiple use management on Hubbard Mesa. A more focused management approach would result in community support and continued multiple uses.

CPW appreciates the opportunity to participate as a Cooperating Agency in this EIS process. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like clarification on any of our comments or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ron D. Velarde, NW Regional Manager

cc. Dean Riggs, Deputy NW Regional Manager
 JT Romatzke, Area Wildlife Manager
 Scott Hoyer, District Wildlife Manager
 Taylor Elm, Land Use Specialist
 file

0029-5
Continued

0029-6

0029-7

0029-6 Shooting Sports
 As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.

0029-7 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations to allow the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area to continue to be open to the maximum number of users. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.



February 16, 2016

Mr. Karl Mendonca, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652

RE: Garfield County Comments: Support for Alternative IV in the Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area

Dear Mr. Mendonca:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide cooperating agency comments regarding the *Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area*.

Garfield County continues to support the narrowly defined court-ordered analysis of the SEIS. The court order required BLM to further address the 1) Community Alternative (directional drilling from below the rim), 2) cumulative air impacts that include development on private land outside the planning area and 3) potential ozone impacts.

It is our opinion that the existing 2006 RMPA/FEIS was thorough and well-balanced and did not need to be recreated. All of the stakeholders were involved: federal, state and local governments, energy industry, recreation, grazing, environmental interests and the public at large. The length of time invested by participants in the original process can be measured in years and the result that came from all of the work was a consensus of the groups on the preferred plan.

Garfield County supports Draft RMPA/SEIS Alternative IV – Settlement Alternative

Garfield County supports BLM's Preferred Alternative, Alternative IV, and asks BLM to expediently bring forward Alternative IV, without substantive amendments, into the Final EIS. Under Alternative IV, 17 oil and gas leases are canceled and closed to new leasing per the Roan Plateau settlement for the approximately 20-year duration of this 2016 RMPA/SEIS. Garfield County supports Alternative IV in part because it does not preclude future management decisions that may reopen areas closed to new oil and gas leasing.

From the draft RMPA/SEIS Executive Summary:

Alternative IV is the Settlement Alternative as well as BLM's Preferred Alternative. *The basis of Alternative IV is to incorporate the terms of the Settlement Agreement for the Planning Area. Approximately 1,990 acres above the plateau rim and 28,470 acres below the rim would be open to oil and gas leasing and development (32,000 acres). Approximately 34,780 acres of BLM surface would be closed to oil and gas leasing.* Leases on lands above the rim that would be made available to oil and gas leasing and development would be subject to the same stipulations as leases issued (per the remanded Record of Decision [ROD] and RMPA) in 2008, as modified by the terms and conditions detailed in the Settlement Agreement. These include specific limits as to the number of well pads to be allowed, maximum surface disturbance per well pad, timing/phasing of well pad construction, allowable access roads, collocation of associated infrastructure, and development of a Master Development Plan. On lands below the rim that would be made available to oil and gas leasing and development, leases would be subject to the same stipulations as leases issued (per the remanded ROD and RMPA) in 2008, as modified by the terms and conditions detailed in the Settlement Agreement.

Alternative IV includes 21,720 acres with NGD/NSO (no ground disturbance/No Surface Occupancy) and 36,990 acres of SSR/CSU (site-specific relocation/Controlled Surface Use) restrictions that would be applied to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to sensitive resources. TL stipulations on 32,150 acres would seasonally limit activity in areas of deer and elk winter range, raptor and waterfowl habitat, greater sage-grouse habitats, migratory bird nesting areas, and elk production area.

Hubbard Mesa Recreational Target Shooting prohibitions

Recently, conflicts among target shooting, mountain biking, off-road vehicle (OHV), trail running and hiking recreational user groups have developed in the Hubbard Mesa OHV area. Alternative III, the Community Alternative, includes proposed target shooting restrictions on Hubbard Mesa within ¼ mile of the centerline of Fravert Access Road, in Township 6 South, Range 93 West to the Hubbard Mesa Trailhead in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area. While Garfield County believes target shooting safety concerns arising from conflicting recreational uses are a serious matter deserving BLM's attention, we believe the issues should not be addressed within the SEIS.

0030-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0030-2 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0030-1

0030-2

Garfield County recommends BLM address Hubbard Mesa recreational user conflict issues through a separate and collaborative process among BLM, Garfield County, City of Rifle, private landowners and recreational users.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide cooperating agency comments regarding the *Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.*

Very truly yours,

John Martin, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

Mike Samson, Commissioner
Board of County Commissioners

Tom Jankovsky, Commissioner
Board of County Commissioners

- Cc Kevin Batchelder County Manager
- Tari Williams, County Attorney
- Fred A. Jarman, AICP, Director, Community Development Department
- Kirby Wynn, Garfield County Oil & Gas Liaison

0030-3

0030-3 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

TO: BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
TOPIC: Comments on Hubbard Mesa Alternatives
DATE: February 2, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We would like to have our comments and concerns considered for the final draft on the Hubbard Mesa Recreational Area.

My family has been using that area for over 80 years for everything from helping stockman gather their flocks of sheep and move cattle through the area. I am a third generation Rifle native who grew up on a farm just below this area and it was like our backyard playground. We have hunted and used this area continually for target shooting. We also ride our ATV's in the area. Our main concern at this time is the possibility of closing some of the main areas we use for target shooting. By closing areas within ¼ mile of the road you would be eliminating the safest areas for target shooting. These areas have excellent dirt backstops and good places to set up our benches. If you close these areas we would have to move out to the upper areas that are more used by other users and do not have the safe backstops that the other areas provide.

We totally agree with a NO SHOOTING ZONE area that was suggested at the Rifle Library meeting around the restroom and loading area. It is sad this would need to be posted as it is a common sense issue. I have taught Hunter Safety Classes for the DOW for many years and have a firm grasp on the safety issues involving firearm handling for all uses. The destruction and trash issues involved with the Hubbard Mesa area can only be described as SLOBS AND VANDALS, not the recreational target shooters we associate with. Many members of our groups are also involved with other groups that are the good folks that do the annual cleanup of this area and should not have their rights taken away.

We would like to see the BLM take the Preferred Alternative (no changes in recreational shooting areas) and the BLM manage the area as they always have. We are happy and excited that the BLM has taken a no change plan for the traffic management of the area for all users, we hope you take the same action for recreational target shooters. As the BLM is the agency that has the law enforcement over this area it makes no sense for other Cities or Garfield County to want changes to this area that they have no enforcement jurisdiction over, unless they are asked for by your agency.

We would like to also thank the BLM for allowing us to comment on this very important issue as your decision will have a lasting effect on the users of the Hubbard Mesa Area for many years to come.

Jake & Becky Mall
119 West 6th Street
Rifle, CO 81650

0032-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Alternative III has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS to consider two sub-alternatives, Alternatives IIIA and IIIB (see Table 2.1, line 173). The impacts analysis for Alternative III has been revised to include the issues raised in your comment. Please see Section 4.5.3.4 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0032-2 Opinion - Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The Proposed Plan (Alternative IV) has been revised to note the prohibition on recreational target shooting in developed recreation sites (existing and future) per Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.0-2). Please see Table 2.1, line 173 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS. The analysis of Alternative IV also has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0032-1

0032-2

0032-3 Opinion - Shooting Sports

The analysis of the Proposed Plan (Alternative IV) has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0032-3



MESA COUNTY
COLORADO
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 District 1 - John Justman 970-244-1605
 District 2 - Scott McInnis 970-244-1604
 District 3 - Rose Pugliese 970-244-1606

P.O. Box 20,000 544 Rood Avenue Grand Junction, Colorado 81502-5010 mcboecc@mesacounty.us Fax (970) 244-1639

February 16, 2016

Mr. Karl Mendonca
 BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office, Manager
 Attn: WRNF Leases
 2300 River Frontage Road
 Silt, Colorado 81652

ALSO VIA EMAIL: Roanplateau@blm.gov

Re: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Planning Area

Dear Mr. Mendonca:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau ("DSEIS"). The Mesa County Board of County Commissioners ("Board") offers these comments as a cooperating agency in this process. Our Board's goal, on behalf of all of our constituents, is to help the BLM ensure the public's lands are managed in the most appropriate and beneficial manner, by incorporating the input of the residents and businesses located in Mesa County that are most directly impacted by the BLM's management decisions.

Before and throughout the SEIS process our Board has encouraged the SEIS process to be as focused and efficient as possible. We have consistently supported Garfield County's position on the project as they will experience the most direct impacts from development on the Roan Plateau. Although we supported the 2006 Roan Plateau Management Plan, and requested that the BLM expedite the SEIS process to consider only the leases on top of the Roan Plateau, we have also commented favorably on the Settlement Agreement for the Planning Area.

Consistent with our position and comments our Board supports Alternative 4 of the DSEIS, the Settlement alternative. However, the DSEIS consistently understates the socio-economic differences between the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives.

As the economic regional center for western Colorado and eastern Utah we support the multiple uses of BLM lands and resources. Oil and gas resource development in the region provides important economic benefits and impacts within Mesa County. Mesa County is the host community for northwest Colorado's oil and gas workforce, and many of its vendors, suppliers and service companies. The DSEIS socio-economic impact analysis regards revenue from local sales and use tax as insignificant by attributing it only to workers' spending on taxable goods. Mesa County is home to most of the oil and gas service companies and associated businesses in the region.

0033-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0033-2 Socioeconomics

The impact to Mesa County fiscal conditions because of use taxes under any alternative is small and was therefore omitted from economic analysis in the FSEIS. An estimate of those amounts is as follows:

Total oil and gas industry sales and use tax revenue to Mesa County government in 2012 was estimated to have been about \$2 million, or about 2 percent of total general fund revenue in Table 6 (Wobbekind et al. 2014)*. This source is the most readily accessed estimate of that revenue, as it is an industry-commissioned study. Total oil and gas industry employment was about 4,000 in 2012, as shown in Table 3.4.16 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. This equates to about \$500 in use tax revenue per job, with jobs acting as a proxy or index for level and change in economic and fiscal activity from the alternatives. Using total oil and gas employment impact predictions for Mesa County, by alternative, from Table 4.4.17 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, the predicted incremental use tax to Mesa County would be approximately \$120,000 per year under Alternative I; \$266,000 per year under Alternative II; \$158,000 per year under Alternative III; and \$176,000 per year under Alternative IV. Given the similarity in the order of magnitude among these figures, it was concluded that a more rigorous analysis is not required in order to compare socioeconomic impacts among alternatives.

[*Wobbekind, R., B. Lewandoski, and E. Chung. 2014. Oil and Gas Industry Economic and Fiscal Contributions in Colorado by County, 2008-2012. Prepared for The American Petroleum Institute. Prepared by Business Research Division, Leeds School of Business, University of Colorado Boulder. May. Available: <<http://www.api.org/~media/files/news/2014/14-october/colorado-api-economic-impact-study.pdf>.]

0033-1
0033-2

0033-2
Continued

0033-2 cont'd Socioeconomics

Such businesses pay significant sales and use taxes for equipment purchases, operations, maintenance, and other purchases from Mesa County vendors. The Final SEIS should include a rigorous analysis of revenue from sales and use taxes paid by oil and gas industry.

Specifically we recommend that the Public Revenues sections of the Final SEIS reflect the following comments/concerns:

1. The \$26.9M in sales tax for Mesa County should be bumped up to include use tax as well, since use tax is also driven by new jobs. The total should be \$29.8M. (Table 4.4.31)
2. The analysis defines sales tax effects as only indirect effects. Since oil and gas bring in direct sales tax (\$780K for Mesa County in 2015), the analysis should also include direct sales tax effects.
3. The DSEIS does not estimate the increase in Mesa County property taxes that would come from employees living in Mesa County.

	Alternative I	Alternative II	Alternative III	Alternative IV
Population Increase, per Table 4.4.15	793	1,668	1,024	1,133
Households, 35 per population	278	584	358	397
Per Household Income	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$108,000
Total Income	\$29,975,400	\$63,050,400	\$38,707,200	\$42,827,400
Area Taxable Spending	\$9,480,769	\$19,941,896	\$12,242,507	\$13,545,664
MC Tax for New Direct Jobs	\$189,615	\$398,838	\$244,850	\$270,913
Job Multiplier	3.81	3.81	3.81	3.81
Total Jobs	1,057	2,224	1,365	1,511
Total Other New Jobs	780	1,640	1,007	1,114
Other New Job Avg Income	\$50,174	\$50,174	\$50,174	\$50,174
Income for Other New Jobs	\$39,125,910	\$82,297,627	\$50,523,243	\$55,901,206
Area Taxable Spending	\$12,374,938	\$26,029,505	\$15,979,744	\$17,680,713
MC Tax for New Indirect Jobs	\$247,499	\$520,590	\$319,595	\$353,614
Total 2% MC Tax for Job Growth	\$437,114	\$919,428	\$564,445	\$624,528

Major assumptions are highlighted in green. The \$108,000 was found online, specific to this project. The 3.81 multiplier is from <http://commonsensepolicyroundtable.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/5000-Jobs-Analysis-052214.pdf>. \$50,174 is GJ Median Income.

0033-2 Continued
0033-3
0033-3 Socioeconomics
Local revenue based on sales for Mesa County is shown in Table 4.4.31 in the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Mesa County data in Table 4.4.31 is from the Mesa County 2013 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

February 16, 2016
Page 3 of 3

Thank you for your consideration of these comments on the Draft SEIS. We look forward to the timely release of a Final SEIS.

Sincerely,



Rose Pugliese, Chair
Board of County Commissioners



John Justman
Commissioner

Scott McInnis
Commissioner

cc: Garfield County Board of County Commissioners
Frank Whidden, Mesa County Administrator
Patrick Coleman, Mesa County Attorney
Peter Baier, Mesa County Deputy Administrator of Operations
Keith Fife, Mesa County Natural Resource Liaison
Neil Kornze, BLM Director
Ruth Welch, BLM Colo. State Director
U.S. Senator Michael Bennet
U.S. Senator Cory Gardner
U.S. Congressman Scott Tipton
Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper
Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman
Colorado Senator Ray Scott
Colorado Representative Dan Thurlow
Colorado Representative Yeulin Willet



February 18, 2016

Via Electronic Mail

Mr. Greg Larson, Draft SEIS Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

E-Mail: roanplateau@blm.gov

*Re: Bill Barrett Corporation's Comments on the Draft Roan Plateau Planning Area
Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact
Statement*

Dear Mr. Larson:

Bill Barrett Corporation (BBC) files these comments on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Draft Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), 80 Fed. Reg. 72732 (Nov. 20, 2015).

BBC is an independent producer of oil and gas. BBC currently holds a 90 percent interest in the federal oil and gas leases located on top of the Roan Plateau. BBC has a direct and substantial interest in protecting its leased assets, ensuring efficient and responsible development of these oil and gas resources, and ensuring that BLM's Roan Plateau planning efforts do not devalue or render uneconomic these leased resources.

The oil and gas industry has a strong and vested interest in promulgation of a viable RMPA/SEIS that provides long-term regulatory certainty, and in turn, business and investment certainty for companies currently operating in the planning area, as well as new companies that will seek to explore and develop oil and gas resources. The BLM estimates the total technically-recoverable natural gas reserves for the Roan Plateau Planning Area to be approximately 8.9 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas. The significant oil and gas resources within the planning area will provide jobs, and a substantial economic benefit to local counties, communities, and the State of Colorado, as well as provide significant revenue to the federal government in the form of oil and gas royalties.

BBC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Draft RMPA/SEIS

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Legal Framework

The Draft RMPA/SEIS must necessarily be analyzed within the context of BLM's legal obligations under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as well as other state and federal jurisdictional limitations upon BLM's authority.

I. BLM's Multiple-Use Obligations Under FLPMA

FLPMA is the organic statute for the BLM. Under FLPMA, BLM is required to manage public lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with applicable land use plans, to meet the needs of present and future generations. 43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(7), (8) & (12); 43 U.S.C. § 1732(a) & (b); 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-3.

Oil and Gas is a Major Use of Public Lands. FLPMA identifies mineral exploration and production as one of the "principle or major uses" of public lands. 43 U.S.C. § 1702(l). Further, FLPMA emphasizes the importance of public resources to the United States domestic energy supply and contains an express declaration of Congressional policy that BLM manage public lands "in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, [and other commodities] from the public lands." 43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(12) (emphasis added). FLPMA's definitions of multiple use and the major uses of public lands highlight the on-going utilization of natural resources on public lands for the benefit of the American people. 43 U.S.C. § 1702(c).

II. FLPMA Requires BLM to Respect Valid Existing Lease Rights

It is well settled under law that any RMP supplement or amendment process must respect valid existing lease rights. This fundamental principle is found within the applicable statutes, regulations, and BLM policy guidance.

Pursuant to FLPMA, all BLM actions, such as authorization of RMPs, are "subject to valid existing rights." 43 U.S.C. § 1701 note (h); *see also* 43 C.F.R. § 1610.5-3(b) (BLM is required to recognize valid existing lease rights). Thus, pursuant to federal statute, the BLM cannot terminate, modify, or alter any valid or existing property rights. *Id.*

Once the BLM has issued a federal oil and gas lease that does not contain a no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation, the BLM cannot completely deny development on the leasehold. *See, e.g., National Wildlife Federation, et al.*, 150 IBLA 385, 403 (1999). As explained by the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), only Congress has the right to completely prohibit development once a federal lease has been issued. *Western Colorado Congress*, 130 IBLA 244, 248 (1994). Thus, a lease cancellation alternative or an alternative that would not allow development on the top of the plateau would breach and violate the terms of BBC's leases and be unlawful.

When FLPMA was enacted, Congress made it clear that nothing within the statute, or in the land use plans developed under FLPMA, was intended to terminate, modify, or alter any valid or existing property rights. *See* 43 U.S.C. § 1701. Thus, an RMPA prepared pursuant to

FLPMA, after lease execution, is likewise subject to existing rights. *See Colorado Environmental Coal, et al.*, 165 IBLA 221, 228 (2005).

Similarly, federal courts have interpreted the phrase “valid existing rights” to mean that federal agencies cannot impose stipulations or conditions of approval that make development on existing leases either uneconomic or unprofitable. *See Utah v. Andrus*, 486 F. Supp. 995, 1011 (D. Utah 1979); *see also Conner v. Burford*, 84 F.2d 1441, 1449-50 (9th Cir. 1988). Therefore, through the RMPA, BLM cannot revise or restrict valid existing lease rights through imposition of conditions of approval (COA) for drilling permits or through imposition of lease stipulation provisions from adjacent leases. *Colorado Environmental Coalition*, 165 IBLA at 228.

Importantly, through the RMP, BLM cannot revise or restrict valid existing lease rights through imposition of Conditions of Approval (COA) for drilling permits or through imposition of lease stipulation provisions from adjacent leases. *Colorado Environmental Coalition*, 165 IBLA at 228.

An RMP supplement or amendment for the Roan Plateau cannot defeat, devalue, or materially restrain BBC’s valid and existing rights to develop its leases through subsequent imposition of new lease stipulations, COAs, or other means. *See Colorado Environmental Coalition, et al.*, 165 IBLA at 228 (citing *Colorado Environmental Coal.*, 135 IBLA 356, 360 (1996) *aff’d*, *Colorado Environmental Coal. v. Bureau of Land Management*, 932 F. Supp. 1247 (D. Colo. 1996)).

Comments

I. The Draft RMPA/SEIS Must Recognize and Respect BBC’s Valid Existing Lease Rights and Ensure that Management Prescriptions do not Restrict Access to, Amend, or Otherwise Restrict, Existing Oil and Gas Lease Rights

1. The Draft RMPA/SEIS Must be Revised to Recognize Valid Existing Lease Rights

The Draft RMPA/SEIS needs to be revised to distinguish between current, valid existing lease rights, and future leasing decisions. The RMPA governs future leasing decisions (e.g., when, where and under what terms and stipulations new leases may be offered). The RMPA SEIS and Record of Decision, however, cannot revise or cancel existing leases.

For example, Alternative I would require cancellation of nearly all of the remaining federal leases. This action is contrary to long established law and legal precedent, as explained in more detail below. The appropriate scope of Alternative I – the No Action Alternative – is that the status quo for current leases remains and continues. This component of Alternative I, and related textual narrative contained in the Draft RMPA/SEIS, needs to be revised to reflect the applicable legal framework, as well as the proper scope of the District Court decision, and subsequent Settlement Agreement.

0035-1 Alternatives

As discussed in Section 1.1 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, the original RMPA/FEIS (2006) was remanded. Because the court set aside the RMPA, no comprehensive land use plan exists for the Planning Area, and 2008 leases are subject to BLM’s reconsideration. In view of the Court’s ruling, BLM determined that a supplemental analysis under NEPA and a new proposed RMPA were warranted. This required evaluating the No Action Alternative from the original RMPA/FEIS as well as a full range of alternatives, even if they conflicted with the terms of the 2008 leases. As stated in Section 2.3.1, because this document supplements the Roan FEIS, Alternative I, the No Action Alternative, represents management of the Planning Area prior to the RODs for the Roan FEIS. Alternative I therefore does not cancel existing leases, but implementation of the No Action Alternative likely would require that BLM cancel leases issued in 2008 for lands within the Planning Area that are not available to lease under this alternative, and take other measures to “unwind” the initial implementation of the 2006 ROD that began before the court’s decision. Should the BLM select the No Action Alternative, leases issued based on analysis in the 1999 FEIS and related decisions would remain intact with the same stipulations and COAs.

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2. The Draft RMPA/SEIS Needs to Reflect the Proper Scope of the Settlement Agreement and its Implementation to Date

The Draft RMPA/SEIS also needs to be revised to acknowledge that voluntary relinquishment, cancellation, and reimbursement for certain leases on the top of the plateau has already occurred. Under Alternative IV, the settlement/preferred alternative, under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, lease cancellation for certain specific leases on the top of the plateau has already occurred. BBC voluntarily relinquished those leases under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, and the DOI, Office of Natural Resource Revenue, reimbursed BBC for the money paid for those leases.

3. Proper Scope of the District Court Decision and Judicial Order

The Draft SEIS must be revised to reflect the accurate and proper scope of the District Court decision and Judicial Order. Significantly, the District Court did not cancel or enjoin any of the leases in any way, and upheld the BLM's Roan Plateau RMP interpretation of the Transfer Act's mandate that the DOI "shall" lease the federal lands and minerals in the Naval Oil Shale Reserves within the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

The District Court upheld almost the entirety of the RMP, and remanded it on discrete issues that only require explanation of BLM's decision-making, as well as further explanation and/or potential additional air quality analysis or tiering to subsequent air analyses that BLM has already performed and that includes the Roan Plateau airshed. The Court simply remanded the RMP and FEIS for additional NEPA analysis and explanation consistent with its Judicial Order.

Lease cancellation would go beyond the procedural remedy of additional NEPA analysis, and would be contrary to law. NEPA is a procedural statute that "does not mandate particular results, but simply prescribes the necessary process." *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 350 (1989); *Wyo. Farm Bureau Fed'n v. Babbitt*, 199 F.3d 1224, 1240 (10th Cir. 2000). Where, as here, a court finds narrow procedural violations of procedural statutes, like NEPA, the remedies "are limited to procedural remedies." *Willow Creek Ecology v. U.S. Forest Service*, 225 F. Supp. 2d 1312, 1316 (D. Utah 2002) (citation omitted). Accordingly, the NEPA analysis and Record of Decision for the revised RMP cannot seek to cancel leases as part of the federal land use plan amendment process.

4. BLM Cannot Lawfully Amend the Terms of Existing Leases

While BLM may include additional stipulations on existing leases related to air quality based upon additional analysis conducted on remand pursuant to the Judicial Order, BLM does not have the discretionary authority to revise existing lease terms or impose new terms or stipulations beyond the parameters of analysis conducted pursuant to the Judicial Order, aside from the inclusion of a stipulation that incorporates the terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement.

Under well-established precedent, after BLM accepts the bid and the lessee fully pays for the lease, a contract exists between the lessee and BLM based solely on those identified terms and conditions. *See e.g., Coastal States Energy Co.*, 80 IBLA 274, 279 (1984). BLM may not

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0035-2 Opinion - Oil and Gas

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes this information in Chapter 1, Section 1.6. As part of the Settlement Agreement, BLM cancelled 17 leases held by Bill Barrett Corporation (BBC). BLM prepared an environmental assessment for the proposed cancellation (BLM 2015a), and after the leases were cancelled, the lessees were reimbursed rent and bonus bids paid for the leases.

0035-3 Opinion - Oil and Gas

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS does not seek to cancel leases as any part of any alternative, nor is this included as an assumption in the impact analyses. Instead, the planning analysis focuses on the combination of lands that would be open or closed to leasing under each of the alternatives, and the impacts of those decisions.

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later amend the lease with terms not identified in the sale notice and not part of the contract subject to the bidding process. A retroactive amendment of lease terms by BLM would be a unilateral breach of the lease contract.

The Mineral Leasing Act (MLA), 30 U.S.C. § 226, and FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. § 1761, authorize BLM to issue oil and gas leases for the development of federal minerals and use of public lands. Once BLM decides to offer a lease for sale and accepts the prospective lessee's payment for that lease, the lease—and the stipulations therein—constitute a binding contract between the parties that governs the development of the leased minerals. *Mobil Exploration & Producing S.E., Inc. v. United States*, 530 U.S. 604, 607–08 (2000); *Anadarko Prod. Co.*, 66 IBLA 174, 176 (1982) (citing *United States v. Ohio Oil Co.*, 163 F.2d 633, 635 (10th Cir. 1947)). Consequently, any subsequent action by BLM is controlled by the terms of those contractual arrangements.

Furthermore, as expressly mandated by FLPMA, any subsequent BLM action must recognize and be subject to valid existing lease rights. *See* 43 U.S.C. § 1701 note (h) (“All actions by the Secretary concerned under this Act shall be subject to valid existing rights.”).

Although a lessee's surface use rights are not unlimited, 43 C.F.R. § 3101.1-2,¹ the terms, conditions, and stipulations controlling leasehold development are established prior to the sale of leases and are agreed to by the lessee and BLM upon BLM's acceptance of payment and lease issuance. *See* 43 C.F.R. § 3101.1-3 (A party “shall be deemed to have agreed to stipulations applicable to the specific parcel as indicated in the List of Lands Available for Competitive Nominations or the Notice of Competitive Lease Sale available from the proper BLM office.”).

Any action to retroactively amend and modify lease terms to impose newly created NSO restrictions post-lease issuance would unilaterally rewrite the leases and impose an unreasonable restraint on the lessees' development rights, in breach of the lease and in violation of the lessee's valid existing lease rights. The Draft RMPA/SEIS must be revised to clarify the scope of the Judicial Order and Settlement Agreement, and recognize the legal limits that BLM must respect with regard to valid existing lease rights.

II. The Draft RMPA/SEIS Must be Revised to Clarify the Limits of BLM Authority Over Privately Owned Surface

The Draft RMPA/SEIS contains the following narrative regarding regulation of privately owned surface:

Note that on split-estate lands (i.e., Federal minerals, but private surface), the NGD/NSO, SSR/CSU, and TL restrictions would be applied only for activities related to mineral exploration and development, such as drilling for oil and gas. This is because the Federal mineral estate creates a nexus by which the BLM may

0035-4 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes this information in Chapter 1, Sections 1.2 and 1.6. As part of the Settlement Agreement, BLM cancelled 17 leases held by BBC. In the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, lands covered by certain other leases would be subject to specific stipulations described in the Settlement Agreement.

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¹ Under 43 C.F.R. § 3101.1-2, BLM is permitted to “make modifications to the siting and timing of surface-disturbing activities,” *Wyoming Outdoor Council v. Bosworth*, 284 F. Supp. 2d 81, 92 (D.D.C. 2003), subject to the requirement that any modification must be reasonable.

regulate aspects of these activities that occur on the surface as well as the subsurface.

Draft RMPA/SEIS 2015, Section 4.1.2 at 4-4.

This narrative needs to be revised to reflect that BLM cannot lawfully impose conditions upon privately owned surface that is not agreed to by the private surface owner. BLM must recognize and respect the private property rights of the surface owner. In the event the private surface owner does not agree to limitations or restrictions that BLM may seek to impose upon the surface, then neither BLM, nor the lessee, may implement those measures upon that private surface. The lessee may seek to codify prescriptions for surface use with the landowner via a surface use agreement, but the private surface owner has the legal authority to reject or revise those proposed conditions in the valid exercise of his private property rights.

FLPMA mandates that all BLM actions, such as authorization of RMPs, are “subject to valid existing rights,” 43 U.S.C. § 1701 note (h), including valid existing private property rights held by a surface owner. Thus, pursuant to FLPMA, the BLM cannot terminate, modify, or alter any valid or existing property rights. *Id.*

III. Alternative III is Not Technically or Economically Feasible, and Therefore Not a Reasonable Alternative

BLM should not carry forward Alternative III, a base directional drilling alternative, within the range of reasonable alternatives in the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The District Court remanded the Roan Plateau RMP on discrete issues that only require explanation of BLM’s decision-making, including the decision to not analyze a base directional drilling alternative in detail.

This alternative was eliminated by the BLM from detailed analysis during the initial Roan Plateau RMP process, and BLM already has, in the administrative record, the data and information relied upon to eliminate this alternative. Instead of analyzing Alternative III in the supplemental document, BLM need only provide a more detailed explanation for its decision to eliminate the alternative from detailed analysis.

1. Alternative III is Not Technically or Economically Feasible and Does Not Meet the Purpose and Need of the Draft RMPA/SEIS

The geologic, technical, and economic reasons as to why directional drilling from the base is not feasible have not changed and are still the same as when BLM first addressed these issues in the RMP starting in 2002. The geology of the minerals underlying the top of the Roan Plateau will not change. As a result, the technical and economic issues that render directional drilling infeasible will not change either over the course of the next 20 years and life of the RMPA/SEIS.

NEPA requires BLM to consider reasonable alternatives that will accomplish the intended purpose of the proposed action, are technically and economically feasible, and yet have a lesser impact. 40 C.F.R. § 1500.2(e). “Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical

0035-5 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

An RMP does not apply to non-Federal lands, including non-Federal surface estates over Federal minerals ('split-estate' lands). The RMP does apply to the Federal mineral estate. As owner of the dominant mineral estate, the United States has both the right to authorize its lessees and their operators to use the non-Federal surface to access the Federal minerals, and the obligation to prevent unreasonable damage to the surface estate. Accordingly, BLM's oil and gas operating regulations apply to facilities and activities on split-estate lands. BLM's Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 requires operators to make good-faith efforts to reach a surface use agreement with the surface owner. BLM tries to accommodate the needs of the surface owner, but does not impose permit conditions on split-estates that exceed those applicable on wholly Federal lands. (See The Gold Book, p. 12.) The lease stipulations required by the RMP for particular Federal lands within its scope apply on both wholly Federal lands and split-estate lands, unless the RMP otherwise specifies.

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or feasible from the **technical and economic** standpoint.” CEQ 40 Most Asked Questions, Question 2a, 46 Fed. Reg. 18026 (emphasis added). “Alternatives that ‘do not accomplish the purpose of an action are not reasonable’ and need not be studied in detail by the agency.” *Save Our Canyons*, 297 F.3d at 1031 (quoting *Custer Cty. Action Ass’n v. Garvey*, 256 F.3d 1024, 1041 (10th Cir. 2001)); see also *Colo. Env’tl. Coal. v. Dombeck*, 185 F.3d 1162, 1174-75 (10th Cir. 1999). Further, under NEPA, BLM does not need to consider alternatives that “it has in good faith rejected as too remote, speculative . . . impractical or ineffective.” *Airport Neighbors Alliance, Inc. v. United States*, 90 F.3d 426, 432 (10th Cir. 1996) (upholding an agency’s rejection of alternatives because of the costs and environmental complications associated with the alternatives); *City of Aurora v. Hunt*, 749 F.2d 1457, 1467 (10th Cir. 1984) (upholding agency’s rejection of alternative when agency considered alternative infeasible due to difficult terrain, high-rise complexes, and dense development); see also *Holy Cross Wilderness Fund v. Madigan*, 960 F.2d 1515, 1528 (10th Cir. 1992) (upholding agency’s rejection of alternative on grounds that agency considered it too speculative and uncertain).

The 1997 Transfer Act unambiguously mandated that Interior “shall” enter into leases for development of the federal minerals underlying the Roan Plateau. 10 U.S.C. § 7439(b)(1). As the District Court held, BLM was required to comply with the Transfer Act by leasing both the base of the Plateau and the Upper Plateau. *Colo. Env’tl. Coal. v. Salazar*, 875 F. Supp. 2d 1233, 1247 (D. Colo. 2012). Indeed, the District Court explained that an alternative “that permitted only an *insignificant* portion of [the Upper Plateau] to be leased” would conflict with the requirements of the Transfer Act. *Id.* at 1246 (emphasis in original).

During the planning process for the Roan Plateau RMP, BLM considered a reasonable range of alternatives, and appropriately eliminated those alternatives that were either duplicative of alternatives being analyzed, did not comply with the BLM’s interpretation of the Transfer Act (which was confirmed by the District Court), or were not feasible.

There are numerous existing documents in the RMP administrative record from a variety of sources, including the BLM, Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC), and industry, that detail why directional drilling from the base of the Plateau is not, and for the long-term foreseeable future will not be, technologically and economically feasible.

As BLM made clear in its response to Rock the Earth comment letter for the Roan RMP, extended reach directional drilling (ERD) technology is not feasible for the geology found at the Roan Plateau. Given the nature of the geologic structures, relatively dense downhole spacing is necessary to develop the oil and gas resources within the Roan Plateau. Roan Plateau RMP/FEIS at C-16. Accordingly, the COGCC approved ten acre well density on lands near the Planning Area for an industry pilot project, based on WPX Energy² demonstrating that such density was necessary to effectively drain the gas reserves.

WPX also provided a report to BLM (WPX Report) regarding the feasibility of directional drilling within the Planning Area. Letter from David Cesark, Principal Environmental Specialist at Williams Production, transmitting *Technical Challenges Associated with Drilling on the Roan Plateau*, (WPX Report) (Nov. 10, 2003). The WPX Report was based

² Formerly Williams Production RMT.

on the company's experience drilling over 200 directional wells on lands within the Planning Area. *Id.* The WPX Report stated that there is extreme difficulty directionally drilling a well with more than a 2,000 foot horizontal reach, and that drilling from the base of the Plateau to below the Upper Plateau was infeasible. *Id.* at Page 2 of 13. The WPX Report details the limitations associated with directional drilling in the Planning Area and demonstrates that it would be physically and technologically impossible to access the reserves under the Upper Plateau from the base. *See Id.* This report, which is based upon actual drilling operations in the Piceance Basin, remains uncontested in the record.

BLM relied on its own experts, state experts, and members of industry with actual experience drilling within and surrounding the Planning Area, and local data to determine the maximum reach feasible with directional drilling. Based on this information, BLM concluded that ERD technology from the base of the Plateau to resources below the Upper Plateau was not feasible. Letter to Marc Ross, President, Rock the Earth, regarding comments to Roan RMP/FEIS, 2-3 (Aug. 16, 2007).

Because Alternative III is not a technically or economically feasible alternative and does not meet the purpose and need of the EIS (based on the Transfer Act), BLM must simply explain and document why development of the resources underlying the top of the Roan Plateau is infeasible from the base. A separate analysis of a base directional drilling alternative through Alternative III is not required under NEPA.

2. BLM Cannot Lawfully Analyze Any Alternative that Would Require Lease Cancellation to Implement the RMP Amendment

So long as BBC retains leases on the top of the Roan Plateau, any alternatives that would eliminate, modify or alter BBC's leases in any way would not be lawful and could not be considered reasonable under the law.

It is well settled that once the BLM has issued a federal oil and gas lease that does not contain a no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation, and in the absence of a nondiscretionary statutory prohibition against development, the BLM cannot completely deny development on the leasehold. *See, e.g., National Wildlife Federation, et al.*, 150 IBLA 385, 403 (1999). Only Congress has the right to completely prohibit development once a lease has been issued. *Western Colorado Congress*, 130 IBLA 244, 248 (1994). Thus, an alternative that would not allow development on the top of the plateau—Alternative III—would breach and violate the terms of BBC's leases and be unlawful.

IV. The Draft RMPA/SEIS Must be Revised to Clarify the Applicability of Greater Sage-Grouse Protective Stipulations on Valid Existing Leases

In line with the Settlement Agreement, the Draft RMPA/SEIS discusses the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment and Final EIS (NWCOGSG FEIS) and analyzes protective measures for the greater sage-grouse (GrSG) contained therein. However, the Draft RMPA/SEIS fails to acknowledge the limits of GrSG protective measures on valid existing rights. The Draft RMPA/SEIS states:

0035-6 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 Alternative III was analyzed in response to public comment and the Judicial Order which said it was not adequately addressed in the EIS. BLM determined it was necessary to analyze the impacts of the proposal and considered feasibility of the alternative throughout the analysis.

0035-7 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 As discussed in Section 1.3.7.2, as a result of the Judicial Order, specific management actions that have been implemented are now subject to reconsideration in the RMPA/SEIS. If BLM's decisions following the RMPA/SEIS process are different from those in the 2007 and 2008 RODs, BLM may need to undertake additional measures to "bring into conformance" its previous implementation actions so as to conform with the new planning decisions. Alternative III responds to portions of the Judicial Order. Alternative III does not address the 2008 leases on the Roan Plateau because the Proposed RMPA/FEIS is a supplement to the analysis in the 2006 FEIS. Alternative III considers development of all potential Federal minerals. Alternative III is fully discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3 and Table 2.1.

0035-6

0035-7

Where a proposed fluid mineral development project on an existing lease could adversely affect GRSG populations or habitat, the BLM will work with the lessees, operators, or other project proponents to avoid, reduce, and mitigate adverse impacts to the extent compatible with lessees' rights to drill and produce fluid mineral resources. The BLM will work with the lessee, operator, or project proponent in developing an Application for Permit to Drill for the lease to avoid and minimize impacts to GRSG or its habitat and will ensure that the best information about GRSG and its habitat informs and helps guide development of such Federal leases.

Draft RMPA/SEIS 2015, Section 4.5.5.5 at 4-290.

The Draft RMPA/SEIS must be revised to recognize that where leases have already been issued, BLM cannot add new stipulations to existing leases for the benefit of the GrSG and its habitat. Pursuant to FLPMA, any stipulations set in place for GrSG through the RMP amendment process must recognize valid existing lease rights. See 43 U.S.C. § 1701 note (h). Thus, proposed lease restrictions can only apply to newly-issued leases, and protective stipulations cannot be imposed as conditions of approval.

As noted in the Draft RMPA/SEIS, the Planning Area was recently mapped as general habitat for the GrSG, though previous mapping indicated the Planning Area as non-habitat. Draft RMPA/SEIS 2015, Section 3.3.4.2 at 3-108. BLM should not impose protective measures on lessees for a species that is non-existent within the Planning Area.

V. The Draft RMPA/SEIS Must Explain the Function of the RFD Scenario

The Draft RMPA/SEIS must be revised to include an explanation that the Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario is not a cap or limitation on the number of wells that can be developed within a planning area.

An RFD scenario does not authorize a particular level of oil and gas development and is not a planning decision, but a planning tool used to assist BLM with NEPA analyses by providing a baseline scenario of activity. From a legal standpoint, it is well settled that the RFD scenario is not a threshold number for development to be allowed in a plan. *Theodore Roosevelt Conservation P'ship v. Salazar*, 605 F. Supp. 2d 263, 280 (D.D.C. 2009); see also *Theodore Roosevelt Conservation P'ship v. Salazar*, 616 F.3d 497, 509-10 (D.C. Cir. 2010); *S. Utah Wilderness Alliance*, 159 IBLA 220 (2003) (explaining that a resource management plan's general reference to a number of wells that might be anticipated or assumed annual within a planning area "does not constitute a term, condition, or substantive limit on the number of wells BLM may authorize."); *Wyoming Outdoor Council*, 156 IBLA 377, 385 (2002).

The RFD serves as a planning tool for the BLM for identifying and quantifying direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, which assists in the development and analysis of alternatives. Including an explanation of the function of the RFD Scenario will inform the public and reduce litigation risk.

0035-8 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, existing stipulations for existing oil and gas leases would apply to those leases. New stipulations would apply only to lands leased pursuant to the Record of Decision (ROD) that results from this NEPA process. This may, however, require modification of leases issued in 2008 to achieve conformity with the planning decision (see Section 1.3.7.3). COAs equivalent to stipulations developed through this RMPA could be applied to development on pre-2008 leases, to the extent that they do not conflict with existing lease terms.

0035-8 0035-9 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
The Planning Area above the rim has been mapped as a General Habitat Management Area for the GRSG, with the exception of a 30-acre Priority Habitat Management Area in the northwest corner of the Planning Area. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes management actions for GRSG, priority habitat, and leks to ensure consistency with the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse RMPA/FEIS. It is understood that, at the implementation level, areas that are not considered suitable habitat for GRSG will not be treated as such. However, these management actions would allow for the management of priority habitat, or occupied habitat, should the GRSG become established in the future.

0035-9

0035-10

0035-10 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) is a technical estimate produced in support of the planning process. BLM developed the RFD with the expertise of geologists, market considerations, and input from industry and believes these estimates to be reasonable for analysis. It provides the interdisciplinary planning team with an estimate of the oil and gas development activities that are reasonably likely to occur on BLM-administered lands within the Roan Plateau Planning Area over the next 20 years. As such, it is neither a cap, nor a limitation to the number of wells, that can be developed within the Planning Area. As described in the RFD Appendix G to the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, "A RFD is a long-term scenario used as a baseline for adjusting the projected amount of oil and gas activity for each alternative in the Draft Resource Management Plan. It is not a decision and does not authorize or approve any development."

The following is from Section 4.1.1.1 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS: "The RFD is intended as a technical and scientific approximation of anticipated levels of oil and gas development during the planning timeframe. As such, the RFD and the planning process, of which it is a part, are not intended to define the specific numbers and locations of wells and pads needed to develop the oil and gas resource. Instead, they are intended to allow flexibility during resource development while providing sufficient specificity to support the impact analysis and alternative selection processes."

While BBC recognizes that the RFD is a planning tool and not a regulatory limit on development, BBC is concerned that the RFD understates the number of wells projected for on top of the plateau under Alternative IV and the rate at which those wells could be developed. Tables ES-2 and 4.1.2 indicate that a total of 149 wells are projected to be drilled from 7 pads on top of the plateau. BBC has analyzed how many down-hole locations could conceivably be reached from the 7 pad locations specified in the Settlement Agreement and with the typical horizontal displacement being achieved with directional drilling in the Piceance Basin. We estimate that approximately 450 wells could be drilled from these pads. Because of the remoteness of the plateau and infrastructure requirements, an operator of leases on the top of the plateau will be incentivized to maintain continuous operations. BBC estimates that each drilling rig working on top of the plateau will drill approximately 40 wells per year. The Settlement Agreement stipulates that up to two drilling rigs can operate on top of the plateau at any given time, so it is probable that in an economic environment that allows development, approximately 80 wells would be drilled on top of the plateau each year. BBC recommends that BLM consider this information as it finalizes this Draft RMPA/SEIS.

VI. COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF RMPA/SEIS

BBC also provides the following comments on specific sections of the Draft RMPA/SEIS.

- 1) Throughout the document, the presentation of areas available for leasing and surface development is inconsistent and confusing. For example, for Alternative IV, Table ES-2 states that 13,000 acres is available for pads, other surface facilities and roads (1,830 acres atop the plateau and 11,170 acres below the cliffs). As noted on that table, this acreage was calculated by subtracting the areas with NSO stipulations from the total leased area. In addition, the Executive Summary page ES-4 states that under Alternative IV there would be 1,990 acres available for lease above the plateau rim, which appears to conflict with the number provided in Table ES-2 (the acreages shown for below the rim are also inconsistent). In contrast, Section 2.3.4 states that there are 1,830 acres above the rim available for leasing and development which, on its face, seems to contradict the acreages presented in Table ES-2. Nowhere is it clearly stated that the total area covered by the two leases to be retained under the Settlement Agreement is approximately 4,650 acres. It is recommended that BLM carefully review all of the acreages indicated for each alternative to ensure the accuracy of the acreages, to revise the text of all applicable sections, and to ensure that how these acreages are described is consistent throughout.
- 2) Footnote 4 is missing from Table ES-2.
- 3) The assumptions used to develop the anticipated ground disturbance associated with Alternative IV, as presented in Tables ES-2 and Section 4.1.2, are seemingly inconsistent with the terms of the Settlement Agreement. It appears that the methodology used to calculate the temporary disturbance for the 7 pads allowed by the Settlement Agreement is accurate (10 acres/pad for a total of 70 acres), however, the Settlement Agreement specifies that each well pad shall be limited to approximately 3 acres of un-reclaimed

0035-11 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

0035-11 The Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) is a technical estimate produced in support of the planning process. BLM developed the RFD with the expertise of geologists, market considerations, and input from industry and believes these estimates to be reasonable for analysis. It provides the interdisciplinary planning team with an estimate of the oil and gas development activities that are reasonably likely to occur on BLM-administered lands within the Roan Plateau Planning Area over the next 20 years. As such, it is neither a cap, nor a limitation to the number of wells, that can be developed within the Planning Area. As described in the RFD Appendix G to the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, "A RFD is a long-term scenario used as a baseline for adjusting the projected amount of oil and gas activity for each alternative in the Draft Resource Management Plan. It is not a decision and does not authorize or approve any development."

The following is from Section 4.1.1.1 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS: "The RFD is intended as a technical and scientific approximation of anticipated levels of oil and gas development during the planning timeframe. As such, the RFD and the planning process, of which it is a part, are not intended to define the specific numbers and locations of wells and pads needed to develop the oil and gas resource. Instead, they are intended to allow flexibility during resource development while providing sufficient specificity to support the impact analysis and alternative selection processes."

0035-12 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

This section was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0035-13 Executive Summary

0035-13 This section was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Footnote 4 was added to the table.

0035-13
 Continued

0035-13 cont'd Executive Summary

0035-13 cont'd Executive Summary

- ground disturbance during production. Therefore, the long-term disturbance for pads should reflect 21 acres of disturbance instead of the 17.5 acres currently calculated.
- 4) It is recommended that the reference to well numbers be removed in Table 4.1.2 because this table only addresses the surface impacts from oil and gas development. It is likely, particularly in the case of the pads on top of the plateau where the size of pads is limited by the Settlement Agreement, and considering the incentive for continuous operations described earlier, that changes in the number of wells/pad will not significantly affect the pad size. In addition, the formula contained in footnote 5 should be corrected to reflect “.40” miles of new roads instead of “40”.
 - 5) Table 4.2.15 states that the air analysis performed for the SEIS assumed that there would be 16 wells/pad, however, the remainder of the document assumes that there will be 20-21 wells/pad.
 - 6) On page 4-123 under the bullet titled “**Exploration and Construction**”, the text of this bullet should specify that the disturbance figures provided are per well pad not per well.
 - 7) On page 4-136 under the subsection titled “*Summary of Impacts to Terrestrial and Aquatic Resources from Alternative I*”, it is stated that the phased and clustered development specified for on top of the plateau under Alternative II would lessen the impact to wildlife as compared to Alternatives III and IV. However, Alternative III does not include any drilling on top of the plateau and the development pattern specified by the Settlement Agreement under Alternative IV is essentially phased and clustered development, which restricts the area for leasing and development. Therefore, the impact to wildlife under these alternatives as compared to Alternative II should be less.
 - 8) Throughout the analysis of environmental consequences in Chapter 4, there are instances where the comparison of impacts from Alternative II to Alternative IV does not appear to be consistent with the details of each alternative. For example, in Section 4.3.2, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, the impacts from oil and gas leasing and development from each alternative are indicated to be moderately negative. However, the level of oil and gas development under these alternatives is very different, particularly atop the plateau; therefore, the impact on many of these resources should be less for Alternative IV. As an example, Table 4.3.5 for Alternative II and Table 4.3.9 for Alternative IV indicate the same level of moderately negative impact to deer/elk summer range, however, the estimated summer range habitat loss for each alternative is very different with the loss of summer range habitat under Alternative IV being significantly less (Tables 4.3.4 and 4.3.8).
 - 9) Table 4.4.2 incorrectly identifies Alternative IV as Alternative VI.
 - 10) Table 4.4.3 – the number of pads visible in the close range from I-70 for Alternative IV does not appear to be consistent with the analysis documented in Section 4.4.1.5, Tables 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, or Maps 26 and 27. These latter portions of the document correctly indicate that little or no oil and gas development would be visible in the close range or near foreground.
- 0035-13
Continued
- 0035-14
0035-14 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Well numbers are used throughout the impact analysis in Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS as the basis for estimating potential short-and long-term surface disturbance by alternative oil and gas leasing and development scenarios.

This section was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.
- 0035-15
0035-15 Climate and Air Quality
The noted difference in the number of wells per pad is not large enough to affect the emissions levels for the CARMMS planning area specific and cumulative modeling analyses. The number of wells per pad parameter is more important for project-specific near-field modeling analysis that BLM will prepare when reviewing location, timing, well, and equipment information for specific development proposals. See Appendix J (CARPP).
- 0035-16
0035-16 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
This section was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.
- 0035-17
0035-17 Biological Resources
This section was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.
- 0035-18
0035-18 Biological Resources
As discussed in Section 4.1.3, in order to reduce the necessarily complex impact analysis process to readily understandable terms, a qualitative approach for summarizing impacts to specific resources, management actions, and uses is employed throughout the FSEIS. Qualitative terms specific to wildlife impacts are further explained in Section 4.3.2.1, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Introduction.

Impact summary tables, such as the cited Table 4.3.5 and Table 4.3.9 were developed to summarize all estimated direct,

indirect, adverse, beneficial, and cumulative impacts to terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. Elk/Mule Deer habitat loss, estimated in Tables 4.3.4 and 4.3.8, is a part of this summary analysis, but not the entirety. The difference in Elk/Mule Deer summer habitat loss has been analyzed as part of the summary analysis; however, additional direct, indirect, adverse, and cumulative impacts, incorporating additional species, are also analyzed, thus resulting in the "moderate" categorization for both Alternatives II and IV.

0035-19 Biological Resources

Table 4.4.2 was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0035-20 Visual Resources

Table 4.4.3 was revised for clarity in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

- 11) The socio-economics analysis may have underestimated the potential employment, wages, taxes, etc. under Alternative IV since the number of wells that could be drilled is underestimated.
- 12) Section 4.5.2.5 should reiterate that oil and gas traffic will not generally use Cow Creek or Rim Road for access and that the area to be developed is largely not currently accessible to the public via roads from the east, due to intervening private inholdings.

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and consideration on these important issues. BBC looks forward to continuing to work cooperatively and collaboratively with the BLM and other stakeholders during the next stages of this process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 970-353-0407, ext. 6015 or dennison@billbarrettcorp.com if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Doug Dennison
 Environmental/Governmental Affairs Liaison

0035-21 Socioeconomics

0035-21 The number of wells is an estimate based on the BLM Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD). The BLM developed the RFD with the expertise of geologists, market considerations, and input from industry and believes these estimates to be reasonable for analysis. It provides the interdisciplinary planning team with an estimate of the oil and gas development activities that are reasonably likely to occur on BLM-administered lands within the Roan Plateau Planning Area over the next 20 years. As such, it is neither a cap, nor a limitation to the number of wells, that can be developed within the Planning Area. As described in the RFD Appendix G to the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, "A RFD is a long-term scenario used as a baseline for adjusting the projected amount of oil and gas activity for each alternative in the Draft Resource Management Plan. It is not a decision and does not authorize or approve any development."

0035-22 The following is from Section 4.1.1.1 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS: "The RFD is intended as a technical and scientific approximation of anticipated levels of oil and gas development during the planning timeframe. As such, the RFD and the planning process, of which it is a part, are not intended to define the specific numbers and locations of wells and pads needed to develop the oil and gas resource. Instead, they are intended to allow flexibility during resource development while providing sufficient specificity to support the impact analysis and alternative selection processes."

0035-22 Transportation

Although the referenced section (Section 4.5.2.5) specifically addresses Travel Management impacts, the reader is correct in pointing out that oil and gas development traffic under Settlement Alternative would use existing private development roads to access the proposed "settlement leases" from the west. As stated in Section 4.4.4.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS under Transportation impact section: "Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, primary access above the rim would be limited to designated roads, subject to BLM's onsite inspection and approval. Operators would not use Cow Creek Road or Rim Road east of the retained leases for access, except in emergencies. This restriction would require contractual access across private land/roads from the south or west."

February 18, 2016

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL AND OVERNIGHT DELIVERY

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments – Attn: Greg Larson
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652
Email: roanplateau@blm.gov

RE: Roan Plateau Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental EIS**INTRODUCTION**

Earthjustice, Conservation Colorado Education Fund, The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Rock the Earth, Wilderness Workshop, Rocky Mountain Wild, Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians, and Friends of the Earth (collectively, the Conservation Groups) submit these comments on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment, and Draft Supplemental EIS, for the Roan Plateau Planning Area (the DEIS).

We thank BLM for its decision to enter the 2014 settlement in *Conservation Colorado Education Fund, et al. v. Jewell, et al.* (the 2014 Settlement or Settlement Agreement), and for developing a new resource management plan for the Roan Plateau Planning Area (the Planning Area). We support the DEIS's Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4), which would adopt the Settlement Alternative as defined in the 2014 Settlement.

After more than a decade of controversy over the Roan and six years of litigation, the 2014 Settlement achieved a solution that is highly protective of this crown jewel of Colorado public lands. It canceled all but two of the oil and gas leases on top of the Plateau, and the Settlement Alternative would close those lands to future leasing. The Settlement Alternative also requires numerous measures to minimize the footprint and environmental impacts where oil and gas development is allowed to occur.

Remarkably, the Roan settlement also enjoys broad support from a wide range of stakeholders. The agreement was reached with support from Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, several members of the state's congressional delegation, local governments, the Conservation Groups, and the energy companies that had purchased leases on the Plateau. Oil and gas industry trade associations have also expressed support.¹ As the Grand Junction Sentinel

¹ <http://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1060028164/search?keyword=roan+plateau> (quoting Western Energy Alliance).

described it, the 2014 Settlement involved “cooperation on a massive scale” that provides “the best, if not only, option” for moving beyond this long-running dispute.²

The Settlement Alternative is critical to that agreement because it represents a consensus plan for future management of the Roan. This proposal was hammered out in detailed negotiations between the federal government, conservation and sportsmen’s groups, oil and gas lessees, and numerous other stakeholders. Adopting the Settlement Alternative should avoid further litigation over the Roan and finally bring the long-running controversy to a close with a highly protective management plan for these lands. Please select the Settlement Alternative in the final Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMP or Plan) for the Roan.

We also appreciate the DEIS consideration of the Community Alternative (Alternative 3), which represents another strong approach to managing the unique resources of the Roan. In the comments below, the Conservation Groups suggest incorporating some elements of Alternative 3 into BLM’s final RMP for the Roan. Including these elements – such as protection of lands with wilderness character and wild and scenic rivers – can be done in a manner consistent with the Settlement Alternative, and will provide important additional protections for these resources.

The DEIS’s discussion of no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations does raise serious concerns because it appears to limit their applicability in a manner inconsistent with the 2014 Settlement Agreement. We urge BLM to correct this error so that its final environmental impact statement and RMP conform to the Settlement Alternative as defined in the Settlement Agreement.

Finally, we urge BLM to continue its effort to expedite this analysis and to issue the final record of decision as currently scheduled later in 2016. Adopting the new RMP will bring this long-running dispute to a conclusion and provide certainty for all stakeholders involved.

DISCUSSION

While the Conservation Groups support the DEIS Preferred Alternative, we offer comments below on a number of specific issues where the DEIS analysis is flawed or raises concerns. These issues include the air quality analysis, and the DEIS description of NSO stipulations. In addition, BLM should revise some of the assumptions and analysis of Alternatives 3 and 4.

Addressing these issues is particularly important if BLM departs from its Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4) and adopts some other plan for managing the Planning Area. Abandoning the consensus reached in the Settlement Alternative would be a major step in the wrong direction. But if BLM does so, it will be critical that the agency fairly and accurately compare the other options – Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 – in its final EIS.

0036-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0036-2 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

Alternative IV, the Settlement Alternative, incorporates all oil and gas management requirements and conditions described in the Settlement Agreement. The stipulations carried forward in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS are directly from the 2007 ROD and the leases as issued. The language noted in this comment has been revised in the FSEIS to more clearly reflect BLM's typical description of NSO stipulations and how they are applied. For specific standards, waivers, exceptions, and modification criteria that apply to each stipulation, please see Appendix C.

| 0036-1

| 0036-2

² Editorial, *A win-win for the Roan*, Grand Junction Sentinel (Nov. 23, 2014).

I. The Discussion Of No Surface Occupancy Stipulations Conflicts With BLM Standards And The Settlement Agreement.

The DEIS's discussion of NSO stipulations raises significant concerns because it conflicts with the Settlement Agreement and BLM standards. The DEIS discussion of NSOs inaccurately portrays BLM's standard implementation of this stipulation. The DEIS explains NSO as follows:

Prohibits long-term use or occupancy of the land surface for fluid mineral exploration or development to protect identified resource values. This means that an area is protected from permanent structures or long-term, ground-disturbing activities (i.e., with impacts lasting longer than two years). For example, **an NSO designation would preclude construction of a well pad (because it would last longer than two years), but not a typical pipeline (because it would be revegetated within two years).** Also, an NSO does not preclude the extraction of underlying fluid minerals if they can be accessed from outside the area by directional drilling. Except for specified situations, individual NSOs may include exceptions, modifications, or waivers that would allow a ground-disturbing activity if it meets specific, stated criteria. In situations where a ground-disturbing activity is permitted by an exception, the activity would be subject to the best management practices (BMPs) and reclamation standards in Appendices H and I, respectively.

DEIS at 2-3 (emphasis added). There is no basis for BLM to arbitrarily define impacts lasting less than two years as being exempt from NSO stipulations. The DEIS cites the *Uniform Format for Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations* (Rocky Mountain Coordinating Committee 1989) as the source for the terminology in the DEIS. *Id.* However, that document does not include any such language about NSO stipulations not applying to impacts lasting less than two years.

0036-2
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It is standard practice for BLM to administer NSO stipulations such that they apply to all activities associated with oil and gas leasing and development, including specifically in the Northwest Colorado District. The recently completed Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse EIS defines NSO as:

A major constraint where use or occupancy of the land surface for fluid mineral exploration or development and **all activities associated with fluid mineral leasing** (e.g., truck-mounted drilling and geophysical exploration equipment off designated routes, construction of wells and/or pads) are prohibited to protect identified resource values. Areas identified as NSO are open to fluid mineral leasing, but surface occupancy or surface-disturbing activities associated with fluid mineral leasing cannot be conducted on the surface of the land. Access to fluid mineral deposits would require horizontal drilling **from outside the boundaries of the NSO area.**

NWCO Greater Sage-Grouse FEIS at Glossary-22 (emphases added). Similarly, the White River Field Office Oil and Gas Development EIS defines NSO as:

A fluid minerals leasing constraint that prohibits occupancy or disturbance (**including production facilities located on a lease or unit such as roads, pipelines, etc.**) on all or part of the lease surface to protect special values or uses. Lessees may exploit the fluid mineral resources under the leases restricted by this constraint through use of directional or horizontal drilling **from sites outside the area.**

WRFO Oil and Gas Development FEIS at A-1 (emphases added).

The DEIS description is also inconsistent with the Settlement Agreement and the stipulations for existing leases in the Planning Area. Those stipulations do not make the NSOs inapplicable to disturbances lasting less than two years. *See, e.g.*, Stipulation GS-NSO-Roan-22 (Steep Slopes); Stipulation GS-NSO-Roan-24 (Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Species Habitat); GS-NSO-Roan-27 (Wildlife Security Areas Below the Rim). Attempting in the RMP amendment to make NSOs inapplicable to disturbances lasting less than two years would be inconsistent with the Settlement Agreement. That agreement provides that the Settlement Alternative will make leasing and development subject to lease notices, stipulations and standard terms and conditions *consistent with those for the Base Leases . . .*” Settlement Agreement ¶ 5(c). Adding a two-year exemption from the NSO conflicts with the existing lease terms, and would not conform to the Settlement Alternative as defined in the 2014 Settlement.³

The 2007 Record of Decision (ROD) did contemplate that waivers or exceptions of the stipulations could be granted for short-term disturbances. *See* June 2007 ROD at Table F-1. However, that language was not part of the stipulations themselves. *See, e.g.*, Stipulation GS-NSO-Roan-22 (Steep Slopes); Stipulation GS-NSO-Roan-24 (Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Species Habitat); GS-NSO-Roan-27 (Wildlife Security Areas Below the Rim). Under the Settlement Agreement, it is *the stipulation terms* – not the 2007 ROD – that define the parameters of the Settlement Alternative. Settlement Agreement ¶ 5(c).

Moreover, the 2007 ROD required additional steps before such short-term disturbance could be allowed: the applicant had to (a) demonstrate that such disturbance would not impair the resource protected by the stipulation, and (b) meet various other conditions. *See* June 2007 ROD at Table F-1. The 2007 ROD did not purport to simply exempt disturbances of less than two years from NSO protections.

The clear intent of an NSO stipulation is to ensure that all activities are conducted from outside the area – not to arbitrarily assign temporal frameworks during which surface-disturbing activities can occur. BLM must update the definition and explanation of NSO stipulations in the final EIS to clearly state that the stipulation applies to all activities associated with oil and gas development.

0036-3 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 Alternative IV, the Settlement Alternative, incorporates all oil and gas management requirements and conditions described in the Settlement Agreement. The stipulations carried forward in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS are directly from the 2007 ROD and the leases as issued. The language noted in this comment has been revised in the FSEIS to more clearly reflect BLM's typical description of NSO stipulations and how they are applied. For specific standards, waivers, exceptions, and modification criteria that apply to each stipulation, please see Appendix C.

0036-3

³ The DEIS statement also appears inconsistent with other parts of the draft Plan. *See* DEIS Appendix C, Table C1-4 (Table of stipulations under Settlement Alternative).

II. The Final Plan Should Better Protect Lands With Wilderness Character And ACECs.

A. BLM Should Protectively Manage Lands With Wilderness Characteristics In The Final RMP Amendment.

FLPMA requires BLM to inventory and consider lands with wilderness characteristics during the land use planning process. 43 U.S.C. § 1711(a); *see also Ore. Natural Desert Ass'n v. BLM*, 625 F.3d 1092, 1122 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that “wilderness characteristics are among the values the FLPMA specifically assigns to the BLM to manage in land use plans). IM 2011-154 and Manuals 6310 and 6320 contain mandatory guidance on implementing that requirement. The IM directs BLM to “conduct and maintain inventories regarding the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics, and to consider identified lands with wilderness characteristics in land use plans and when analyzing projects under [NEPA].” Manual 6310 reiterates that, “[r]egardless of past inventory, the BLM must maintain and update as necessary, its inventory of wilderness resources on public lands.” Manual 6320 requires BLM to consider lands with wilderness characteristics in land use planning, both in evaluating the impacts of management alternatives on lands with wilderness characteristics and in evaluating alternatives that would protect those values. Wilderness inventories are to be done on a *continuing* basis and relevant citizen-submitted data is to be evaluated. BLM Manual 6310 at § .04(C)(1).

Of additional importance to this DEIS, the 2014 Settlement stipulates that BLM must address “the management of lands having wilderness characteristics consistent with BLM Manual 6320, considering the BLM’s most recent inventory of such lands.” 2014 Settlement ¶ C(6)(c). We appreciate that BLM has been updating lands with wilderness characteristics (LWC) inventories as part of this planning process in compliance with FLPMA and BLM Manuals 6310 and 6320, including specifically responding to new information submitted by The Wilderness Society and Conservation Colorado. DEIS at 3-214. We also support that BLM considers protecting all inventoried LWC in Alternative 3 of the DEIS. DEIS at 2-22. Managing LWC for protection of wilderness character is not inconsistent with the 2014 Settlement, and BLM should manage LWC that way in the final RMP amendment.

These areas are treasured by hikers, hunters, wildlife viewers and many others who visit our public lands to experience the sights and sounds of nature and revel in some of Colorado’s most spectacular wild lands. In addition to providing backcountry recreation opportunities, lands with wilderness characteristics harbor important wildlife habitat, riparian areas, cultural resources and other resources of the public lands that are better protected within lands managed to protect wilderness characteristics.

FLPMA obligates BLM to take resource inventories, which include wilderness character, into account when preparing land use plans, using and observing the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. 43 U.S.C. § 1712(c)(4); 43 U.S.C. § 1712(c)(1). Through management plans, BLM can and should protect wilderness character and the many uses that wilderness character provides on the public lands through various management decisions, including by excluding or limiting certain uses of the public lands. *See* 43 U.S.C. § 1712(e). This is necessary

and consistent with the definition of multiple use, which identifies the importance of various aspects of wilderness character (such as recreation, wildlife, natural scenic values) and requires BLM's consideration of the relative values of these resources but "not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return." 43 U.S.C. § 1702(c).

BLM should better balance the multiple uses of public lands on the Roan Plateau by managing lands for protection of wilderness characteristics in the final RMP amendment. The East Fork LWC unit in particular, which is the only LWC unit on the top of the Plateau, should be managed for protection of its wilderness characteristics. The East Fork LWC unit harbors outstanding values that would be best protected through LWC management, including opportunities for high-quality hiking, horseback riding, photography, wildlife viewing, wildflower study, camping, sightseeing, hunting and fishing experiences on the Roan Plateau. DEIS at 3-214. BLM's inventory finds that "the diversity and stark contrast of the barren cliffs abruptly changing to coniferous forest creates a scenic quality comparable to a national park." *Id.* The East Fork unit also contains other important public lands resources that would benefit from LWC management, including Colorado Natural Heritage Program conservation sites classified as very significant, fossil and cultural resources, and the East Fork Parachute Creek stream corridor, which contains Colorado River Cutthroat Trout in addition to other Outstandingly Remarkable Values. DEIS at 3-217—218.

Portions of the East Fork unit overlap with the BBC retained leases on the top of the Plateau. However, the 2014 Settlement stipulates where development, including well pads and access, will occur on those leases. Only one of the new pads would potentially overlap with the LWC unit, on the boundary of the unit with private land. Access to that unit would not occur in or through the LWC unit. 2014 Settlement at Exhibit 2A. Therefore, BLM could easily exclude the proposed well pad site from the LWC unit; the East Fork unit would still meet the size criterion and be manageable for wilderness characteristics without impacting the leaseholder's ability to develop the leases consistent with the 2014 Settlement.

The Southeast Cliffs and Northeast Cliffs LWC units also contain highly valuable wilderness resources that should be protected through management to protect those values. The rugged terrain of these areas provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. They also are both regionally significant for their scenic qualities, which are prominent along the I-70 corridor. Protection also can be done in a manner consistent with the Settlement Agreement. For example, much of the Northeast Cliffs LWC unit would be closed to new leasing under the Settlement Alternative. Compare DEIS Map 11 (Alternative IV oil and gas surface management) with DEIS Map 35 (lands with wilderness characteristics).

All three of the inventoried LWC units combined comprise just under 20,000 acres of the 73,603-acre planning area. Managing all inventoried LWC would appropriately balance conservation with other uses across the planning area and comply with FLPMA's multiple use and sustained yield mandate.

To better fulfill its multiple-use mission, BLM must adopt meaningful protections for wilderness resources. Manual 6320 directs that "an alternative that protects lands with

0036-4 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
 Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMPA/SEIS, presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment. This alternative is carried forward as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0036-4 Management and protection of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise portions of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

0036-5 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
 Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMPA/SEIS, presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment. This alternative is carried forward as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Management and protection of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise portions of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

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wilderness characteristics must contain management actions to achieve protection.” Manual 6320 at § .06(A)(2)(d). The manual provides examples of land use plan decisions that could protect wilderness characteristics, including: recommend withdrawal from mineral entry; close to leasing or NSO with no exceptions, waivers or modifications; right-of-way exclusion; close to construction of new roads; close or limit motorized and/or mechanized use; designate as VRM I or II; among others. The management prescriptions outlined in Appendix F of the DEIS are appropriate to protect wilderness characteristics, and we encourage BLM to carry those through to the final RMP amendment.⁴ It is particularly important that LWC are closed to new leasing. DEIS at F-4. For the East Fork LWC unit, BLM should state that the area is closed to new leasing outside of the retained BBC leases to provide clarity and consistency with the 2014 Settlement.

Lastly, we appreciate BLM’s commitment to continue updating LWC inventory information for the Southeast Cliffs and NOSR Production Area inventory units. We look forward to seeing additional information and updated inventories, particularly for the Southeast Cliffs unit.

B. Management Prescriptions In Areas Of Critical Environmental Concern Must Be Clarified.

We support BLM’s identification of many relevant and important values in the Roan Plateau planning area that merit special management through Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation. However, BLM’s proposed management approach for ACECs in the DEIS, while protective of the relevant and important values identified in each ACEC, would likely be difficult for the agency to administer and difficult for the public and operators to understand. BLM should consider how best to clarify ACEC management while providing necessary protections for identified resources.

The DEIS does not apply management prescriptions to entire ACECs; rather, it applies management actions to specific resources within ACECs. ACEC designations do not in and of themselves carry any management prescriptions. DEIS at 2-91. For example, NSO stipulations would be applied to lands over 30 percent slopes which are within 5 miles of, and visible from, 1-70 to protect scenic resources within the Anvil Points and Maggie Gulch ACECs. NSO stipulations would be applied to high and moderate risk habitat areas for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout in the East Fork Parachute Creek and Trapper/Northwater Creek ACECs. DEIS at Table 2.2.

⁴ As noted in the DEIS, BLM is evaluating management of LWC because, “[c]onsistent with BLM policy the Draft RMPA/SEIS does not consider the designation of new Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) or the classification or management of BLM lands as if they are, or may become, WSAs.” DEIS at 1- 8. We maintain that this policy is not valid and should not be maintained, but are focusing our comments on the range of alternatives BLM is considering in this DEIS and appreciate BLM’s identification of LWC and evaluation of needed protections.

0036-6 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
 Management prescriptions in Appendix F of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS were evaluated in Alternative III, in Section 4.5.8.3. Appendix F is consistent with BLM Manual 6320, Considering Lands With Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process. Impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics from application of Alternative IV were considered in Section 4.5.8.4, including beneficial impacts to the East Fork Parachute Creek unit from the oil and gas management decisions.

As stated in Chapter 2, Table 2.1, line 4, the BLM surface area closed to leasing is listed for each alternative.

While this approach is a logical way to target relevant and important values in ACECs, it creates a complex mosaic of management prescriptions that can be difficult to understand. The maps included in the DEIS include maps of the ACECs, maps of stipulations, resource maps, and other relevant information, but are not combined to show exactly how management would be applied across each ACEC. At a minimum, BLM should provide more detailed and informative maps specific to management actions for each ACEC.

BLM should also consider whether it makes more sense to apply management prescriptions to full ACECs, which is standard practice for ACEC management. This approach may require adjusting ACEC boundaries, designating more but differently delineated ACECs, and/or including special exceptions for the retained leases within designated ACECs to comply with the 2014 Settlement. There are logical and compelling reasons for the agency to ascribe management prescriptions to full ACECs rather than specific resources within ACECs, including that: resources migrate; it can be difficult and resource-intensive to maintain site-specific resource data on an ongoing basis; and it is simpler and more transparent for the public and public lands users to understand management actions applied across a delineated polygon. BLM should consider changing the management approach for ACECs in this RMP amendment to its typical method.

Whichever approach BLM ultimately adopts for designating and managing ACECs in the Roan Plateau planning area, it is critical that management objectives and actions are clearly communicated and mapped in the EIS so that the public and operators understand decisions being made and the agency is able to appropriately administer the ACECs and implement the RMP amendment.

III. Additional Protection For Special Status Plant Species And Significant Plant Communities Should Be Incorporated Into The Final Plan.

The Roan Plateau harbors a wealth of rare and narrowly endemic plant species. The DEIS lists two federally-listed threatened plants (DeBeque Phacelia and Parachute Penstemon), seven current or former BLM sensitive plant species, and nine significant plant communities in the Planning Area, such as the DeBeque Milkvetch, Hanging Garden Sullivantia, and several forest communities. DEIS at 3-90 to 92. Some of these plants are exceedingly rare both globally and in Colorado; in some instances the Roan hosts the majority of all known occurrences. *Id.* (Colorado Natural Heritage Program rank); *see also* Colorado Natural Heritage Program. 1997+ Colorado Rare Plant Guide. www.cnhp.colostate.edu. Latest update: June 30, 2014. Additionally, several rare natural communities are found on the Plateau which sustain water resources and provide habitat for rare animal species, such as Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Motorized travel and recreation on the Plateau will have adverse impacts on these special status plants and significant plant communities. To help minimize those impacts, we recommend providing an additional layer of protection for these plants by managing some of their locations for preservation of wilderness character. Doing so should help minimize or avoid dust and disturbance from roads and off-road motorized traffic.

0036-7 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
 The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS details proposed management prescriptions for ACECs in Chapter 2, Table 2.2.

0036-7 0036-8 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
 The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS details proposed management prescriptions for ACECs in Chapter 2, Table 2.2.

0036-9 T&E Species
 Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate species, as well as BLM special status species, are protected by an NGD/NSO for occupied and Critical Habitat, and an SSR/CSU for sensitive plant species populations and significant plant communities. Impacts are described in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3. Management of LWCs is analyzed in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.8.

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For example, a number of special status plants, as well as critical habitat for the Parachute Penstemon, are located in the East Fork and Southeast Cliff LWC Units. *Compare* DEIS Map 23 (Special status plants and significant plant communities) with DEIS Map 35 (Lands with wilderness characteristics); *see also* March 29, 2013 Conservation Groups' Scoping Comments for Roan Plateau SEIS Map 5 (map depicting Parachute Penstemon critical habitat). In addition, Old growth Douglas Fir is found in the Northeast Cliffs LWC unit. DEIS Maps 23, 35. Managing these areas to preserve wilderness characteristics will have the co-benefit of protecting soil and hydrologic processes from degradation that inevitably results from motorized recreational use and associated roads.

As noted above, management for LWC characteristics can be done consistent with the Settlement Agreement. For example, the surface locations stipulated in the Settlement Agreement for development of the two Retained Leases atop the Plateau avoid Parachute Penstemon critical habitat. Compare March 29, 2013 Conservation Group Scoping Comments Map 5 with Settlement Agreement Ex. 2A (DEIS Appendix K). Thus, protection of this habitat should not interfere with development contemplated under the 2014 Settlement. Moreover, much of the Northeast Cliffs LWC unit would be closed to new leasing under the Settlement Alternative. Compare DEIS Maps 11, 35. Managing these lands for protection of their wilderness character will not conflict with the Settlement Alternative.

IV. The DEIS Substantially Understates The Amount Of Air Pollution Under Alternative 2 And The Other Alternatives.

Attached please find comments discussing the DEIS's air quality analysis. The issues raised in the attachment should be addressed and corrected.

V. Rivers Eligible For Protection Under The Wild And Scenic Rivers Act Should Be Found Suitable For Designation And Protectively Managed.

In total, eight streams on the Roan Plateau have been found to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). Eligible rivers, as outlined in the Wild and Scenic River Act, are those that possess at least one "outstandingly remarkable value" (ORV). A river related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale. BLM Manual 6400 at § 3.1.D.1. The segments found eligible on the Roan Plateau are streams that are of critical conservation value for not only the Colorado River Valley Field Office, but also the state of Colorado and the nation. Rivers recognized as eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS represent some of the most socially and ecologically important river systems in the nation. BLM should fully recognize the weight of these conclusions when making determinations on suitability. Recognizing these rivers as suitable can be done in the final RMP amendment without causing any inconsistency with the Settlement Agreement.

Through BLM's eligibility findings, the agency has formally acknowledged that those segments possess outstandingly remarkable values. In the RMP amendment, BLM must ensure protection of those ORVs, either through suitability determinations (and attendant BLM management) or other means such as alternative conservation designations with appropriate management prescriptions. BLM WSR Manual 6400 identifies suitability criteria factors upon which the agency should base suitability determinations. One of these factors is the ability of the agency to manage and/or protect the river area or segment as a Wild & Scenic River, or other mechanisms (existing and potential) to protect identified values other than WSR designation.

For many of the segments BLM determines are eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, appropriate protection should be provided under a formal finding of suitability for designation under the 1968 Act. In others, clear, reliable and enduring management prescriptions may be more appropriate. This could be accomplished through other designations and/or allocations in the RMP amendment that are within the range of alternatives, such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, or management prescriptions specific to river and stream corridors such as closures to energy development and rights-of-way. All of the eligible segments are within ACECs and/or LWCs considered in the range of alternatives: East Middle Fork Parachute Creek, Trapper Creek and Northwater Creek overlap with the Trapper/Northwater Creek ACEC. East Fork Parachute Creek, First Anvil Creek, Second Anvil Creek, Golden Castle Creek and JQS Gulch overlap with the East Fork ACEC and the East Fork LWC. See DEIS Map 9. We can support BLM utilizing other mechanisms to protect identified values where appropriate, provided that such mechanisms specifically conserve ORVs.

Protective management for the eligible stream segments included in the East Middle Fork Parachute Creek Complex warrant specific, extensive, and reliable stipulations to protect the present populations of native Colorado River cutthroat trout and associated habitat by prohibiting all surface-disturbing activities, all siltation and unnatural run-off, and all stream impoundments and diversions, and by maintaining existing healthy populations and communities of native riparian vegetation (restricting presence or spread of non-native invasive plants). In addition, scenic values at East Fork Falls, at hanging garden seeps on East Fork, and in all associated landscapes must be protected. Managing the East Fork LWC unit for protection of its wilderness characteristics could also protect the outstandingly remarkable values of the stream corridor.

VI. Mandatory Practices Should Be Required to Preserve Habitat At The Base of The Plateau.

The Conservation Groups support the comments filed by National Wildlife Federation on the DEIS. In particular, BLM should state unequivocally in the final RMPA that as part of the Master Development Plans (MDPs) required by the Settlement Agreement, BLM will consult with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife before approving any activity impacting wildlife resources and that Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitat will be a required component of any MDPs and all leases and permits. In doing so, BLM must recognize that Timing Limitations (TLs) are insufficient to protect and conserve these vital habitats. Instead, conservation measures should focus on more effective

0036-10 Wild and Scenic Rivers
Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMPA/SEIS, presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment. This alternative is carried-forward as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0036-11 Management and protection of stream reaches eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise the eligible stream reaches.

0036-12 0036-11 Wild and Scenic Rivers
Management and protection of stream reaches eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise the eligible stream reaches.

0036-12 0036-14 0036-15 Wild and Scenic Rivers
Management and protection of stream reaches eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act were fully considered within in the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that comprise the eligible stream reaches.

0036-13 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Proposed Plan includes direct protections to Parachute Creek and the Colorado Cutthroat Trout from an NGD/NSO for fish habitat and an SSR/CSU for the Parachute Creek Watershed Management Area (Chapter 2, Table 2.1). Indirect protections are also provided by management prescriptions for botanical/ecological resources in the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and through overlapping surface-use restrictions including plant habitat and the sensitive plants and significant plant communities' stipulations.

0036-14 Biological Resources

The Proposed Plan includes direct protections to the scenic values at East Fork Falls from an NGD/NSO for the East Fork Falls. Indirect protections are also provided by management prescriptions for botanical/ecological resources in the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and through overlapping surface-use restrictions including plant habitat and the sensitive plants and significant plant communities' stipulations.

0036-15 Biological Resources

Appendix K in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS contains the full Settlement Agreement. Exhibit 2, Section E, of this document states: *Prior to submitting the MDP, the operator shall consult with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and BLM to develop terms that minimize impacts to wildlife and other resources. Agreed-upon terms shall be included in the operator's proposed MDP.*

Under the proposed RMPA, the stipulation that includes this language will be applied to the retained base leases. Additionally, BLM has discretion to include additional resource-protection requirements as conditions of approval of MDPs and APDs.

methods of reducing impacts – particularly limiting the density of development sites and roads, as well as limiting vehicle traffic.

VII. The DEIS Does Not Fairly And Accurately Analyze Alternative 3.

In its June 2012 decision, the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado set aside the previous RMP for the Planning Area because (among other grounds) BLM had failed to analyze in detail the “Community Alternative” that several of the Conservation Groups, local governments, and members of the public had recommended. DEIS at 1-8. Accordingly, BLM is analyzing the Community Alternative as DEIS Alternative 3.⁵ We appreciate BLM’s consideration of that option. But the DEIS analysis of Alternative 3 is flawed in several respects and does not give it fair consideration for purposes of a possible management plan.

In particular, the DEIS paints a negative (and inaccurate) picture of Alternative 3 as compared to Alternative 2 – both with regard to reasonably foreseeable oil and gas development, and environmental impacts. First, the DEIS does not accurately describe the level of oil and gas development that is reasonably foreseeable atop the Plateau under Alternative 3. While Alternative 3 allows the entire area above the Plateau rim to be leased subject to NSO stipulations, the DEIS treats this alternative as being tantamount to precluding any leasing and development on those lands. The DEIS predicts that only two well pads (and 40 wells) would be developed atop the Plateau under Alternative 3. DEIS at Table ES-2; *see also* DEIS at 4-288. That is the same number of pads – and even fewer wells – that are predicted under the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1). *Id.* at Table ES-2 (predicting 43 wells drilled on two pads under Alternative 1, and 40 wells on two pads under Alternative 3).⁶

The DEIS greatly exaggerates the limit on oil and gas development represented by Alternative 3. It is not realistic to assume that imposing NSO stipulations on the top of the Plateau will preclude any development of those leases. As discussed in the Conservation Groups’ March 2013 scoping comments, directional and horizontal drilling technologies currently being used in the Piceance Basin (and likely to be further developed over the 20-year life of the RMP) would allow much of the minerals to be recovered from private lands at the west, southwest, and northern boundaries. *See* March 29, 2013 Conservation Group Scoping Comments at 5-8 and attached maps and appendix. The DEIS’s prediction of virtually no federal development under Alternative 3 appears to ignore this technology.

⁵ The other two issues identified by the district court related to air pollution: (a) the “cumulative air impacts of the RMPA decision in conjunction with anticipated oil and gas development on private lands outside the Planning Area,” and (b) “[p]otential ozone impacts from proposed oil and gas development.” DEIS at 1-8. These two issues are discussed in the attachment to this letter.

⁶ The DEIS accurately forecasts the level of development atop the Plateau under Alternative 4: as allowed under the Settlement Agreement, the DEIS anticipates seven well pads atop the Plateau. DEIS at ES-8.

0036-16 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 Section 4.5.5.4 clearly states BLM’s assumptions for this analysis based on the Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Roan Plateau Planning Area, in Appendix G. As the RFD states, lateral reaches in the northern Parachute field area can approach 4,877 feet. However, lateral reach is dependent on geology and reservoir characteristics, and most of the directional drilling within the CRVFO and Roan Plateau area has a lateral reach around 2,500 feet. The lateral reach constrains the amount of oil and gas that can be recovered.

Other passages in the DEIS, in fact, recognize that federal minerals can be developed from the adjacent private lands. For example, the discussion of wildlife impacts from Alternative 3 “assume[s] this [alternative] would result in oil and gas development for leases above the rim to be conducted on adjacent private lands.” DEIS at 4-140. In addition, the reasonably foreseeable development analysis (RFD) assumes that central facilities necessary for development of federal leases “are expected to be developed on private land,” DEIS Appx. G at 34, 36, thus confirming that operators can and will coordinate development of private and federal acreage. That coordination will make development of federal minerals reasonably foreseeable under Alternative 3.

Instead of assuming that Alternative 3 precludes development of federal minerals atop the Plateau, the EIS should analyze the oil and gas recoverable from surface locations on private lands above the rim at the perimeter of the federal NSO leases, using directional or horizontal wellbores extending at least two miles across the NSO leases.⁷ That analysis also should consider which lands at the base are close enough to allow similar development of federal leases above the rim.

Moreover, the DEIS discussion of the extent to which private surface would be used under Alternative 3 to develop federal minerals above the rim is inadequate for a meaningful comparison between the environmental impacts of that approach and the impacts from Alternative 2. In one brief paragraph, the DEIS concludes that under Alternative 3, development of leases above the rim from adjacent private lands “could have a deleterious impact on terrestrial and aquatic habitat by potentially severing access to home ranges and hindering seasonal movement patterns.” DEIS at 4-140. But the DEIS never discusses how likely such access is to be severed, or whether surface facilities could be located to avoid such an impact. Nor does the DEIS compare the impacts of leaving the federal surface acreage atop the Plateau intact (Alternative 3) with the impacts from Alternative 2, which would fragment the top of the Plateau with more than 1,000 wells and 53 well pads spread across the top of the Plateau.

The DEIS comparison of Alternatives 2 and 3 is flawed in other ways as well. For example, the discussion of impacts to wildlife habitat appears self-contradictory. The DEIS predicts that Alternatives 2 and 3 will have essentially the same level of adverse impacts to big game summer range (as well as habitat for several other species). Compare DEIS Table 4.3.5 (Alternative 2) with *id.* Table 4.3.7 (Alternative 3). This appears to conflict with the DEIS estimates of effective habitat loss: it predicts a 37 percent loss of big game summer range for Alternative 2, versus only 2.5 percent for Alternative 3. DEIS Tables 4.3.4, 4.3.6.

⁷ And as discussed in our March 29, 2013 scoping comments, a full and accurate comparison between Alternatives 3 and 2 requires getting much more information about the directional and horizontal drilling that is occurring in the Piceance and that will be technically feasible. Limiting the scope of NSO stipulations based on self-serving comments from operators claiming that they cannot drill any farther using horizontal or directional wells is inadequate.

0036-17 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 Alternative III does not preclude development of Federal minerals atop the plateau; rather it anticipates, based on the RFD in Appendix G, that Federal minerals can be developed from the private surface at the edges of NOSRs. As the RFD states, lateral reaches in the northern Parachute field area, can approach 4,877 feet. However, lateral reach is dependent on geology and reservoir characteristics, and most of the directional drilling within the CRVFO and Roan Plateau area has a lateral reach around 2,500 feet. The lateral reach constrains the amount of oil and gas that can be recovered.

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0036-18 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 The availability of private lands for oil and gas development above the rim under Alternative III would be subject to negotiation between Federal minerals leaseholders and private surface owners. The impacts analysis presented in Section 4.5.5.4 assumes successful completion of negotiations for development of two well pads and 40 wells above the rim on private surface at the perimeter of BLM land under NOSRs. Potential locations for these hypothetical well pads under Alternative III were estimated using a GIS analysis with an assumed lateral directional drilling reach of 2,500 feet in areas with slopes of less than 20 percent (this has been noted in Sections 2.3.3 and 4.5.5.4, as it already was in Section 4.5.5.3). Impacts to resources on private surface as discussed throughout Chapter 4, both in terms of potential indirect impacts to resources on Federal surface within the Planning Area, as well as in *Offsite and Cumulative Impacts* sections are included in the discussion of impacts to each resource. The potential for adverse offsite impacts to various resources is discussed, as applicable, in these sections.

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0036-19 Biological Resources
 As discussed in Section 4.1.3, in order to reduce the necessarily complex impact analysis process to readily understandable terms, a qualitative approach for summarizing impacts to specific resources, management actions, and uses is employed throughout the FSEIS. Qualitative terms specific to wildlife impacts are further explained in Section 4.3.2.1, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Introduction.

Impact summary tables, such as the cited Table 4.3.5 and Table 4.3.9 were developed to summarize all estimated direct, indirect, adverse, beneficial, and cumulative impacts to

terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. Elk/Mule Deer habitat loss, estimated in Tables 4.3.4 and 4.3.8, is a part of this summary analysis, but not the entirety. The difference in Elk/Mule Deer summer habitat loss has been analyzed as part of the summary analysis; however, additional direct, indirect, adverse, and cumulative impacts, incorporating additional species, are also analyzed, thus resulting in the "moderate" categorization for both Alternatives II and IV.

If BLM chooses to depart from the Settlement Alternative, the EIS must be revised to provide a fair and accurate discussion of Alternative 3, so that BLM and the public can meaningfully compare that approach with Alternatives 2 and 1.

VIII. The DEIS Understates The Amount Of Drilling That Is Reasonably Foreseeable Under Alternative 2.

The DEIS also underestimates the reasonably foreseeable number of wells to be drilled (and thus the adverse environmental impacts) under Alternative 2.

As an initial matter, a comparison of the DEIS with the reasonably foreseeable development scenario (RFD) shows that Alternative 2 imposes essentially no constraint on the level of drilling in the Planning Area. The RFD estimates the amount of drilling expected "under the assumption that all potential productive areas [except for those the BLM may not legally lease] are open for oil and gas leasing and developed under standard lease conditions," unconstrained by any protective stipulations or other limits. DEIS Appx G at 33. BLM's RFD estimates that under those assumptions, 1,070 wells could be drilled on federal lands above the rim during the life of the RMP, and 2,450 wells would be drilled below the rim over the same period. *Id.*

Almost exactly the same outcome is anticipated under Alternative 2: 1,067 wells are predicted atop the Plateau, and 2,445 wells below the rim, over the course of the 20-year RMP. DEIS at ES-8. In other words, Alternative 2 will allow virtually the same level of drilling (3,512 wells) as if no constraints were placed on the leases at all (3,520 wells). This illustrates what the Conservation Groups and many other members of the public have long argued: that Alternative 2 is grossly inadequate to protect the unique resources on the Roan.⁸

Moreover, these estimates substantially understate the reasonably foreseeable level of drilling that would occur under Alternative 2. The RFD, and the DEIS, only consider the first twenty years of development. DEIS Appx G at 31 (RFD covers wells spud from 2016-2035); DEIS at ES-8 (DEIS Alternative 2). Drilling authorized by the leases, however, is very unlikely to end after only twenty years. On the contrary, because Alternative 2 requires unitizing all leases atop the Plateau, the leases there are likely to remain in effect for decades longer because wells will be producing on at least some of the leases for a period well beyond 20 years.

For example, the DEIS's Alternative 2 prediction of 1,067 wells atop the Plateau contrasts starkly with Bill Barrett Corporation's 2009 statements that it was likely to drill over 3,000 wells on those same lands (under essentially the same management plan as Alternative 2). The 1,067-well estimate also conflicts with the DEIS's premise that wells atop the Plateau will be drilled with ten-acre downhole spacing. DEIS at 4-286. With ten-acre spacing, more than

0036-20 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) is produced as a planning document. It provides the interdisciplinary planning team with an estimate of the oil and gas development activities that are reasonably likely to occur on BLM-administered lands within the Roan Plateau Planning Area over the next 20 years. Per BLM guidance, 20 years is a standard and accepted horizon over which to develop an RFD for the life of a plan in order to avoid speculation beyond that foreseeable period. As such, it is neither a cap, nor limitation to the number of wells that can be developed within the Planning Area. The RFD follows BLM guidance found in Handbook-1624-1 - PLANNING FOR FLUID MINERAL RESOURCES. The following is from Section 4.1.1.1 in the Draft RMPA/SEIS and Proposed Plan/Final SEIS: "The RFD is intended as a technical and scientific approximation of anticipated levels of oil and gas development during the planning timeframe. As such, the RFD and the planning process, of which it is a part, are not intended to define the specific numbers and locations of wells and pads needed to develop the oil and gas resource. Instead, they are intended to allow flexibility during resource development while providing sufficient specificity to support the impact analysis and alternative selection processes."

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⁸ Given the equivalence between the RFD and Alternative 2, we also do not understand how the DEIS can conclude that the effect of Alternative 2 on oil and gas development will be "moderate and adverse." DEIS at 4-287.

3,000 wells will be necessary to fully develop 30,000-plus acres atop the Plateau under Alternative 2.⁹

Even applying the methodology used by BLM, the DEIS substantially underestimates the reasonably foreseeable level of drilling. BLM's RFD is based on an estimate of the relationship between the number of wells drilled in the Planning Area (both above and below the rim) and the spot price for natural gas. DEIS Appx G at 29-31. BLM then used the United States Energy Information Agency's (EIA) predicted prices for the next 20 years to estimate the reasonably foreseeable development in the Planning Area during that period. Based on EIA's prediction of future natural gas prices, BLM anticipates an average of 190 wells per year drilled below the rim, and 85 wells per year above the rim, assuming an average natural gas price of \$4.89/MMBTU between 2016-2035. *Id.* at 21, 29-31. The DEIS uses this figure to estimate the number of wells to be drilled by 2035.

But EIA's price forecast does not end at 2035. Rather, it extends another five years – through the year 2040. *Id.* at 21. In fact, the RFD analysis itself charts future wells out to 2040. *Id.* at 31 (Figure 19 estimating the potential number of wells spud in the Planning Area based on the price of natural gas through 2040). That additional five years makes a very substantial difference, because the price of natural gas between 2035-2040 is predicted to be much higher than the average from the preceding 20 years. *Id.* at 21, 29-30 (price averaging about \$7/MMBTU (\$6-\$8/MMBTU) from 2035-2040, compared to \$4.89/MMBTU from 2016-2035). According to RFD Figure 19, approximately an additional 1,462 wells will be drilled on federal lands between 2035-2040 – increasing the total number of federal wells in the Planning Area by more than 41 percent.¹⁰ In other words, the RFD itself shows that by cutting off its analysis at 20 years, BLM has omitted nearly one-third of the reasonably foreseeable development in the Planning Area.

These additional wells need to be included to accurately estimate the reasonably foreseeable development – and the impacts from that drilling – under Alternative 2.¹¹ Otherwise,

⁹ In estimating the impacts of Alternative 2, the DEIS assumes that no surface facilities will be developed on lands subject to NSO/NGD restrictions. DEIS at 4-9 n. 1. We do not object to this assumption, but it means that waivers, exceptions of modifications of NSO stipulations will require supplemental NEPA analysis.

¹⁰ For the years 2035-2040, Figure 19 shows a nearly straight-line increase in annual well spuds from 400-500 per year. Using an average of 450 wells per year for those five years totals 2,250 wells spud during 2035-2040. DEIS Appx G at 31. Table 3 of the RFD (DEIS Appx G at 31) indicates that 64-65 percent of the Planning Area acreage represents federal minerals. Multiplying 2,250 by 0.65 equals 1,462.5 federal wells spud between 2035-2040. Those 1,462 wells represent 41.5 percent of the 3,520 federal wells predicted to be drilled during the previous 20 years (from 2016-2035). *Id.*

¹¹ In addition, Table 4.1.2 (DEIS at 4-8) overstates the likely development at the base under Alternative 4 compared to Alternative 2. This table states that there is more acreage available below the rim for surface facilities under the Settlement Alternative (Alternative 4) than under Alternative 2. DEIS at 4-8. This appears to be a mistake, because a significant portion of the

the DEIS will make it impossible to accurately compare Alternative 2 with other options (esp. Alternative 3) that are more protective of the Plateau.

IX. Target Shooting In The Hubbard Mesa Area Should Be Managed To Protect Public Safety.

The DEIS contemplates restrictions on target shooting in the vicinity of the Hubbard Mesa OHV area to protect public safety. Alternative 3 would prohibit recreational target shooting within ¼ miles of developed recreation sites and the centerline of Fravert Access Road, Township 6 South, Range 93 West to the Hubbard Mesa Trailhead in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area, a restricted area comprising 610 acres. DEIS at 2-60. The DEIS states that there have been concerns and complaints from visitors and neighbors due to unsafe and indiscriminate shooting. DEIS at 3-191.

Target shooting should be subject to the same standards and restrictions as those applied to recreational travel, hunting, camping, etc. when weighing its impact on cultural and biological resources, as well as to other public lands uses and visitor safety. BLM should conduct a public safety analysis to determine the appropriate restrictions for target shooting. For example, in developing the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP, BLM conducted a GIS-based analysis of safety zones for recreational target shooting, mathematically determining Surface Danger Zones. That analysis was used to determine areas that should be closed to target shooting to protect public safety and paleontological resources. Prehistoric Trackways National Monument Final EIS at 2-4 and Appendix G.¹²

BLM should also consider whether seasonal restrictions, such as during times of high recreation use, would achieve public safety objectives. Regardless of how BLM ultimately decides to manage target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa area, the RMP amendment should describe how any restrictions will be implemented and commit to dedicating necessary resources such as enforcement.

X. Management Of Greater Sage-Grouse Should Reflect Current BLM Plans And Policy.

The DEIS references and incorporates the Proposed Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) and EIS (NWCOGSG FEIS) stating: "Data and management actions from the Proposed LUPA/Final EIS are incorporated into this Draft RMPA/SEIS." DEIS at 1-9. However, the Record of Decision and Approved LUPA were issued on September 21, 2015, approximately two months before publication of the DEIS and there

base is not available for leasing under Alternative 4: some of the leases canceled under the settlement encompassed acreage below the rim of the Plateau. Those lands will be closed to new leasing under Alternative 4. See DEIS at Map 11.

¹² Available at:

http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office/trackways_rmp.html.

0036-21 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The on-going management process could include a public safety analysis similar to the one suggested.

0036-22 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additional measures to minimize user conflicts could be considered as part of this on-going management process. BLM does not designate trails or areas for particular uses in open OHV areas.

The Hubbard Mesa TMA delineation (same boundary as the Hubbard Mesa OHV Riding Area) allows muscle-powered travel and mechanized (wheeled conveyance) travel cross-country year-round consistent with the "open" OHV designation for motorized travel. All TMA delineations are subject to additional restrictions (i.e., seasonal, area, type, and number) set forth in the ROD or in subsequent travel planning.

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were changes to the plan. BLM should not only reference the data and management from the final documents, but ensure that the decisions in the Roan EIS are consistent with those provisions across all activities managed by this plan amendment, including incorporating mitigation and adaptive management processes set out in the ROD and Approved LUPA.

Further, as stated in the DEIS: "The goals for greater sage-grouse include efforts to conserve, enhance, and restore the sagebrush ecosystem upon which sage-grouse populations depend in an effort to maintain or increase their abundance and distribution, in cooperation with other conservation partners." DEIS at 4-165. The DEIS generally acknowledges the benefit and harm to special status species from different aspects of the alternatives as minor, moderate or major *See* DEIS at 4-177 (Table 4.3.12). However, the DEIS does not include a specific discussion of the benefits of reducing development and disturbance or of increasing conservation, such as designating ACECs and managing lands with wilderness characteristics, for greater sage-grouse. Consistent with the goals of the DEIS, the final EIS should discuss these benefits in detail and consider how management actions support conserving, enhancing and restoring the sagebrush ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. The Conservation Groups support the DEIS's Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4), which would adopt the Settlement Alternative as defined in the 2014 Settlement. We also suggest incorporating some elements of Alternative 3, such as management for LWCs, into the final RMP for the Planning Area. These elements can be included in a manner consistent with the Settlement Alternative, and will provide important additional resource protections.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can provide additional clarification or answer any questions.

Sincerely,



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 Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources
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0036-23 Special Status Species

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is consistent with the greater sage-grouse Record of Decision and Approved LUPA.

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0036-24 Opinion - Alternatives

Alternative IV presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0036-24

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ATTACHMENT A
COMMENTS ON AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS

February 15, 2016

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652
roanplateau@blm.gov

RE: Comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Colorado River Valley Field Office

Dear Roan Plateau RMPA/SEIS Planning Coordinator:

These comments pertain to the November 2015 climate and air quality analysis in the Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, hereinafter DEIS, for the Roan Plateau Planning Area (Planning Area), including Naval Oil Shale Reserves Numbers 1 & 3.

The climate and air quality analyses for the DEIS do not adequately analyze the air quality impacts that could occur as a result of the actions authorized under the Roan Plateau DEIS, therefore, failing to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA). Specifically; 1) the modeling analysis used in the DEIS does not project emissions for most of the 20-year life of the DEIS, rather, the modeling analysis only extends to 2021, 2) the modeling analysis grossly underrepresents the number of new wells in the Planning Area and therefore air pollution emissions are underrepresented, 3) the DEIS does not include a near-field analysis, 4) the cumulative impacts analysis inadequately demonstrates future impacts from planned projects, and 5) the DEIS does not take into account the already elevated ozone levels near the Roan Plateau.

In the Conservation Colorado Education Fund, et al. v. Jewell, et al. settlement agreement (the 2014 Settlement), the Court remanded the SEIS to the BLM to more fully address three items, two of which were air quality issues. The first being that the cumulative air quality impacts needed to be addressed and the second was that an ozone analysis needed to be included as part of the SEIS. Because of the reasons listed above, the BLM has not fulfilled these requirements. In addition, the DEIS does not satisfy the BLM's obligations under NEPA and FLPMA to disclose whether the proposed development will cause CAA violations.

0036-25 Climate and Air Quality

The climate and air quality analysis contained in the DSEIS adequately analyzes the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect impacts that may potentially result from implementing the Proposed Plan. The RMPA itself does not authorize nor predict with certainty the level of actual development that will occur for any given resource or allowable use activities. Rather the RMPA analyzes a range of assumptions to inform decision makers of possible impacts so that they can determine whether or not to make the resources BLM manages available, and under what criteria.

1). From an air quality assessment standpoint there are several reasons that a shorter timeframe is more practical than the full 20 year RFD projection analysis that would be of lesser value to well-informed decision makers. The year 2021 was modeled in CARMMS primarily due to the availability of projected 2021 EPA emissions inventories that were developed for planning purposes (SIP - PM2.5 attainment demonstrations). These inventories were the most comprehensive (i.e., for all source categories) and scientifically defensible available at the time the modeling was conducted. No future inventory exists to describe the cumulative atmosphere in 2036.

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The RMP analysis utilized the assumptions described in the 2014 RFD document (see Appendix G). While the total well counts and the underlying surface disturbance assumptions are appropriate for analyzing most BLM-managed resources (i.e. on the ground impacts), air resources impacts are more directly affected by other variables such as timing, technology, and changes in regulations. Changes in the emissions spectrum resulting from control regulations, standard development practices, and/or dynamic shifts in the economy are not reasonably foreseeable over the lifetime of an RMP. Several changes have already occurred since the development of the CARMMS model such as CDPHE's Methane Rule, EPA's proposed updates to the NSPS OOOO regulations, BLM's draft Venting and Flaring rule, as well as recent changes to the ozone NAAQS. Therefore, it is appropriate to model more frequently over shorter periods of time in order to capture rule changes and variances in the anticipated development (practices or pace) versus trying to model the entire RMP period, which would be too speculative.

2.) The CARMMS model used the linear interpolation of the projected RFD to estimate the annual well counts added within the planning area. Under the highest-development alternative (3,511 new wells over 20 years), there could be an additional

176 wells per year over the 20 year timeframe. At this rate there would be 704 new wells in the planning area by 2021 if development were to start in 2018. The high CARMMS scenario by contrast analyzed 675 new wells by 2021. In the context of the emissions analyzed by CARMMS, the apparent deficiency of 29 wells would not equate to a significant difference in air emissions (see next paragraph). CARMMS is an emission-based assessment for which well counts represent only one variable of analysis (and a minor one at that). BLM has extensive expert technical knowledge that emissions from development can vary significantly in any given area due to the type of wells being developed (vertical vs. directional or horizontal), the target formation characteristics, and operator specific practices. The CARMMS emissions calculators attempt to smooth those inconsistencies out over the broader context of a cumulative analysis by analyzing several different well types and development practices (i.e., many wells), such that the 675 CARMMS wells could provide emissions coverage for 704 actual wells. Nonetheless, the contingency in which the CARMMS emissions estimates are too low is accounted for by BLM CO through the CARPP adaptive management strategy (see SEIS sections 4.2.5.2, 4.2.5.8, pg. 4-347, Appendix J).

The projected emissions associated with the Federal wells analyzed under CARMMS are provided in Table 4.2.16. In order for the RMP analysis to cover any future development authorizations BLM needs to manage projects within the corresponding emissions budgets analyzed under CARMMS. Nothing in the RMP prevents BLM from providing for mitigation of emissions to ensure that emissions are still within the range of impacts analyzed until a new CARMMS model is in place to provide an updated estimate of emissions from future oil and gas development authorizations as necessary.

3.) BLM declined to produce a near-field assessment for the RMP. At this stage of oil and gas resource management, speculating on the required information (location, timing, equipment parameter values, etc.), which is not currently known would not provide useful information to decision makers in this process. However, in accordance with the CARPP BLM will conduct near-field analyses as necessary for future oil and gas projects (actual development) when information needed for an adequate analysis is known.

4.) The cumulative air quality impacts described in the SEIS adequately demonstrate future impacts for the emissions analyzed. Adequate and comprehensive cumulative emissions inventories were included in the CARMMS analysis (see

CARMMS Report): specifically, the U.S. wide cumulative year 2021 emissions inventories (EPA year 2021 projections described above), comprehensive Rocky Mountain Region oil and gas projections to year 2021, the intercontinental boundaries conditions (i.e. impact contributions from overseas countries), and emissions inventories from adjacent countries (Canada and Mexico).

Additionally, the CARPP framework inherently provides for an iterative "plan, do, check, act" approach for assessing air quality impacts at various stages of decision-making and NEPA analysis. The framework includes a project tracking process that allows BLM to provide for adaptive management during future project implementation. Effects to emissions inventories from rule making and significant changes in oil and gas development practices can be captured in future analysis such that the oil and gas context (and subsequent decisions) are well-reasoned and scientifically defensible. The tracking process allows BLM to use the NEPA process to verify our CARMMS assumptions, provide analysis for variances in development, re-evaluate the affected environment, and provide for any mitigation as necessary to meet mission requirements.

5.) Section 3.2.5.3 and Table 3.2.16 set the stage for the impacts analysis by describing existing air quality conditions in the region including recently monitored ozone (and other pollutants) concentrations in and around the Planning Area. The CARMMS analysis uses these baseline ozone monitoring concentrations to calculate a relative response factor (RRF) for the absolute modeling results from the corresponding base year. The RRF provides an adjustment for the absolute results if they are too high or too low to "correct" the predictions in a relative manner (i.e., compare the CARMMS base year results to actual monitored conditions and adjust accordingly to make the data fit, which is a standard practice). Future year absolute results get the same application of the RRF to correct for the over or under predictions. Thus the existing ozone concentrations for the region are not ignored, but rather play a very significant role in estimating future concentrations. As shown in the CARMMS Report, most areas of the Rocky Mountain Region (especially populated-urban areas) are expected to see an overall cumulative decrease in ozone for future years.

I have over 16 years of experience working on air quality issues. Thank you for consideration of my comments. Please include me on the mailing list for any future actions on the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan and EIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy = Copeland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Cindy Copeland
Cindycopeland5@gmail.com
1071 Tantra Park Circle
Boulder, CO 80305

Attachment

0036-26 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

ATTACHMENT

Detailed Air Quality Comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

I. The Modeling Analysis Does Not Cover the 20-Year Span of the DEIS and Does Not Represent Projected Emissions

The Roan Plateau DEIS uses the Colorado Air Resources Modeling Management Study (CARMMS) developed under the Comprehensive Air Resources Protection Protocol (CARPP). CARMMS uses a base-year of 2008 and future-year projections from 2012 to 2021. CARMMS was developed for the BLM to analyze the air quality impacts from oil and gas and mining development in Colorado. Modeling results are given for three development scenarios: high, medium and low. In the DEIS, the BLM explains that, “Emissions from the high, medium, and low CARMMS scenarios are expected to approximate, but not equal, emissions that could occur from future oil and gas developed under the four alternatives.”¹ The high CARMMS scenario is closest to Alternatives II and III from the DEIS while Alternatives I and IV are similar to the CARMMS low development scenario. The development rate is the same for the high and medium scenarios, with the only difference between the scenarios being that the medium scenario includes additional mitigation measures.

Unfortunately, the air quality modeling analysis (CARMMS) is inherently flawed with respect to the Roan Plateau DEIS in that it only extends to year 2021, using a ten-year time period for projections. Given that it’s now 2016, the time period for any “projections” is much shorter. The DEIS states that the RMPA would have an anticipated 20-year life,² therefore, the modeling analysis will only cover the first few years of the RMPA being in place. In other words, by the time this DEIS is finalized there will not be many future years left in the modeling analysis. This is a major problem for the air quality analysis because, with a shortened period of analysis, the BLM is not fulfilling basic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for analyzing the impacts of the projected development in the Planning Area. The DEIS does not satisfy the BLM’s obligations under NEPA and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to disclose whether the proposed development will cause Clean Air Act (CAA) violations because the analysis does not cover the entirety of the RMPA planning period.

Another significant problem in the DEIS is that although the CARMMS high, medium and low development scenarios are supposed to approximate Alternatives I-IV, the well counts used are much lower in the modeling analysis than in any of the DEIS alternatives. This is significant because well counts were used to determine production rates, and therefore projected emissions from the planned development.³ The high and medium

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¹ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-56.

² DEIS, Executive Summary, ES-4.

³ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-56.

development scenarios are the most similar to Alternatives II and III (the development rate is the same for the high and medium scenarios), while the low development scenario approximates Alternatives I and IV. But the number of wells used in CARMMS is much lower than projected for all the Alternatives in the DEIS. CARMMS uses only 675 new Federal wells for the high and medium scenarios and 420 (Table 4.2.8) or 464 (in Table 4.2.15) new Federal wells in the Planning Area for the low development scenario during the 10-year time period.⁴ The number of new wells projected in the DEIS for the Planning Area over the 20-year time period are as follows: 1,610 for Alternative I, 3,511 for Alternative II, 2,231 for Alternative III and 2,475 for Alternative IV.⁵ CARMMS is based on a 10-year time period, through 2021, so it can be assumed that the number of wells would be lower than projected for the 20-year life of the RMPA, but even doubling those numbers (a change from 675 to 1,350 for the high scenario and a change from 420 to 840 for the low scenario) does not result in numbers close to the projections in the DEIS. In fact, this analysis is so far off the projections laid out in the DEIS that it is difficult to take the air quality modeling analysis seriously. This is a significant problem and calls into question the entire air analysis portion of this DEIS. Actual emissions will of course be positively impacted by the state of Colorado's increased requirements for oil and gas development, finalized in 2014 and by EPA's anticipated final methane rule. But, under NEPA requirements, the full projections in the DEIS must be accounted for in the air quality modeling analysis in order to determine whether the planned project will adversely impact air quality in the Planning Area and surrounding areas.

The DEIS presents impacts for all the criteria pollutants, greenhouse gases and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), but the potential impacts are misrepresented because the modeling analysis does not reflect the actual plans in the DEIS. It can be assumed that future levels of all these pollutants would be higher in the Planning Area due to the planned oil and gas development than the CARMMS modeled impacts show. The results of that modeling analysis are not analyzed or critiqued in these comments because model inputs are so far off the planned alternatives in the DEIS that it's assumed the results are highly inaccurate.

II. The DEIS Must Include a Modeling Assessment of Near-Field Impacts

The DEIS does not include a near-field modeling assessment, instead, the BLM explains that, "Near-field impacts resulting from individual oil and gas development projects within the Planning Area will be evaluated via separate project-specific NEPA analyses using BLM guidance and the air quality impact tools developed under CARPP and CARMMS specifically for this purpose."⁶ This is contrary to NEPA requirements and in fact, the BLM's own Land Use Planning Handbook explains that the analysis of alternatives in the draft EIS must,

"... provide adequate information to evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of each alternative in order to determine the best mix

⁴ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-57 and 4-64.

⁵ DEIS, Executive Summary, ES-8.

⁶ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-53.

of potential planning decisions to achieve the identified goals and objectives (the analysis should also specifically address the attainment, or non-attainment, of Land Health Standards expressed as goals). The assumptions and timeframes used for analysis purposes (such as reasonably foreseeable development scenarios) should be documented.”⁷

Even though, at the planning stage, many project-specific development details are not well known it is certainly possible for the BLM to determine projected emissions based on the known requirements for economically and technically feasible development, the specifics of the viable development locations and the proposed scale of development.

Without a near-field dispersion modeling analysis the BLM cannot know if the proposed development in the Planning Area will cause NAAQS exceedances or consume more than the PSD increments allow. Putting off any rigorous analysis until source-specific permits are issued or project-specific EISs are proposed means that the BLM is not fulfilling its obligations under NEPA and FLPMA to consider means to mitigate significant impacts to human health or the environment via this EIS process.

Furthermore, many of the sources associated with the proposed development (*e.g.*, area sources and smaller point sources) may not trigger the need for the operator(s) to obtain a permit from the state that would include a near-field modeling analysis and therefore, the referenced state analysis will not occur for these sources. It is only fair to the public and those with an interest in developing these resources that the BLM establish, up front, what levels of control may be required in order to accommodate the level of increased development in the region being proposed under the DEIS. And, in fact, other Resource Management Plan updates in Colorado have included a much more comprehensive modeling assessment of impacts, including near-field modeling analyses. For example, the final Little Snake RMP included near-field, far-field and cumulative modeling.⁸

In order to comply with 40 CFR 1502.24 (to ensure the professional and scientific integrity of the air quality analysis), the air quality analysis should include a near-field analysis to assess localized air quality impacts. Such an analysis should be performed to assess whether the activities allowed under the DEIS scenarios would comply with the NAAQS and the PSD Class II increments. The inputs for this analysis should include all of the air pollution source categories allowed under the development scenarios of the DEIS. The maximum emission rates from sources over the averaging times of the standard for which compliance is being assessed should be modeled. The modeling analysis should use an EPA approved model and should be based on at least one year of quality-assured, on-site, representative meteorological data or, if no on-site data is available, five years of meteorological data from the closest meteorological station representative of the area. See, *e.g.*, Sections 9.3.a, 9.3.1.2 and 9.3.3.2 of EPA’s Guidelines on Air Quality Models at 40 CFR Part 51, Appendix W. For the NAAQS analysis, appropriate background concentrations reflective of current air quality in the area should be added to the modeling results.

⁷ BLM, “Land Use Planning Handbook,” H-1601-1, March 11, 2005, 22.

⁸ See http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/lsfo/plans/rmp_revision.html

Clearly, the DEIS failed to model the near-field impacts of the proposed development to determine compliance with NAAQS and PSD Class II increments as required by NEPA. The BLM must perform a quantitative assessment of near-field impacts as part of this DEIS. This analysis is necessary for the BLM, and the public, to understand the potential human health effects of the activities associated with the proposed additional development in the region and in order for the agency to comply with federal statutes and regulations.

The EPA has addressed the need for quantitative impact assessments prior to any further [project-specific] planning decisions under NEPA. Specifically, EPA stated that the BLM “has an obligation under NEPA to fully consider the reasonably foreseeable developments including proposed tar sands and oil shale activities that are likely in the next several decades, as well as the expansion of existing oil and gas operations *regardless of whether or not an application for drilling has been submitted to your office.*”⁹ (Emphasis added). This would indicate that the EPA does not support waiting until there are project-specific requests before fully assessing air quality impacts, including those to ambient ozone concentrations. The EPA also explicitly recommended, for the proposed West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan DEIS, that the BLM “prepare a Supplemental Draft EIS that includes modeled demonstrations of both this project and cumulative pollutant emissions sources from other activities in the Uinta Basin demonstrating whether the proposed action will contribute to violations of the ozone NAAQS.”¹⁰

The BLM goes as far as downplaying the potential air quality impacts of the proposed development, stating that,

In general, individual projects will have temporary negative impacts on air quality that will mostly occur during the construction phase...Construction will also produce short-term emissions of criteria, HAP, and GHG pollutants from vehicle and construction equipment exhausts...Emissions will result from vehicle exhausts from the maintenance and process technician visits. Well pads can be expected to produce fugitive emissions of well gas, which contains mostly methane and a minor fraction of VOC. Fugitive emissions may also result from pressure-relief valves and working and breathing losses from any tanks located at the site, as well as any flanges, seals, valves, or other infrastructure connections used at the site. Liquid product load-out operations will also generate fugitive emissions of VOCs and vehicular emissions. Most operations will be subject to some portions of existing pollution control regulations, which would mitigate some or all of the expected fugitive emissions from flashing, load-outs, and leaks. Some control equipment (e.g., flares) will produce emissions of criteria, HAP, and

0036-27 0036-27 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 3 and 4.

⁹ February 8, 2008 letter from Larry Svoboda, EPA region 8, to William Stringer, BLM Vernal Field Office, Re: Draft Modeling Protocol for the Uinta Basin Air Quality Study, p. 1.

¹⁰ February 4, 2008 letter from Larry Svoboda, EPA region 8, to William Stringer, BLM Vernal Field Office, Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for EOG Resources Inc., Chapita Wells-Stagecoach Area Natural Gas Development, CEQ #20070549, p. 3.

GHG emissions via combustion.¹¹

This is not an accurate representation of the ongoing air emissions from oil and gas operations. The amount of emissions, including volatile organic compounds (VOC) and methane are significant even after the construction phase has ended. And while it's true that existing pollution control regulations should result in reduced emissions from these sources, the potential emissions still need to be analyzed and accounted for in the DEIS. Fugitive emissions from leaking equipment are a far more significant problem than the above language conveys. Recent top-down emissions studies using air monitoring equipment in aircraft show that oil and gas emissions are higher than official estimates. One such study conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Denver-Julesburg Basin in Weld County, Colorado concluded that with respect to the state's inventory, VOC emissions were twice as high, methane emissions were three times higher and benzene emissions were seven times higher.¹²

III. The Cumulative Impacts Analysis Falls Short of Demonstrating Projected Impacts for the Entire Life of the DEIS

For the cumulative impacts analysis, the DEIS again relies on CARMMS, which uses 2008 as the base-year and projects emissions from 2012 through 2021. Unfortunately, ending at year 2021 for future year projections, does not cover much of the 20-year life of the DEIS, which is expected to be finalized during 2016. This failure to consider the full cumulative impacts of the planned development violates NEPA requirements:

Cumulative impact is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.¹³

In the CARMMS analysis, the BLM has included projected impacts from planned projects in the region that will have cumulative impacts in and near the Planning Area. This is an improvement over the 2006 Roan Plateau FEIS, but the cumulative impacts must be considered for the life of the DEIS. The BLM must ensure that all potential sources of emissions are included in the source inventory, that maximum impacts are modeled and that any control technology assumptions used in the analysis are made enforceable in the final EIS. The BLM has an obligation under NEPA to fully consider the cumulative impacts of the project.

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Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

There are no planned projects analyzed in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, as this information is not foreseeable, but rather the FSEIS analyzes a range of assumptions.

The CARMMS is a future year modeling analysis platform intended to be updated as required to adequately account for cumulative emissions inventory changes. The CARMMS high scenario, as presented in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS only assumed "on the books" emissions controls as of 2012 (see CARMMS Report). As additional modeling results become available (i.e., CARMMS and see response to comment 0036-25, section 3) to inform future development decisions and determine the necessity for mitigation, BLM will apply analyzed control methodologies as Conditions of Approval.

0036-28

¹¹ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-97.

¹² Pétron, G., et al. (2014), A new look at methane and nonmethane hydrocarbon emissions from oil and natural gas operations in the Colorado Denver Julesburg Basin, J. Geophys. Res. Atmos., 119, 6836–6852, doi:10.1002/2013JD021272.

¹³ 40 CFR §1508.7

IV. The BLM Must Acknowledge and Address the Existing High Ozone Levels Near the Roan Plateau Planning Area and Nearby Class I Areas

The BLM must acknowledge the existing high ozone levels in and near the Planning Area and recognize that high background levels of air pollutants can mean that even if the activities analyzed in the DEIS will result in only minor increases in certain pollutants, the aggregate level of pollution that could result might have significant detrimental effects on human health and the environment (*e.g.*, visibility and ecosystems).

Elevated ozone concentrations have been recorded in recent years at monitors near the Planning Area. The highest 8-hour average values for these monitors are mostly in the 60 parts per billion (ppb) range, but there are several higher values at 70 ppb and above (see Table 1, below). These high values are of particular concern because the 8-hour average ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) was lowered to 70 ppb in December 2015.¹⁴

Table 1. Recent 8-Hr Ozone Air Monitoring Data for Northwest Colorado

Site (County)	Site Number	Year	1st high 8-hr O ₃ (ppb)	4th high 8-hr O ₃ (ppb)
Rifle (Garfield)	08-045-0012	2013	65	62
		2014	62	61
		2015 ¹	70	68
Palisade (Mesa)	08-077-0020	2013	68	66
		2014	64	62
		2015 ¹	70	65
Battlement Mesa (Garfield)	08-045-0019	2013	70	69
		2014	63	61
Glenwood Springs (Garfield)	08-045-0020	2015 ¹	65	64
Silt-Colbran (Mesa)	08-077-0022	2013	68	65
		2014	71	63
Grand Mesa (Mesa)	08-077-0021	2013	64	60
Flattops #3 (Garfield)	08-045-0014	2013	69	67
		2014	73	66
Rangely (Rio Blanco)	08-103-0006	2013	106	91
		2014	66	62

¹Year 2015 data were not yet complete at the time of compilation.

Results from the modeling in CARMMS predict that emissions from development in the Planning Area would have a minimal effect on the 4th highest daily 8-hour modeled ozone exceedances. But, for the reasons explained above, the modeling analysis does not

0036-29 Climate and Air Quality

The context for how existing ozone is accounted for in our analysis is described above (please see response to comment number 0036-25, section 5).

0036-29

As shown in the CARMMS Report, most areas of the Rocky Mountain Region (especially populated-urban areas) are expected to see an overall cumulative decrease in ozone for future years including year 2021. This is also the methodology and impact results for other pollutants / AQRVs analyzed in CARMMS.

The CARMMS cumulative and RPPA source apportionment specific results disclosed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.5.5, see also referenced CARMMS Report) show that impact (ozone, visibility, etc.) contributions for hypothetical future oil and gas development within the Planning Area would be minor compared to applicable analysis thresholds and NAAQS standards. This hypothetical development would be made up of multiple oil and gas "projects," and while project-level impact contribution thresholds are not applicable to the projected cumulative development, they are nonetheless instructive.

Currently, such project-level impact contribution thresholds exist for several AQRVs, but there is not a significant impact contribution threshold for ozone that would allow the BLM to assess whether future oil and gas development for a specific oil and gas project (or, by analogy, oil and gas at the planning level like in this SEIS) would significantly contribute to any projected ozone concentrations within the region. Where these thresholds do exist, the comparisons to project-level impacts are disclosed in the SEIS.

¹⁴ 80 FR 65292

calculate the full amount of potential emissions and therefore, under predicts the impacts. And because the ozone NAAQS were just lowered in December 2015, the DEIS uses 75 ppb as the standard. As Table 1 shows, there are already ozone monitors recording values at or near the new ozone standard of 70 ppb, so any increase in emissions could increase the number of ozone exceedances and possibly lead to NAAQS violations. Additionally, none of the “current year” ozone design values used in CARMMS are from counties in or nearby the Planning Area. Instead, most of the 8-hour design values used for the 2021 cumulative scenario are from the Front Range.¹⁵ Although these values are generally higher than ozone values near the Planning Area, there are closer ozone monitors (Table 1 above) and the data collected from those monitors should be used in order to be representative of air quality in the actual Planning Area.

Background concentrations of ozone in the Planning Area are at or exceed the NAAQS and leave virtually no room for additional growth in emissions. For the BLM to present alternatives in the DEIS that allow for growth in the emissions that contribute to this existing air quality concern is inconsistent with the CAA’s goal to protect human health and the environment. The importance of protecting the air quality for those people who live in the region, most importantly for sensitive populations, including children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions is huge. Exposure to ozone is a serious concern as it can cause or exacerbate respiratory health problems, including shortness of breath, asthma, chest pain and coughing, decreased lung function and even long-term lung damage.¹⁶ According to a report by the National Research Council “short-term exposure to current levels of ozone in many areas is likely to contribute to premature deaths”.¹⁷

There is virtually no room for growth in emissions (namely, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and VOCs) that contribute to these harmful levels of ozone pollution in the Roan Plateau and surrounding areas. Yet, the BLM is contemplating between 1,610 and 3,511 additional wells in the Planning Area. And as explained above, the modeling analysis (CARMMS) severely underrepresents the expected impacts from this development because it; 1) only covers a fraction of the 20-year planning period for the DEIS and, 2) the number of projected wells, and thus the expected emissions used in the modeling are grossly underrepresented. The BLM must rectify these issues with the modeling analysis in order to meet all of its NEPA and FLPMA requirements.

¹⁵ Environ, Colorado Air Resources Modeling Management Study (CARMMS) 2021 Modeling Results for the High, Low and Medium Oil and Gas Development Scenarios, Final, 181-2, table 5-39a, table 5-39b and table 5-39c.

¹⁶ See EPA’s National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulates and Ozone, 62 FR 38,856 (July 18, 1997).

¹⁷ <http://www.nationalacademies.org/morenews/20080422.html>



Our mission is to create and sustain the best possible mountain bike trail system and experience in the Roaring Fork Valley.

February 17, 2016

Mr. Karl Mendonca, Field Manager
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652
via email: roanplateau@blm.gov

CC: Mr. Neil Kornze, BLM Director, via email: director@blm.gov

Re: RFMBA-IMBA's Comments regarding Roan Plateau Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

Dear Mr. Mendonca,

As a representative for the The Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association, a Chapter of IMBA, I am writing to provide public comments for consideration in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) analysis of the Roan Plateau area and Hubbard Mesa OHV area. RFMBA and IMBA are member supported associations dedicated to creating, enhancing, and preserving great places to ride. We applaud and support the advocacy work recently started by the Rifle Area Mountain Bike Organization (RAMBO).

In general, we support the BLM's creation of Alternative IV - Settlement Alternative (Preferred Alternative) for its proposed management of oil and gas leasing and development. However, Alternative III - Community Alternative proposes to prohibit recreational target shooting within specific portions of the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area. RFMBA recommends that the final plan address the intentions of the proposed recreational target shooting prohibitions in order to create a safe environment for all recreational users on Hubbard Mesa.

The specific restrictions on recreational target shooting should be revised from those currently proposed. Restrictions should require that target shooting take place at locations within Hubbard Mesa that provide sufficient natural (cliff or steep slope) backstop. Additionally, line of fire target shooting should not be allowed to cross over the area's roads and trails. As an open travel designated area, the trails in questions may be open to OHV, mechanized, or foot and horse travel, and are not necessarily mapped by the BLM. Self regulation by recreational target shooters will be key to any management decision successes. However, minimal signage (yes/no recreation target shooting) may be appropriate in certain high use shooting and/or trail areas. In general, the higher elevation areas of Hubbard Mesa provide fewer adequate natural backstops; target shooting should be encouraged at lower elevation locations where cliff walls and steep slopes provide opportunity for effective backstops. While safety is our primary concern, effective enforcement regarding littering and abandonment of trash (often used for target shooting) remains an issue in need of a long term solution.

0037-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0037-2 Opinion - Alternatives

BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the Final SEIS. Shooting Sports were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0037-3 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additional measures to minimize user conflicts could be considered as part of this on-going management process. BLM does not designate trails or areas for particular uses in open OHV areas.

0037-1

0037-2

0037-3

Imagine! The best trails on the planet – right outside your door!



Our mission is to create and sustain the best possible mountain bike trail system and experience in the Roaring Fork Valley.

Travel Management Areas / Routes. Map 30 (All Action Alternative Transportation and Travel Management) does not indicate for routes open to Mechanized use. While mountain bikers expect to have access to "Full Sized Vehicle" routes, the recreational experience most riders desire is provided via singletrack trails. Simply put, there may be a number of routes labeled as "Foot and Horse Trail" that should be open to mechanized use. We request that the BLM be open and willing to work with RFMBA, IMBA, and/or RAMBO on revising travel management designations if such routes are identified as high value for mechanized use in the future.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern should not prohibit mechanized use on specified routes, nor limit the ability for BLM to plan, study, approve, and manage for future mechanized use within these designated areas. Mechanized use can be an appropriate, quiet, human powered form of recreation when planned sensitively and managed to limit impacts during critical wildlife seasons.

Appendix F. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. Recreation and Visitor Services Management, Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management. Mechanized use is an appropriate, quiet, human powered form of recreation when planned sensitively and managed to limit impacts during critical wildlife seasons. Language that conflates Motorized use with Mechanized use should be revised to maintain a clear distinction between these use types given the greatly differing impacts of each use type. While mechanized use may not be emphasized on these lands, a de facto prohibition on mechanized use should not be pursued; mountain bikers desire to experience the very same public land wilderness characteristics that are sought by those who choose to hike historic trails, camp in a beautiful setting, rock climb a natural cliff face, explore a cave, fish for trout in a wild stream, hunt big game, trap small animals or collect minerals as a hobby.

Routes / Areas open to Cross Country Snow Travel. Where snowmobiles are allowed, it is appropriate to also allow for Mechanized use by Fat Bikes, which are mountain bikes specifically designed for over-the-snow travel.

Thank you for your time and attention as this process reaches a final conclusion. Please don't hesitate to contact me at (970) 948-3486 if you have any questions or ideas in regards to mountain bike riders' current and future use of Hubbard Mesa and the Roan Plateau.

Sincerely,

Mike Pritchard

RFMBA, Executive Director
IMBA, CO/WY Associate Region Director

0037-4

0037-4 Travel Management

The Roan Plateau across all alternatives is managed as undesignated for recreation management. The area is not managed to emphasize mountain biking and the Roan Plateau Planning Area TMA is limited to designated routes year round, except in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. However, new routes may be considered during implementation of an approved management plan. Any decision on a proposed new route would be based on management actions and allowable uses in the approved land use plan.

0037-5

0037-5 Travel Management

Management prescriptions for ACECs under the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS do not prohibit mechanized use on specified routes. However, new routes and allowable uses may be considered during implementation of the approved plan. Any decision on a proposed new route would be based on management actions and allowable uses for the ACECs identified in the approved land use plan.

0037-6

0037-6 Transportation

It is within BLM's allowable discretion to determine type of motorized and mechanized travel that would be authorized within lands managed for wilderness characteristics, at the implementation level. At that time, a number of best management practices to enhance and protect wilderness characteristics would be applied, as stated in Appendix F of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. These could include making a distinction between types of allowable mechanized and/or motorized vehicles, as well as allowable routes and off-route authorizations/restrictions. This is analyzed for Alternative III of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.8.

0037-7

0037-7 Travel Management

As noted in Chapter 2, "Outside Hubbard Mesa, motorized travel within the Planning Area would be limited to designated routes, except for over-snow travel by snowmobiles when the depth of snow cover is at least 12 inches." BLM's intent in limiting over-snow travel to snowmobiles is to ensure that properly tracked vehicles with the ability to float are used. Other vehicles, such as bicycles, are free to use designated routes during times when snow is on the ground.

Imagine! The best trails on the planet – right outside your door!



Ursa Piceance LLC
1050 17th St., Suite 2400, Denver, CO 80265

February 18, 2016

Via Federal Express and E-Mail (roanplateau@blm.gov)

Attn: ROAN PLATEAU SEIS
c/o Mr. Greg Larson, Project Manager
BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652

Re: Ursa Piceance LLC Comments on Colorado River Valley Field Office Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement - BLM/CO/PL-16/001

Dear Mr. Larson:

Ursa Piceance LLC ("Ursa") appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments on the Colorado River Valley Field Office Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement - BLM/CO/PL-16/001 ("Draft RMPA/SEIS"). 80 Fed. Reg. 72732 (Nov. 20, 2015). Ursa previously submitted Scoping Comments in response to the Bureau of Land Management's ("BLM") January 28, 2013 Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan Amendment for the Roan Plateau and incorporates by reference those prior scoping comments into these comments.

I. Background

On August 14, 2008, BLM held a public lease sale for oil and gas leases in the Roan Plateau Planning Area ("Planning Area"). The leases acquired by Ursa's predecessor-in-interest (Antero Resources Piceance Corporation) are all located on the eastern edge of the Planning Area approaching, and adjacent to, Highway 13.¹ Ursa and its predecessor paid a large sum for the right to develop its leases. This substantial investment has remained stranded for nearly the last eight years as a result of a legal challenge brought by a consortium of environmental organizations led by Colorado Environmental Coalition.

Following nearly four years of litigation, the United States Federal District for Colorado issued a decision upholding most of BLM's 2007/2008 Records of Decision implementing amendments to the resource management plans for the Planning Area and related Environmental Impact Statement (collectively, "2008 Leasing Decision"), but nonetheless vacated the 2008

¹ Ursa's leases in the Planning Area include COC-73064, COC-73065, COC-73067, COC-73068, COC-73069, COC-73070, COC-73071, COC-73072, and COC-73083.

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Leasing Decision and remanded the matter to BLM for additional NEPA review. *Colorado Environmental Coalition v. Salazar*, 875 F.Supp.2d 1233 (D. Colo. 2012), *appeal dismissed sub nom*, No. 12-1322 (10th Cir. Jan. 27, 2015) (“*CEC*”). The court found two aspects of BLM’s air quality analysis to be insufficient (analysis of ozone emissions and cumulative analysis of emissions from wells on private lands outside the Planning Area). The court additionally ruled that BLM had not adequately analyzed the feasibility of the so-called “Community Alternative.” The district court’s decision was appealed by various parties to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Ursa and the other parties to the *CEC* litigation entered into a settlement agreement resolving the litigation in November 2014. In the Settlement Agreement, BLM agreed to examine in detail a “Settlement Alternative” that would, among other things, make the lands at the base of the Plateau contained within Ursa’s Leases “open to oil and gas leasing and development, subject to lease notices, stipulations, and standard lease terms and conditions consistent with those for the Base Leases, except as modified by a new stipulation.” *See* Settlement Agreement at ¶ 5c. The only new stipulation agreed to by Ursa in the Settlement Agreement requires Ursa, prior to exploration and/or lease development, to submit a proposed master development plan (“MDP”) identifying its projected activities. *Id.* at Exhibit 3. Prior to submitting the MDP, Ursa must consult with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and BLM “to develop terms that minimize impacts to wildlife and other resources.” *Id.* Those agreed upon terms will be included in the operator’s MDP. *Id.* Ursa agreed to not challenge a BLM decision adopting the Settlement Alternative and further agreed to not challenge any decision that modified the Leases to include those limited terms agreed to in the Settlement Agreement. *Id.* at ¶ 11. Ursa’s agreement not to challenge is dependent upon BLM fully complying with the Settlement Agreement.

II. Ursa’s Leases Are Valid Existing Rights Which BLM Can Modify Only As Agreed Upon By The Parties In The Settlement Agreement.

BLM’s land management planning process for the Planning Area is governed by the Federal Land Policy Management Act (“FLPMA”), BLM’s organic statute. Pursuant to FLPMA, BLM’s land planning is “subject to valid existing rights.” *See* 43 U.S.C. 1701 note (h). BLM’s implementing regulations and Handbook are consistent with FLPMA in making land management plans subject to valid existing rights. *See* 43 C.F.R. 1610.5-3(b); BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, IIIA.3 at 19 (2005). BLM is required to comply with those statutory, regulatory, and agency directives in preparing the Draft RMPA/SEIS.

The Draft RMPA/SEIS properly acknowledges that oil and gas leases constitute “valid existing rights.” *Id.* at 1-4 (“BLM must ... [r]ecognize valid existing rights, including oil and gas leases”); *see also* 78 Fed. Reg. 5834, 5836 (January 28, 2013). Given that Ursa’s leases are valid existing rights, BLM may not derogate those lease rights through the planning and SEIS process beyond the terms Ursa agreed to in the settlement agreement. *See, e.g., Penroc Oil Corp. et al.*, 84 IBLA 36, 40 (1984) (once BLM “has granted the lease [BLM] may not derogate the rights of the Federal lessee acquired under the Mineral Leasing Act and the lease granted

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thereto"); *Union Oil Co. of California v. Morton*, 512 F.2d 743, 746 (9th Cir. 1975) (oil and gas leases convey to lessees a property interest which is enforceable against the Federal Government).

The Draft RMPA/SEIS is ambiguous with regard to additional stipulations BLM may seek to impose on existing leases. The Draft RMPA/SEIS contains references that correctly indicate BLM does not intend to impose any stipulations on Ursa's leases beyond those agreed to in the settlement agreement. *See* Draft RMPA/SEIS at 2-4 ("Existing stipulations for existing leases oil and gas leases would apply to those leases. New stipulations would apply only to lands leased pursuant to the Record of Decision (ROD) that results from this RMPA/SEIS process."); *id.* at 2-23 ("Below the rim, lands available to oil and gas leasing and development would be subject to the same stipulations as those prescribed by the 2007 ROD (and contained in leases issued for those lands in 2008), except as modified by the terms and conditions detailed under Exhibit 3 of the Settlement Agreement. ... Therefore, where the Settlement Agreement is silent on the management of specific resources and resource uses, actions from the 2006 Roan FEIS Proposed Plan are brought forward into Alternative IV.").

Although the foregoing statements indicate that BLM will recognize Ursa's valid existing lease rights except as modified by the Settlement Agreement, the Draft RMPA/SEIS also suggests BLM may seek modifications. Appendix C states that "leases issued *prior to 2007* will remain subject to their existing terms," suggesting that leases issued in 2008 will not. *See* Draft RMPA/SEIS at C1-4. Appendix C for Alternative IV additionally imposes stipulations for areas beyond those lands covered in the 2007 ROD and on lands within Ursa's leases. Those stipulations for Alternative IV indicate that they apply to "new" leases, but BLM should expressly confirm that they do not apply to existing leases. To the extent BLM does seek to impose additional stipulations on Ursa's leases beyond the additional stipulation Ursa agreed to in the Settlement Agreement, such additional stipulations would violate Ursa's valid existing lease rights and would be invalid. *See Colorado Environmental Coalition*, 165 IBLA 221, 228 (2005).

III. BLM Cannot Modify Ursa's Leases Through Conditions Of Approval.

As discussed above, Ursa's leases constitute valid existing rights which cannot be modified through new stipulations not agreed to by Ursa. Similarly, BLM cannot impose new stipulations on Ursa's leases under the guise of imposing best management practices ("BMPs") or conditions of approval ("COAs"). The Draft RMPA/SEIS appears to recognize that BLM cannot infringe on existing lease rights through COAs. *See* Draft RMPA/SEIS at 2-4 ("COAs developed through this RMPA would apply to both new leases and, to the extent that they do not infringe on existing rights, existing leases."). However, the Draft RMPA/SEIS also suggests that BLM may seek to impose BMPs/COAs which will infringe on Ursa's lease rights.

The Draft RMPA/SEIS states that "[f]or all alternatives, BLM will require the use of BMPs (Appendix H) to protect resources values. ... BMPs may be applied to oil and gas operations as COAs and could include a variety of measures to minimize impacts over both the

0038-1 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

Under all alternatives considered in the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS, leases issued under the 1999 FEIS are considered valid existing leases and would be unaffected by the decision that results from this Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS. As discussed in Section 1.3.7.3, "specific management actions that have been implemented are now subject to reconsideration in the RMPA/SEIS. If BLM's decisions following the RMPA/SEIS process are different from those in the 2007 and 2008 RODs, BLM may need to undertake additional measures to 'bring into conformance' its previous implementation actions so as to conform with the new planning decisions." This includes the 2008 sale of oil and gas leases. As discussed in Section 2.3.4, under the Proposed Plan all "base" and "retained" lease areas would be subject to the same stipulations as those prescribed by the 2007 ROD, as summarized in Appendix C, except as modified by the terms and conditions detailed under Exhibits 2 and 3 of the Settlement Agreement (Appendix K). As stated in the Settlement Agreement, Section D, 14, the Parties acknowledged that nothing in Settlement Agreement affects BLM's discretion to adopt the plan of its choice among the alternatives (or a combination of the alternatives) analyzed in the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

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short term and long term.” *Id.* at 2-5. The BMPs in the Draft RMPA/SEIS vastly exceed, in both number and burdens, those BMPs provided in the 2008 Leasing Decision. The 2007 Roan ROD, Appendix A, contained 4 ½ pages of BMPs which could possibly be used for project level COAs. In contrast, the Draft RMPA/SEIS’s Appendix H contains 40 pages of BMPs which BLM states it may seek to impose as COAs. Many of those BMPs in Appendix H of the Draft RMPA/SEIS which BLM may seek to impose are significant and materially burdensome such as air quality modeling, air quality monitoring, the obligation to use certain electric powered equipment or machinery, and the like. Imposing certain BMPs/COAs in Appendix H may impermissibly modify Ursa’s lease rights. Any BMPs or COAs which modify Ursa’s lease rights and are not permitted under the Settlement Agreement are not valid.

IV. Any Lease Modification Not Agreed To By Ursa Will Constitute A Breach Of Contract.

BLM will be liable for breach of contract damages if the agency modifies or otherwise alters Ursa’s leases in ways not agreed to by Ursa. There is no question that federal “oil and gas leases are contracts.” *Oxy USA, Inc.*, 268 F.3d 1001, 1006-1007 (10th Cir. 2001), *rev’d on other grnds*, 549 U.S. 84 (2006). The IBLA has consistently held that upon execution of a federal lease by both parties, “it becomes a binding instrument and cannot be vitiated by unilateral action, all else being regular.” *Leon F. Scully, Jr.*, 104 IBLA 367, 369 (1988). The same general contract law which applies to breaches between private parties applies equally when the United States enters into a contract with a private party such as with a federal oil and gas lease. *Mobil Oil Exploration & Producing Southeast, Inc. v. United States*, 530 U.S. 604, 620 (2000). Just as with a breach of an agreement between private parties, the federal government may be liable in damages to a lessee for breaching an oil and gas lease agreement. *See Griffin & Griffin, LLC v. United States*, 116 Fed. Cl. 163 (Fed. Cl. 2014).

V. The Community Alternative Is Not Feasible And Would Derogate Ursa’s Lease Rights.

“Alternative III, the Community Alternative, was designed, in part, to address specific issues identified in the Judicial Order.” Draft RMPA/SEIS at 2-19. As explained by the court in *CEC* (the Judicial Order), the Community Alternative requires drilling from locations below the rim of the Roan Plateau. *CEC*, 875 F.Supp.2d at 1242 (“limiting the manner of drilling to ‘multilateral directional drilling’ from wells situated around the perimeter of the Plateau”), *id.* at 1249; *see also* Draft RMPA/SEIS at 4-112 (“There is also potential for increased adverse offsite impacts [under Alternative III] to ... areas below the rim, on both BLM and fee lands, since directional drilling from below the rim would also be used to access oil and gas leases above the rim.”). BLM must reject the Community Alternative because (i) it would impermissibly infringe on the lease rights of lessees located below the rim and (ii) the directional drilling proposed is not feasible.

The Community Alternative fails in at least the following respects. *First*, in issuing Ursa’s leases, BLM used the agency’s standard lease form which grants Ursa the “exclusive right to drill for, mine, extract, remove and dispose of all the oil and gas ... in the lands described.” Granting a third party the right to develop oil and gas resources on Ursa’s leases would

0038-2 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 As stated in Appendix H of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS (and in the 2006 FEIS appendix of BMPs), "The BMPs identified in this Appendix represent the kinds of activities which may be required; actual BMPs required during the permitting process to mitigate impacts may vary. BMPs and specific methodologies associated with them are expected to change over time to reflect the results of monitoring and ongoing adaptive management efforts. Additional practices may be required, practices may be withdrawn, or practices may be modified during activity, implementation, or project level planning; this may be done without future land use plan (RMP) decisions or amendments, but would likely be analyzed as part of the NEPA analysis associated with the permitting process."

See also *Yates Petroleum Corporation*, 176 IBLA 144 (September 30, 2008): "When making a decision regarding discrete surface-disturbing oil and gas development activities following site-specific environmental review, BLM has the authority to impose reasonable measures to minimize adverse impacts on other resource values, including restricting the siting or timing of lease activities."

0038-3 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 As discussed in Section 1.3.7.2, as a result of the Judicial Order, specific management actions that have been implemented are now subject to reconsideration in the RMPA/SEIS. If BLM's decisions following the RMPA/SEIS process are different from those in the 2007 and 2008 RODs, BLM may need to undertake additional measures to "bring into conformance" its previous implementation actions so as to conform with the new planning decisions.

Under all alternatives considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, leases issued under the 1999 FEIS are considered valid existing leases and would be unaffected by the decision that results from this PRMPA/FEIS. No analyzed alternative would change the lease rights of leases issued under the 1999 FEIS.

0038-4 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 As analyzed in Section 4.5.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, implementation of Alternative III, the Community Alternative, would not include BLM granting access, or directing that any agreement be reached. Development from private land or

adjacent leases under Alternative III would be the subject to formal ROW requests and site-specific analyses, and/or negotiation between parties. That this would be possible was an assumption for the impact analysis. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes information on development from private land or adjacent leases. BLM addresses the limit of directional drilling in the RFD and in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.5.1, with the assumption that directional drilling would extend approximately 2,500 feet.

Mr. Greg Larson
 Roan Plateau SEIS Project Manager
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impermissibly interfere with Ursa's valid existing property and contractual rights. Any effort to require Ursa to accommodate well pads, pipelines, or other development infrastructure without its consent would amount to a breach of the lease agreement, and would effectively constitute a government taking of private property. Accordingly, even if it was feasible to develop the Plateau leases through directional drilling from locations at the base of the Plateau, any such directional drilling must be undertaken from development sites other than those located on Ursa's leases.

Second, development of the leases above the rim from pad locations at the base of the Plateau is operationally infeasible due to, among other factors, the geologic nature of the reservoir and physical limitations in horizontal drilling technology. Those and other problems with the Community Alternative are discussed in greater detail in the scoping comments Ursa previously submitted jointly with WPX Energy Rocky Mountain, LLC and Oxy USA Inc. and which are incorporated herein by reference.

VI. Minor Technical Corrections.

The Draft RMPA/SEIS contains some minor typographical errors. The third full paragraph at ES-2 repeats the second full paragraph on that page. The second full paragraph in the Biological Environment discussion at 2-24 incorrectly states that "A commensurate SSR restriction would apply to all special status plants and significant plant communities *above below* the rim."

VII. Conclusion

In the Final RMPA/SEIS and Record of Decision, BLM should (i) provide certainty that existing leases will not be modified other than as to those terms agreed to by the lessees in the Settlement Agreement and (ii) reject the Community Alternative.

Very truly yours,

Ursa Piceance LLC


 Vice President-Business Development

0038-4 cont'd Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

0038-4
 Continued 0038-5 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 The RFD assumed that directional drilling would be feasible to an extension of approximately 2,500 feet and this assumption is carried forward to the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS (Section 4.5.5.2). As analyzed in Section 4.5.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, implementation of Alternative III, the Community Alternative, would not include BLM granting access, or directing that any agreement be reached. Development from private land or adjacent leases under Alternative III would be the subject to formal ROW requests and site-specific analyses, and/or negotiation between parties. That this would be possible was an assumption for the impact analysis. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS includes information on development from private land or adjacent leases. BLM addresses the limit of directional drilling in the RFD and in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.5.1, with the assumption that directional drilling would extend approximately 2,500 feet.

0038-5

0038-6

0038-6 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
 This section was clarified in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0038-7

0038-7 Opinion - Alternatives
 Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.



COLORADO
OIL & GAS
ASSOCIATION
WEST SLOPE

February 18, 2016

Greg Larson
Draft SEIS Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

RE: Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Planning Area, Colorado

Dear Mr. Larson:

The Roan Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) is the result of a settlement agreement reached between BLM and the plaintiffs and interveners in a federal lawsuit over the original Roan Plateau RMP. Western Energy Alliance and West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association (collectively, the Associations) generally support the adoption of Alternative IV, the Settlement Alternative (Preferred Alternative), although we are concerned by provisions of the Draft RMPA that were not addressed in the settlement agreement.

Western Energy Alliance represents over 450 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the West. Alliance members are independents, the majority of which are small businesses with an average of fifteen employees. WSCOGA is a member-based organization focused on promoting the development of natural gas and oil resources in Northwest Colorado.

The Associations adamantly oppose Alternative I, which would close the 24,980 acres of the Roan Plateau Planning Area (RPPA) to further oil and gas leasing and development during the anticipated 20-year life of this Draft RMPA. Under Alternative I, BLM likely would cancel oil and gas leases issued in 2008 for lands within the Planning Area to return to previous conditions. This would be a violation of valid existing rights as well as the National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 that transferred management of the Naval Oil Shale Reserves 1 and 3 to the Department of the Interior specifically for the purpose of developing natural gas resources.

0039-1 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development Alternative I is the No Action Alternative, which is a required element of this EIS under NEPA regulations. As stated in Section 2.3.1, because this document supplements the Roan FEIS, the No Action Alternative presented here represents management of the Planning Area prior to the ROD for the Roan Plateau RMPA/FEIS. Therefore, this is essentially the same No Action Alternative that was analyzed in the Roan FEIS. Pre-2008 leases are considered valid existing leases; 2008 leases are subject to review and decision. As discussed in Section 1.1 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, the original RMPA/FEIS (2006) was remanded and because the court set aside the RMPA, no land use plan exists for the Planning Area. In view of the Court's ruling, the BLM determined that a supplemental analysis under NEPA and a new proposed RMPA were warranted. This required evaluating the No Action Alternative from the RMPA/FEIS as well as a full range of alternatives even if they conflicted with the terms of the 2008 leases. As stated in the Settlement Agreement, Section D, 14, the Parties acknowledged that nothing in Settlement Agreement affects BLM's discretion to adopt the plan of its choice among the alternatives (or a combination of the alternatives) analyzed in the SEIS.

0039-1

Alternatives II and III also do not honor the terms of the settlement agreement, and as such should not be selected. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative IV, follows the terms of the settlement most closely, and as such should be the basis for the final RMPA. However, there are certain provisions of the Preferred Alternative that are not related to the settlement agreement and should be removed prior to finalization, as discussed below.

Inappropriate Regulation of Air Emissions

By adding the Comprehensive Air Resources Protection Protocol (CARPP) BLM will create unnecessary confusion and even contradictory requirements for air quality compliance. The State of Colorado, through delegation from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), has jurisdiction for air quality, not BLM. BLM lacks authority to impose controls and limitations beyond those adopted by the state and EPA.

BLM's one-year pre-development baseline monitoring requirement is onerous and goes beyond BLM's jurisdiction. BLM has not adequately justified why such extremely expensive and time-consuming monitoring is necessary given that the area in question is currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants. BLM also exceeds its regulatory purview by requiring specific projects to track emissions of criteria pollutants, Volatile Organic Compounds, Hazardous Air Pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions for use in potential enforcement activity. The CARPP and the monitoring requirements exceed BLM jurisdiction and should be removed from the final document.

No Surface Occupancy (NSO) Stipulations

The RMPA should clarify the conditions that determine whether a Waiver, Exception, or Modification (WEM) of an NSO stipulation may be granted. Specifically, the use of generalized maps referenced in the Draft RMPA may not accurately depict topography and other actual conditions on the ground encountered at a specific location proposed for oil and natural gas development.

For example, broad areas may be designated as subject to an NSO stipulation due to steep slopes. Yet there may be locations within these broad areas where the slopes do not exceed the steepness criteria. Rather than simply designating areas through the use of inaccurate maps at too broad of a scale, BLM should only apply NSO where actual conditions warrant. When an oil and natural gas project can be situated to avoid any actual steep slopes even though the corresponding BLM map may show the broader area as being comprised of steep slopes, then it should not be considered to need an exception, modification or waiver.

Further, while the acreage numbers provided for each stipulation in Tables C-1 through C-4 presumably reflect the polygons shown in the maps, the actual application of restrictions for resource protection should be based on the extent of the sensitive resource that's

0039-2

0039-2 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0039-3

0039-3 Climate and Air Quality
BLM manages public lands in accordance with FLPMA. Section 102(8) of FLPMA requires that "the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect...air and atmospheric [values]." Under NEPA, BLM is required "to identify and assess the reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions upon the quality of the human environment" and to "use all practicable means, consistent with the requirements of the Act and other essential considerations of national policy, to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment" (40 CFR 1500.2). NEPA also requires BLM to include a discussion of measures that may mitigate adverse environmental impacts (40 CFR 1502.14(f), 40 CFR 1502.16(h)). Thus, BLM must manage the public lands in a manner that appropriately protects air quality and related values. For this SEIS, BLM conducted air quality analyses to determine impacts from specific anticipated Federal actions. During subsequent authorization analysis conducted for NEPA, BLM can utilize emission control strategies and mitigation measures from the CARPP and the CARMMS (medium scenario) to address any significant impacts to achieve desired outcomes for air quality.

0039-4

0039-4 Climate and Air Quality
The possible baseline monitoring described in the CARPP is not expected to be necessary for all or even most future proposed oil and gas projects. The CARPP informs operators and other members of the public that baseline monitoring may be required to support BLM's NEPA analysis for large and unique projects located in sensitive (populated, etc.) areas where baseline air quality monitoring data are not available. Baseline air quality monitoring data can be an important part of an accurate cumulative impacts analysis for a proposed project in terms of quantifying impacts above baseline conditions.

0039-5

0039-6

0039-7

This information is useful to the decision maker. The CARPP does not indicate that project emissions will be tracked for enforcement purposes, but rather that when required, the purpose of "life of project" air monitoring "is to measure

impacts potentially attributable to the project over time and to determine the effectiveness of emissions control measures."

BLM Colorado requests emissions information from oil and gas operators for proposed projects when BLM conducts project-specific NEPA analyses. This information helps BLM to develop accurate emissions inventories for use in the air quality impacts analyses for the proposed projects. NEPA analysis of most oil and gas development projects will include air quality impacts analysis. Thus it is a benefit to operators to provide this information, especially when they implement sound environmental practices, as we can build that into our analysis design features.

0039-5 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a programmatic document that guides BLM management of the Roan Plateau Planning Area. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS does not evaluate each potential well location in detail because exact locations are not known. Site-specific evaluation will be conducted during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process. Modifications and/or waivers to stipulations are described in Appendix C, Tables C-1 through C-4.

0039-6 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a programmatic document that guides BLM management of the Roan Plateau Planning Area. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS does not evaluate each potential well location in detail because exact locations are not known. Site-specific evaluation will be conducted during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process. Lease stipulations under the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS reflect the terms of the Settlement Agreement. Modifications and/or waivers to stipulations are described in Appendix C, Tables C-1 through C-4.

0039-7 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a programmatic document that describes and evaluates BLM management actions. Site specific analyses will be conducted during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process.

being protected. When more accurate information about the presence or absence of the resource can be collected from ground surveys, improved data collection technology, or other methods, then the project proponent should not have to seek a WEM. Once the absence of a sensitive resource is demonstrated, the restriction should be deemed inapplicable and excluded from the requirement to obtain a WEM.

Valid Existing Lease Rights

We strongly urge BLM to explicitly recognize valid existing rights as it moves forward with the RMPA. The Mineral Leasing Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and BLM’s own Planning Handbook all expressly limit the agency’s authority to impose mitigation measures that would exceed the terms and conditions of previously issued leases. Operators retain the right to develop their leases in accordance with the terms under which they were issued, and BLM must ensure that any proposed management would not infringe on those rights. BLM cannot burden existing leases with new stipulations or select an alternative that results in the cancellation of leases beyond those that were voluntarily relinquished as part of the settlement agreement. Unambiguous language asserting valid existing rights should be included in the final document.

Reasonable Foreseeable Development

Under FLPMA, BLM is required to integrate social science and economic information in the preparation of land use planning decisions. Specifically, FLMPA requires that BLM “estimate and display the physical, biological, economic, and social effects of implementing each alternative considered in detail.” To that end, the Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario was developed for the Roan Plateau Planning Area in 2014 and is adopted by the draft RMPA. The final RMPA should clearly state, however, that the RFD is merely an estimate, and cannot be used to place a cap or limitation on development in the planning area.

The 2014 RFD projects 5,470 federal and fee wells could be drilled in the RPPA in the next twenty years, with 1,070 federal wells on top of the plateau and 2,450 federal wells below the rim. As mentioned above, however, the RFD is merely a planning tool and not a binding level of oil and natural gas development or an official planning decision.

Greater Sage-Grouse Mitigation

The settlement agreement provided that the RMPA would address efforts to mitigate impacts to the Greater Sage-Grouse (GrSG) under the associated Northwest Colorado Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA). Although the Preferred Alternative adopts planning tools and restrictions according to the finalized LUPA, it should also clarify that these restrictions cannot be applied retroactively to valid existing leases.

The draft RMPA states that “where a proposed fluid mineral development project on an existing lease could adversely affect GRSG populations or habitat, the BLM will work with

0039-7
Continued

0039-8 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
BLM states in Section 1.2 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS that BLM will recognize valid existing rights. Under all alternatives considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, leases issued under the 1999 FEIS are considered valid existing leases and would be unaffected by the decision that results from this Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0039-8

As discussed in Section 1.3.7.3, "specific management actions that have been implemented are now subject to reconsideration in the RMPA/SEIS. If BLM's decisions following the RMPA/SEIS process are different from those in the 2007 and 2008 RODs, BLM may need to undertake additional measures to 'bring into conformance' its previous implementation actions so as to conform with the new planning decisions." This includes the 2008 sale of oil and gas leases.

As discussed in Section 2.3.4, lands covered by leases issued in 2008, including those located below the rim, are subject to review and decision as to whether they will be open to oil and gas leasing and development. Under the Proposed Plan, they would be subject to the same stipulations as those prescribed by the 2007 ROD, as summarized in Appendix C, except as modified by the terms and conditions detailed under Exhibits 2 and 3 of the Settlement Agreement (Appendix K). As stated in the Settlement Agreement, Section D, 14, the Parties acknowledged that nothing in Settlement Agreement affects BLM's discretion to adopt the plan of its choice among the alternatives (or a combination of the alternatives) analyzed in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0039-9

0039-10

0039-9 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) is a technical estimate produced in support of the planning process. It provides the interdisciplinary planning team with an estimate of the oil and gas development activities that are reasonably likely to occur on BLM-administered lands within the Roan Plateau Planning Area over the next 20 years. As such, it is neither a cap, nor limitation to the number of wells that can be developed within the Planning Area.

The following is from Section 4.1.1.1 in the Draft RMPA/SEIS and Proposed Plan/FSEIS:

"The RFD is intended as a technical and scientific approximation of anticipated levels of oil and gas development during the planning timeframe. As such, the RFD and the planning process, of which it is a part, are not intended to define the specific numbers and locations of wells and pads needed to develop the oil and gas resource. Instead, they are intended to allow flexibility during resource development while providing sufficient specificity to support the impact analysis and alternative selection processes."

0039-10 Special Status Species

As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, existing stipulations for existing oil and gas leases would apply to those leases. New stipulations would apply only to lands leased pursuant to the Record of Decision (ROD) that results from this NEPA process. This may, however, require modification of leases issued in 2008 to achieve conformity with the planning decision (see Section 1.3.7.3). COAs equivalent to stipulations developed through this RMPA could be applied to development on pre-2008 leases, to the extent that they do not conflict with existing lease terms.

Roan Plateau RMPA
February 15, 2016
Page 4 of 4

the lessees, operators, or other project proponents to avoid, reduce, and mitigate adverse impacts to the extent compatible with lessees' rights to drill and produce fluid mineral resources." However, where leases have already been issued, BLM must acknowledge it cannot add new stipulations for the benefit of GrSG mitigation without violating FLPMA. BLM should acknowledge this limitation in the final RMPA.

Socioeconomics

Domestic oil and natural gas development is vital to Colorado's economy, providing \$1.1 billion in revenues to the state and local governments that support roads, schools, public safety and other critical services. In Garfield County specifically, the oil and natural gas industry provides \$833 million in annual economic impact and supports 2,470 jobs.¹ The final RMPA should clearly identify the importance of oil and natural gas development to the planning area, and emphasize that the decisions made therein are intended to balance continued development with other resource management goals, rather than eliminating development altogether.

Conclusion

The Associations support the adoption of the Preferred Alternative in the final RMPA where it accords with the settlement agreement. However, as outlined above there are several provisions where the draft RMPA exceeds the scope of the settlement agreement and BLM's authority to act. There are also instances where some clarification is needed so that future management actions do not violate federal laws and regulations. Thank you for considering our comments, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Sgamma
Western Energy Alliance



David Ludlam
West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association

0039-11 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, existing stipulations for existing oil and gas leases would apply to those leases. New stipulations would apply only to lands leased pursuant to the Record of Decision (ROD) that results from this NEPA process. This may, however, require modification of leases issued in 2008 to achieve conformity with the planning decision (see Section 1.3.7.3). COAs equivalent to stipulations developed through this RMPA could be applied to development on pre-2008 leases, to the extent that they do not conflict with existing lease terms.

0039-12 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

¹ John Dunham and Associates, *Western Oil & Natural Gas Employs America*, prepared for Western Energy Alliance, 2014, at: www.westernenergyalliance.org/employsamerica.



To: The Bureau of Land Management

Feb. 18, 2016

Re: Roan Plateau Comments

From: Grand Valley Citizens Alliance (GVCA), PO BOX 656, Silt CO 81652

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the future of the Roan Plateau. Most of our members live at the base/valley of the Roan Plateau, so it is as special to them, as it was to the Ute Indians many years ago.

Because of the extensive oil and gas development in the valley, most of our members are already impacted by the industry. Therefore, it is painful to accept any compromise that would encourage more O&G development in a sensitive natural habitat. The Roan Plateau is no less special than the Thompson Divide to locals.

We know that BLM officials, industry representatives and members of the conservation community worked hard to come up with a compromise in Alternative IV. However, some GVCA members have reservations about it. More specifically:

-- The development of O&G on private property situated on the Roan Plateau and below the rim are placed in areas sensitive to wildlife habitat for the Mexican Spotted owl and the native Brown trout, as examples. More O&G production on BLM land adjacent to those areas could have a negative cumulative effect on wildlife, especially in the winter. We recommend more wildlife study is needed before O&G drilling occurs on BLM land on the Roan Plateau.

-- It is possible that directional drilling from the private property sites could reach much of the energy resources under proposed drilling locations in Alt. IV. Drilling and fracking methodology and technology improves all the time, therefore, it would make sense to delay the drilling applications that could cause the most negative impacts on wildlife and natural habitat, such as below the rim.

-- Proposed drilling below the rim, as allowed by Alt. IV, could greatly impact the old growth of Douglas Fir already compromised by beetle kill, and could increase the danger of fire in those areas. Because O&G companies would have to do drastic cutting into the Roan Plateau rim to make roads and level pads, the visual scars would be noticeable for miles. The impression that the Roan Plateau is no longer a "wild" place, because of drilling rigs so apparently graphic, could affect tourism and hunting businesses in the area.

-- The development of more drilling on the Roan Plateau in Alt. IV feeds into the boom/bust economic cycles in the Rifle/Western Garfield County area, whereas, tourism is much more stable. With all the federal land already open for O&G development in the valley, and the private land available on the Roan for O&G development, it just makes more sense to set aside the Roan Plateau BLM land for natural habitat. Much like has been decided by the BLM for Thompson Divide in nearby Carbondale.

-- GVCA members are aware that the chances of Alt. I being accepted as the Roan Plateau management plan are slim. We understand the importance of compromise, but can only half-heartedly support the Alt. IV, because of the proposed areas of O&G development could suffer from impacts that may never be rectified, such as abandoned wells, careless re-vegetation, accidental spills, and water contamination.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to express our opinions.

Leslie Robinson, chair, Grand Valley Citizens Alliance

0040-1 Special Status Species

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS took into account development on private lands in the sections in Chapter 4 on cumulative impacts.

0040-2 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a programmatic document. Additional analysis will be conducted during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill processes. Drilling from private property to access minerals underneath lands atop the plateau is considered as part of Alternative III.

0040-3 Biological Resources

0040-1 Drilling below the rim was analyzed in all of the alternatives. Under Alternative II, the old growth Douglas Fir would be protected by the Magpie Gulch ACEC. Alternative III provides protection with the Magpie Gulch ACEC and wilderness.

0040-2 Alternative IV, the Settlement Alternative from the Roan Plateau Planning Area Proposed RMPA/FSEIS provides specific protections for old growth Douglas-fir stands from disturbance from oil and gas development activities, as well as all other surface-disturbing activities. These include minimizing impacts through management prescriptions for botanical/ecological resources in the Magpie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) as well as GS-CSU-Roan-12: Habitat for BLM sensitive plant species populations and significant plant communities and the corresponding Site Specific Relocation (SSR) limitation for non-oil and gas development. Similarly, visual resources on the Roan Plateau cliffs and rim are provided protections through GS-NSO-Roan-30:1-70 viewshed (VRM Class II) and corresponding No Ground Disturbance (NGD) limitation for non-oil and gas development as well as GS-CSU-Roan-04: Erosive soils and slopes (>30%) and corresponding SSR.

0040-3 Potential impacts to old growth Douglas-fir and visual resources from all activities in all alternatives were estimated and disclosed in Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additionally, please reference Section 4.4.4.5, which states that "Under the terms included in the Settlement Agreement, primary access above the rim would be limited to designated roads, subject to BLM's onsite inspection and approval. Operators would not use Cow Creek Road or Rim Road east of the retained leases for access, except in emergencies. This

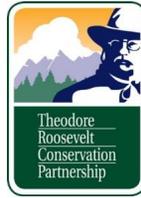
restriction would require contractual access on across private lands/roads from the south or west." No new roads would be created on the rim under the Proposed Plan.

0040-4 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0040-5 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.



RE: Draft Roan Plateau Supplemental EIS Comments

February 18th, 2016

Submitted by email to roanplateau@blm.gov

Mr. Greg Larson
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652
Email: roanplateau@blm.gov

Dear Mr. Larson:

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to guarantee every American quality places to hunt and fish. The TRCP consists of 35,000 individual advocates, 1,400 affiliated local- and state-level clubs and organizations and hundreds of hunting and fishing related businesses from across the country. We currently have roughly 4,300 members in Colorado and work with a multitude of groups, businesses, local governments and other stakeholders throughout the state to guarantee every American quality places to hunt and fish.

We're writing to ask you to take actions finalizing a balanced management plan for the Roan Plateau. We strongly support the BLM's preferred alternative, Alternative 4 (Settlement Alternative) of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, which will ensure the conservation of some of the most significant and delicate fish and wildlife habitat on the Roan Plateau while also allowing for responsible energy development.

0041-1

As sportsmen we see the need for responsible energy development that balances oil and gas exploration and production with our most valuable resource: public lands for recreating, hunting, and fishing. The Settlement Alternative achieves this balance in the form of the Watershed Management Area of Parachute Creek, No Ground Disturbance/No Surface Occupancy (NGD/NSO) in high-value Colorado River Cutthroat Trout (CRCT) habitat, and water quality standards, as well as approximately 28,660 acres above the rim and 6,310 acres below the rim closed to oil and gas leasing and development. These conservation measures for the populations of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout found on the Roan are invaluable, and we ask to see them implemented in the Final EIS.

Likewise, stipulations such as NGD/NSO in big game security areas along and below the Roan cliffs, and seasonal Time Limits (TL) in migration corridors and winter range, are critical to big game habitat and the hunting heritage enjoyed on the Roan. The Roan Plateau and Piceance Basin used to host the “largest migratory mule deer heard in North America,” however since the early 2000’s we have witnessed a dramatic decline in the herd’s population ¹. In order to see that trend reversed these conservation measures must be enacted.

We ask BLM to ensure that the conservation measures under the Settlement Alternative are fully and finally incorporated into BLM’s revised plan for the Roan Plateau by adopting Alternative 4.

The management of the Roan Plateau can be an example of what the BLM can do to maintain our sporting heritage for future generations. By reaching a balance between responsible development and conservation for fish and wildlife habitat, the BLM will be able to ensure certainty for both energy and hunting and angling interests.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to continuing to engage on this issue in the future.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Payne
 Colorado Field Representative
 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
 1440 Williams Street C
 Denver, CO 80218

1. Legacy in the Crosshairs: Colorado’s ‘Mule-Deer Factory’ on the Decline, National Wildlife Federation and Colorado Wildlife Federation http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Regional/Rocky-Mountain/LegacyintheCrosshairs_MuleDeer_NWF_CWF.pdf

0041-2 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0041-2

0041-3 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0041-3



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®
Rocky Mountain Regional Center
303 East 17th Avenue, Suite 15
Denver, Colorado 80203
<http://www.nwf.org>

February 18, 2016

Greg Larson, Project Manager
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652

Via electronic mail to: roanplateau@blm.gov

Re: RE: Roan Plateau Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Project Manager Larson:

These comments on the *Roan Plateau Draft Resource Management Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* [DSEIS] are submitted on behalf of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and its six million members and supporters. NWF members use and enjoy the fish and wildlife resources provided by America's public lands, including the Roan Plateau here in Colorado. Because of concerns shared by its members and supporters regarding the potential impact of energy development on vital fish and wildlife resources in the area, NWF pursued a legal challenge of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) previous Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and the decision to make nearly all BLM lands available for oil and gas leasing.

NWF thanks BLM for its decision to enter into the 2014 settlement in *Conservation Colorado Education Fund, et al. v. Jewell, et al.* (2014 Settlement) and for developing a new RMPA for the Roan Plateau Planning Area (the Planning Area). NWF supports the DSEIS's Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4) which incorporates the 2014 Settlement. Adopting the Preferred Alternative should avoid further litigation over the Roan and finally bring the long-running controversy to a close with a management plan for these lands that provides more effective conservation of fish and wildlife. Abandoning the consensus reached in the Settlement Alternative would be a major step in the wrong direction. Please select the Preferred Alternative

in your new RMPA for the Roan. NWF supports and incorporates herein by reference the comments filed by the Conservation Groups; those comments also support the Preferred Alternative.¹

Finally, NWF urges BLM to continue its effort to expedite this analysis and to issue the final record of decision as currently scheduled in late 2016. Adopting the new RMPA will provide certainty for all stakeholders involved.

DISCUSSION

While NWF supports the DSEIS Preferred Alternative, NWF offers comments below on specific issues regarding the conservation of big game habitats in the Planning Area. These issues were addressed in the 2014 Settlement and should be clarified in the Preferred Alternative.

The basis for Alternative IV is to incorporate the terms of the 2014 Settlement for the Planning Area. Pursuant to that agreement, approximately 28,660 acres above the rim of the Plateau and 6,310 acres below the rim would be closed to oil and gas leasing and development. Below the rim, lands available to oil and gas leasing and development would be subject to the terms and conditions detailed under Exhibit 3 of the 2014 Settlement. This specifies that a proposed Master Development Plan (MDP) be submitted prior to exploration and/or lease development that includes consultation with Colorado's Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) specifically in order to develop provisions that "minimize impacts to wildlife and other resources." Therefore, where the 2014 Settlement is silent on the management of specific resources and resource uses below the rim, NWF maintains that BLM should state unequivocally that it will consult with CPW before conducting any activity impacting such resources and that Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve fish and wildlife and their habitat will be a required component of all leases and permits.² One wildlife resource at particular risk due to development activities below the rim are mule deer. BMPs to conserve deer and their habitat below the rim must be a component of any approved MDPs. Such BMPs must reduce the surface disturbance in habitats below the rim.

Mule deer are a critical piece of the cultural and ecological fabric of the American West. Long associated with the wild expanses of sagebrush hills and high alpine ridges, mule deer are often recognized as a symbol of the western frontier. The species depends on large, unbroken tracts of

¹ See comments submitted on behalf of Earthjustice, Conservation Colorado Education Fund, The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Rock the Earth, Wilderness Workshop, Rocky Mountain Wild, Center for Biological Diversity, WildEarth Guardians and Friends of the Earth (collectively, the Conservation Groups).

² Once a lease is issued, BLM maintains that it has limited discretion to change lease terms and development if future conditions warrant additional restrictions or protections for fish and wildlife. Therefore, BLM must clearly state that conservation measures will be based upon their effectiveness rather than a prediction that development levels will be limited due to other factors.

0042-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0042-2 Biological Resources

Appendix K in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS contains the full Settlement Agreement. Exhibit 2, Section E, of this document states: "Prior to submitting the MDP, the operator shall consult with the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and BLM to develop terms that minimize impacts to wildlife and other resources. Agreed-upon terms shall be included in the operator's proposed MDP." Under the Proposed RMPA, the stipulation that includes this language will be applied to the retained base leases.

Additionally, the Proposed Plan includes an NGD/NSO for wildlife seclusion areas below rim, a SSR/CSU for big game migration corridor, and a TL for big game winter range as shown in Chapter 2, Table 2.1 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. BLM also has discretion to include additional resource-protection requirements as conditions of approval of MDPs and APDs.

0042-1

0042-2

intact and diverse shrub communities, landscapes that traditionally dominated the West. To the extent these habitats are fragmented, mule deer struggle. In fact, mule deer are now declining across much of the West. They have been continuing to fall in number since the latter third of the 20th century. Deer face a number of stressors, but the most significant is that their habitat is changing and disappearing. Deer depend on access to quality habitat across various landscapes, but winter range is determined by most deer biologists to be the limiting factor – the habitat in least supply relative to others and therefore the determinant of population levels – for deer herds. It is this type of habitat that is at risk below the rim of the Plateau³, along with the migration corridors that allow the animals to reach winter and summer ranges.⁴

Over the last decade, scientific understanding about the impacts of energy production on wildlife populations has expanded, with much learned about impacts to mule deer. A series of studies on the Pinedale Anticline in western Wyoming show that drilling and production of natural gas on winter ranges significantly affect mule deer, with dramatic decreases in wintering populations within the developed area. In 2007, Sawyer *et al.* published a report on eight years of research that attributed 27 percent of the decline in mule deer on the Pinedale Anticline to energy development. In 2010, monitoring reports showed a 60 percent loss in mule deer since development began in 2001.

Specifically with respect to big game winter ranges, BLM must recognize that Timing Limitations (TLs) are insufficient to protect and conserve these vital habitats. TLs do not control overall habitat disturbance in priority habitats; rather, they require changes in activity at certain times of year.⁵ BLM has previously acknowledged the potential for adverse big game impacts from oil and gas development including the fact that “residual unavoidable adverse impacts to ungulates increase dramatically when well pad densities exceed one pad per square mile.” *Final Environmental Assessment February 2013 Oil and Gas Lease Sale: Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area* (Uncompahgre EA) at 77.⁶ Furthermore, the Uncompahgre EA acknowledges that “[t]hese residual adverse impacts occur from reduced habitat effectiveness regardless of the

³ As shown by the data in Table 3.3.4, approximately 27,590 acres (41 percent of the BLM portion of the Planning Area) is mapped as deer winter range. This includes nearly all of the BLM lands below the rim.

⁴ An important feature of the Planning Area relative to movements and use by mule deer is the barrier to seasonal (elevation) movement posed by the sheer Roan Cliffs. Deer (and elk) are unable to penetrate this barrier except for a few places where breaks in the cliffs provide passages. Only one such area (“migration corridor”) occurs within the Planning Area for deer (Map 20). DSEIS at 3-75.

⁵ The adoption of TLs as the primary lease stipulation in mule deer habitat assumes that the most significant stressor on winter ranges is noise and human presence; if that is so, seasonal restrictions seem logical. If the most significant stressor to mule deer on winter ranges is loss of habitat and displacement due to surface disturbance, however, BLM is compromising the ability of mule deer populations to remain viable within developed areas in the absence of significant, additional conservation measures.

⁶ Mule deer avoid well pads, especially those with high traffic volume (Sawyer *et al.* 2009). This has the potential to adversely impact survival, reproduction and recruitment. Impacts to big game populations are considered extreme when well pad densities exceed four pads/mile (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2008, Lutz *et al.* 2011).

0042-3 Biological Resources

The Proposed Plan includes an NGD/NSO for wildlife seclusion areas below rim, a SSR/CSU for big game migration corridor, and a TL for big game winter range as shown in Chapter 2, Table 2.1 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

use of Timing Limitation Stipulations on drilling activities or other site specific Best Management Practices designed to reduce impacts.” *Id.*

We appreciate the Uncompahgre Field Office’s candor in acknowledging the multiple studies (Sawyer 2009, Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2008) demonstrating that standard TLs alone are inadequate to prevent adverse impacts to mule deer from winter habitat development. More effective methods of reducing impacts are known, including limiting density of both development sites and roads as well as limiting vehicle traffic. Compensatory mitigation should only be considered when on-site mitigation is impossible – occupied habitat is occupied for a simple reason, because it is the best-functioning habitat available to wildlife.

Colorado’s statewide deer population estimate declined from roughly 600,000 deer in 2006 to approximately 390,000 in 2013. Deer populations do fluctuate somewhat naturally in response to changing environmental conditions, but the most recent decline in the state’s largest deer herds is atypical and has reduced these herds well below population objectives established by CPW.

The DSEIS acknowledges that deer populations in the Planning Area have reflected this same pattern. Deer populations in Data Analysis Unit (DAU) 41 have declined since the 1980s, with dramatic declines in the early 1990s. CPW’s current long-term objective for the mule deer population in DAU 41 has been revised downward to 6,500 to 8,500 individuals. Habitat loss from landscape-scale changes, including oil and gas development, and long-term drought conditions are considered to be the primary causes for the decline and failure to rebound. Displacement of deer from native winter ranges to less desirable ranges has already occurred in response to natural gas development. The landscape may no longer be able to support the earlier larger herd sizes. DSEIS at 3-73 to 3-74. The final RMP for the Roan Planning Area should acknowledge that to “minimize impacts” to wildlife resources on lands below the rim may require the adoption of BMPs effective to reduce the overall footprint of surface disturbance.⁷

Sincerely,



Kathleen C. Zimmerman
Policy Director – Public Lands
National Wildlife Federation
303-441-5159
zimmerman@nwf.org

0042-3

⁷ The DSEIS indicates that well sites are limited to two wells per section in “sensitive wildlife habitat (including severe winter range and winter concentration areas).” DSEIS at 2-71. However, the Uncompahgre EA acknowledges that impacts “increase dramatically” when well pads exceed one per section. Moreover, surface disturbance resulting from other infrastructure, including roads and pipelines, and human activity should be addressed as well.

TO: BLM Colorado river Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652
FROM: Bill Hamann
235 Arroyo Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81507

SUBJECT: Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/Supplemental
EIS

DATE Feb 18, 2016

I am writing to comment on the above mentioned Resource Plan Amendment. My comments are submitted on behalf of the Western Slope Group of the Colorado Mountain Club. Our group enjoys hiking in the remote backcountry areas of the Western Slope, on the high mesas, the red rock canyons, and the nearby mountain ranges.

I moved to the Grand Junction area in 1978. During the 38 years I have lived in this area, I have watched as the BLM has leased out hundreds of thousands of acres in NW Colorado for oil shale development and for drilling for natural gas. Most of this leasing and oil and gas drilling has been leased with only minimal concern for the adverse impacts to the existing environment, including wildlife, water and air quality, vegetation, and similar natural resources. Recent law suits have shown that many of the drilling permits which were issued did not comply with NEPA requirement. It is important that BLM make stronger efforts to protect the few areas that have not been subject to oil and gas drilling. One of the most important of these is the Roan Plateau, which contains populations of rare cutthroat trout, endangered plants, and lands suitable for wilderness designation.

I urge BLM to adopt Alternative 3, which would allow no surface disturbance above the rim. Although Alternative 4 is similar in that it allows only two lease areas on the top of the Plateau, the oil and gas industry would never miss those leases. There is presently a huge glut in natural gas and 500 permits are going undrilled in Colorado. Maintaining the natural integrity of the top of the Plateau is much more important considering it is an untouched island in a ocean of oil and gas drilling. To keep the top of the Roan Plateau drill-free would be much more in compliance with the concepts of Multiple Use which BLM is required to follow.

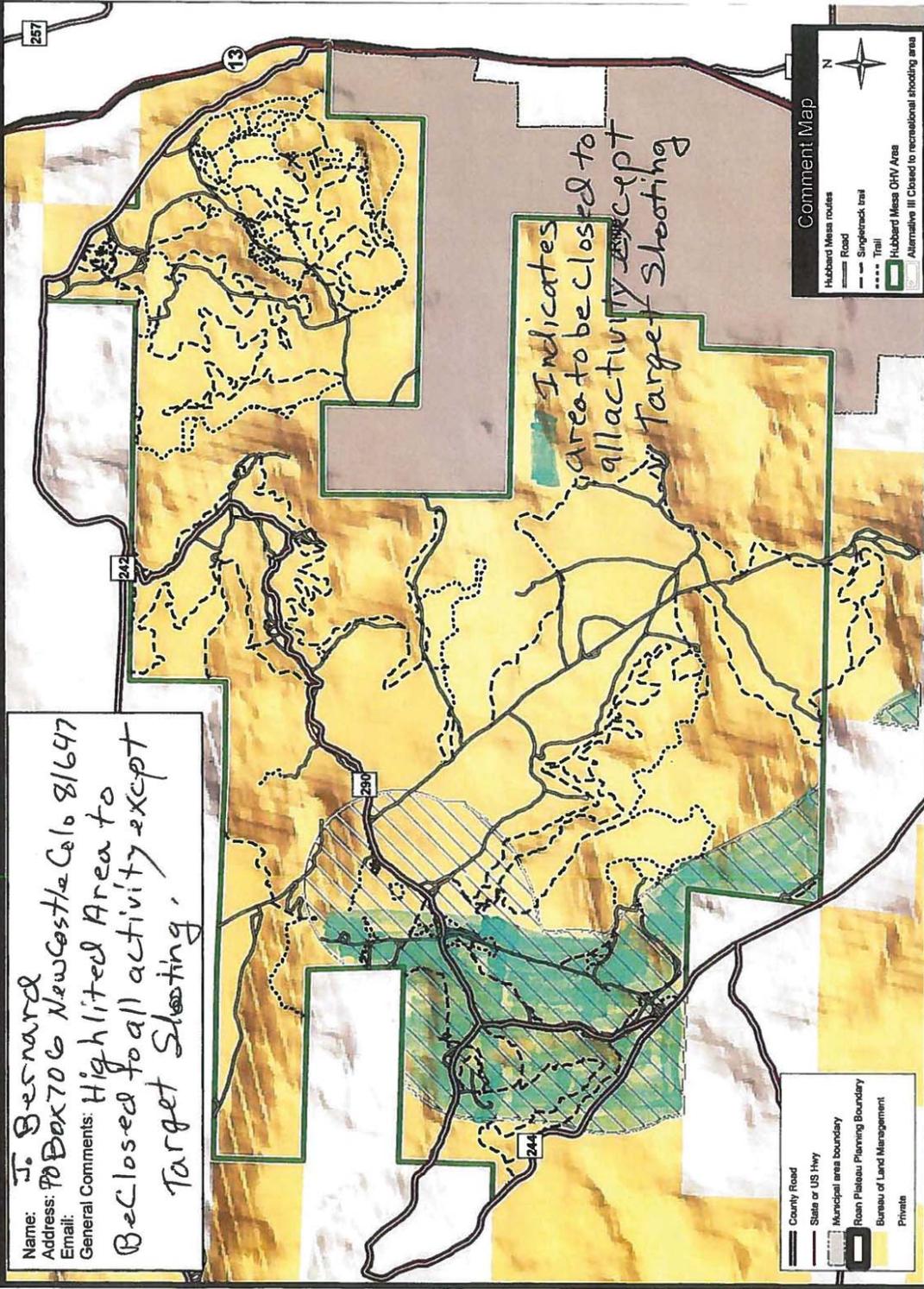
0043-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0043-1

Name: J. Bernard
 Address: PO Box 706 Newcastle Colo 81647
 Email:
 General Comments: Highlighted Area to be closed for all activity except Target Shooting.

Indicates area to be closed to all activity except Target Shooting



0044-2 Opinion - Shooting Sports
 Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. Therefore, this comment has not been carried forward for analysis in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.



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156



Public Comment Form
Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

0045

We want your comments! If you have any comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, please complete and submit this comment sheet to ensure your input is considered. You can submit this comment sheet at the public meeting, or mail to the following address (49-cent postage required):

Roan Plateau Comments
 BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
 2300 River Frontage Road
 Silt, CO 81652

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 RECEIVED
 FEB 17 2016
 COLORADO RIVER VALLEY FIELD OFFICE

You may also email comments to roanplateau@blm.gov.

The Draft EIS is available on the BLM's Website at: <http://www.blm.gov/co/crvfo>. Hard copies are available for review at the Parachute, Silt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale public libraries, or at the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO). CDs are available in limited quantities by request from the CRVFO.

Effective Public Commenting: The most helpful comments are those that identify: 1) an error in analysis that may affect the outcome; 2) additional information that would change analysis and conclusions; 3) something that should be clarified; or 4) a substantially different alternative that meets the purpose and need statement and has not been considered. Comments are most effective when they are as specific as possible; contain references to page numbers and sections of the document where applicable; and are backed with explanations, facts, and references, as appropriate.

All public comments are due by February 18, 2016.

If you have no comments or questions, but would like to be on our mailing list, please complete the contact information on the reverse side.

<p>I am writing this comment to express my concerns about closing the 610 Acres of the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area to recreational target shooting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The area of proposed closure is the safest area for target shooting. There is a backstop. Closure of this area will result in target shooting where there is not a backstop and there are more trails. - Recreational target shooting has been going on in this area for many decades and predates the mountain bike. OHV use is a recent development. - Recreational target shooting is a safe and family friendly activity. Generations of shooters utilize Hubbard Mesa OHV Area. - Public Lands are for Multiple Use. - The BLM does not have staff or funds to enforce such a closure.

0045-1

0045-1 Shooting Sports
 The analysis of Alternative IV has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Section 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The concerns raised regarding backstops have been included in the impacts analysis of Alternative III; see Section 4.5.3.4.

From: janbbirder <janbbirder@aol.com>
To: roanplateau <roanplateau@blm.gov>
Subject: recommendations for the new plan
Date: Tue, Feb 16, 2016 12:33 pm

February 14, 2016

Roan Plateau

Please be aware of the deep appreciation vast numbers of people have for this area. It is clear that in 2008 a big mistake was made by the agency to lease the entire Roan Plateau for oil and gas development. That was a politically motivated decision. There is great support from a diversity of people in our country for protection of these public lands.

If we all need to send the long list of reminders why oil and gas leasing should be cancelled and curtailed we can do that. But if you are educated to the value of biodiversity and watershed protection alone it would seem clear to me that you must decide that your Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 should not even be considered. The top should be totally closed to leasing. Alternative 3 should also be closed for any future leasing, watershed protection and maintaining values of wilderness characteristics would be most important there. And determination of additional protection would be gained for the streams, sensitive fish, and unique hanging gardens by determining that eight eligible stream reaches are suitable for designation under the Wild and Scenic River Act. In the Alternative 4 there should be additional protection from Alternative 3 for eligible stream reaches under the Wild and Scenic River Act, and to maintain wilderness characteristics within the three wilderness inventory units.

By putting protections in place in this PLAN, the staff that is on board now at the agency may be able to face the next generations with some confidence that their due diligence will be greatly appreciated and admired. Widening 49 miles of access roads should be a no-no. One rare butterfly, five rare birds and one rare mammal species must be taken into consideration as well as waterfalls, and the area that includes the Parachute penstemon which is extremely rare. Anvil Points ACEC, Magpie Gulch ACEC, East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC and Trapper Creek/Northwater Creek ACEC are places well studied and their protection should be automatic.

Thank you for the study you are giving to this area that is loved by so many.

Sincerely,
Jan Burch
395 Lime Kiln Way
Grand Junction, CO 81507



0046-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0046-2 Opinion - Alternatives

BLM presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment in preparing the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Wild and Scenic Rivers and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0046-1

0046-2

From: jamie@wpa.com
 To: jamie@wpa.com
 Subject: Recommendations for the new plan
 Date: Tue Feb 18, 2015 12:22 pm

February 14, 2015

Dear Pat,

Please be aware of the data aggregation vast numbers of people have for this area. It is clear that in 2015 we did not have the data to allow the agency to make the correct decisions for the gas development. That was a critically-motivated decision. There is great support from a variety of people in our country for protection of these public lands.

If we need to send the long list of lambs why do and gas leasing should be handled and outlined we can do that. But if you are looking to the view of protection, the water and protection zone it would seem clear to me that you must handle that your Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 should not even be considered. The top should be closed to leasing. Alternative 3 should also be closed for any future leasing. We need protection and maintaining values of wilderness characteristics would be most important here. And we need to add more protection would be gained for the stream, sensitive fish, and riparian habitat. Guidance for determining that right eligible stream reaches are suitable for designation under the Wild and Scenic River Act. In the Alternative 4 there should be additional protection from Alternative 3 for riparian stream reaches under the Wild and Scenic River Act, and to maintain wilderness characteristics within the three wilderness inventory units.

By putting protections in place in this RIA, the staff that is on board now at the agency may be able to take the next generation with some confidence that their due diligence will be greatly appreciated and valued. Withholding 40 miles of access roads should be 20-30. One rare butterfly, five rare birds and one rare mammal species must be taken into consideration as well as wetlands, and the area that includes the Paria Plateau which is extremely rare. Anvil Point ACEC, Maple Gulch ACEC, East Fork Paria Plateau ACEC and Tipton Creek ACEC are places well studied and their protection should be automatic.

Thank you for the study you are doing in this area that is loved by so many.

Sincerely,
 Jan Butler
 392 Lime Kiln Way
 Grand Junction, CO 81507





Public Comment Form Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

We want your comments! If you have any comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, please complete and submit this comment sheet to ensure your input is considered. You can submit this comment sheet at the public meeting, or mail to the following address (49-cent postage required):

Roan Plateau Comments
BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

You may also email comments to roanplateau@blm.gov.

The Draft EIS is available on the BLM's Website at: <http://www.blm.gov/co/crvfo>. Hard copies are available for review at the Parachute, Silt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale public libraries, or at the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO). CDs are available in limited quantities by request from the CRVFO.

Effective Public Commenting: The most helpful comments are those that identify: 1) an error in analysis that may affect the outcome; 2) additional information that would change analysis and conclusions; 3) something that should be clarified; or 4) a substantially different alternative that meets the purpose and need statement and has not been considered. Comments are most effective when they are as specific as possible; contain references to page numbers and sections of the document where applicable; and are backed with explanations, facts, and references, as appropriate.

All public comments are due by February 18, 2016.

If you have no comments or questions, but would like to be on our mailing list, please complete the contact information on the reverse side.

I would like to support alternative #4 along with consideration of or of identified wild horse & burro suitable areas. I feel that this proposal is both in the best interest as well benefit of the people of COEMA

[Signature]
(Kevin M. Maxwell)

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FEB 18 2016
COLORADO RIVER VALLEY FIELD OFFICE

0051-1

0051-1 Opinion - Alternatives
BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the Final SEIS. Wild and Scenic Rivers were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.



Public Comment Form
**Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/
 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement**

0053

0053-1 Opinion
 Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

We want your comments! If you have any comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, please complete and submit this comment sheet to ensure your input is considered. You can submit this comment sheet at the public meeting, or mail to the following address (49-cent postage required):

Roan Plateau Comments
 BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
 2300 River Frontage Road
 Silt, CO 81652

You may also email comments to roanplateau@blm.gov.

The Draft EIS is available on the BLM's Website at: <http://www.blm.gov/co/crvfo>. Hard copies are available for review at the Parachute, Silt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale public libraries, or at the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO). CDs are available in limited quantities by request from the CRVFO.

Effective Public Commenting: The most helpful comments are those that identify: 1) an error in analysis that may affect the outcome; 2) additional information that would change analysis and conclusions; 3) something that should be clarified; or 4) a substantially different alternative that meets the purpose and need statement and has not been considered. Comments are most effective when they are as specific as possible; contain references to page numbers and sections of the document where applicable; and are backed with explanations, facts, and references, as appropriate.

All public comments are due by February 18, 2016.

If you have no comments or questions, but would like to be on our mailing list, please complete the contact information on the reverse side.

<p align="center">Roan Plateau Comments - Feb. 16, 2016</p> <p>The Roan Plateau is a very special place and it needs to be protected for future generations. I'm a great old Broad for Wilderness and I am old (pushing 84) much of my adult life I have been hiking and backpacking. I can't do that anymore. Future generations need to enjoy that privilege. The Roan Plateau has wonderful flowers, some rare penstemons and lovely columbine prunellas and many more. The major waterfall is unique in Colorado. It is truly a special place. We don't need to "drill baby drill" on the Roan. What disruption is there now is more than we need.</p> <p>Save the Roan, save the environment, save our pristine areas for our future generations. Please</p> <p align="right">Thank you Joyce D. Olson 2068 Snow Mesa Lane Grand Junction, CO 81507 970 243 6296</p>

0053-1



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8

1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202-1129
Phone 800-227-8917
www.epa.gov/region08

February 18, 2016

Ref: 8EPR-N

Karl Mendonca
BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652

Re: Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental
Draft EIS #20150330

Dear Mr. Mendonca:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 has reviewed the Roan Plateau Planning Area Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO). Our comments are provided for your consideration in accordance with our responsibilities under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA).

Project Description

The Draft SEIS considers land use planning decisions for management of approximately 73,800 acres of Federal land in western Garfield County and a small portion of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. This includes 56,540 acres of the former Naval Oil Shale Reserves Numbers 1 and 3. This new planning effort and supporting environmental analysis addresses information and alternatives analyzed in the BLM's 2006 Proposed RMPA/FEIS, supplemented with additional analyses in response to issues identified by the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. It also addresses new issues raised in internal and external scoping for the supplement. The Draft SEIS analyzes goals, objectives, allowable uses, and management actions for the planning area, and includes these four alternatives:

- Alternative I: the No Action Alternative
- Alternative II: the 2006 FEIS Proposed Plan Alternative
- Alternative III: the Community Alternative, and
- Alternative IV: the Settlement Alternative, which is the BLM Preferred Alternative and incorporates the terms of a settlement agreement signed between the BLM and the plaintiffs and interveners in a Federal lawsuit over the 2006 Roan Plateau FEIS. Above the rim, approximately 1,830 acres would remain open, and 28,660 acres would be closed to oil and gas development. Below the rim, approximately 11,170 acres would be open, and 6,310 acres would be closed to oil and gas leasing and development.

The plan amendment that is ultimately adopted may combine components from each of the alternatives presented in the Draft SEIS.

The EPA’s Comments and Recommendations

As a cooperating agency for this project, we’ve appreciated the opportunity to work closely with the BLM prior to the public release of the Draft SEIS. Our comments focus on (1) water resources, (2) air resources, and (3) greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change.

(1) Water Resources

Identify Underground Sources of Drinking Water or usable water

The Draft SEIS states that the chemistry of many groundwater sources both atop and below the rim are not of drinking water quality, and/or “are not known to contain significant useable water-bearing zones” (pgs. 3-34 to 3-37 and 4-39 to 4-40). This is confusing because most of the groundwater resources identified in the Draft SEIS do meet the BLM definition of usable water under Onshore Order No. 2, which are “those waters containing up to 10,000 ppm of total dissolved solids” which must be reported, protected and/or isolated under Onshore Order 2. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), these aquifers are also considered Underground Sources of Drinking Water (USDW) if their total dissolved solids (TDS) concentrations are ≤ 10,000 mg/L. As such, these USDWs are subject to protection during injection activity under the SDWA unless an aquifer exemption has been granted. Therefore, we recommend identifying all groundwater sources that qualify as usable water as defined by Onshore Order No. 2 and USDW as defined by SDWA.

Identify geologic structural relationships where communication of fluids from production zones with shallow aquifers may be more likely

Page 3-32 of the Draft SEIS states that “fractures are ubiquitous in both the upper and lower aquifers, leading to relatively high conductivity rates. These fractures increase the propagation of fluids throughout both aquifer systems, including movement through the semi-permeable Mahogany confining zone. The majority of these fluids are discharged at numerous springs, seeps, and creeks.” Because of these findings, we recommend inclusion of a comprehensive geologic map, demonstrating the orientation, distribution, and density of faults and fractures in the study area. These maps can help guide well placement or identify where additional measures may be necessary to protect groundwater resources (i.e., in areas of high fracture density, zones containing conjugate or bimodal fracture sets, or faults).

Discuss what measures are in place to protect groundwater, including groundwater that supports seeps, springs, perennial streams and CRCT habitat

Page 3-35 of the Draft SEIS states that “atop the plateau, groundwater is discharged from the upper aquifer unit and possibly lower unit (see comments above on leaky Mahogany Zone) at numerous springs and seeps, which contribute to base flows in the East Fork Parachute Creek and East Middle Fork Parachute Creek basins.” The Draft SEIS describes the contribution of seeps and springs to other perennial streams (p. 3-13), some of which contain populations of the genetically pure Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRCT). Protection of seeps, springs, wetlands and other surface waters is dependent not only on protection from surface-disturbances, but also on protection against groundwater contamination. We recommend including in the Final EIS a discussion on the protective measures for groundwater that

0054-1 Water Resources

The text has been revised based on this comment in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4.2 and in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.1 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

Four water-bearing zones are identified. The water quality of samples collected from the zones is discussed, including meeting drinking water standards with a few exceptions. However, it is noted that, "Waters with dissolved solids concentrations in excess of 1,000 mg/L are not freshwater; more than 500 mg/L of dissolved solids is undesirable for drinking purposes." Appendix B of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS (Information Related to Oil and Gas Leasing, Permitting, and Development: Typical Oil and Gas Operations) addresses properly setting and cementing surface casing to protect aquifers from contamination by drilling and production operations, stating that minimum standards and enforcement provisions are part of Onshore Order No. 2. Best management practices for preventing the degradation of groundwater are also noted in Appendix H of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. During site-specific permitting and in accordance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, an assessment of usable water(s) is completed and practices are applied to protect the identified usable water(s).

0054-1

0054-2 Water Resources

BLM has determined that the inclusion of a comprehensive geologic map would not provide useful information or insight into the analysis of potential impacts in this programmatic document. Instead, such information may appropriately guide well placement or necessary measures for protecting groundwater resources when site-specific projects are analyzed for a Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill.

0054-2

At the site-specific stage of permitting, appropriate mitigation measures are required during well development to minimize potential adverse impacts. Appendix B of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS (Information Related to Oil and Gas Leasing, Permitting, and Development: Typical Oil and Gas Operations) discusses properly setting and cementing surface casing to protect aquifers from contamination by drilling and production operations, stating that minimum standards and enforcement provisions are part of Onshore Order No. 2. The water resources analysis (Section 4.2.4) assumes that oil and gas operators will comply with all local, state, and Federal laws and regulations, especially as they relate to state and Federal

0054-2
Continued

groundwater protection, storm water, and 404 permitting. The analysis also assumes that appropriate best management practices listed in Appendix H would be implemented for all ground-disturbing activities under the Action Alternatives, as appropriate to individual projects.

These would include casing, cementing, and well-monitoring requirements under COGCC rules, BLM regulations including the Onshore Orders, Standard Operating Procedures, best management practices, and conditions of approval issued by the BLM.

The inclusion of a well bore diagram would not provide useful information or insight into the analysis of potential impacts in this programmatic document, but would apply to a site-specific analysis.

0054-2 cont'd Water Resources

will be required for this project. These measures are particularly important where geologic structures or deep aquifers under artesian pressure (i.e., Williams Fork) are likely to increase communication with deeper fluids that may become contaminated by drilling and completion activities, and in areas where groundwater supports seeps or springs which contribute to perennial springs containing CRCT habitat. We also recommend including wellbore diagrams depicting cement and casing requirements that will be implemented to protect groundwater sources in the project area.

Disclose all known previous groundwater impacts related to industry activities within the planning area and consider additional mitigation options, especially within the retained leases

The Draft SEIS discusses the 2013 Williams Company spill event (pgs. 3-19 and 3-35) that contaminated groundwater down gradient of the original spill, at least two other contaminant release events were reported in the planning area in 2008 (the Berry Petroleum and Marathon Oil Garden Gulch spill and Williams Company Prather Springs spill), and several other spill events that have been reported elsewhere in the region. In many of these cases, it is unclear how long the release or releases were occurring before they were discovered. Prompt identification of spill events will help prevent significant negative impacts. We recommend that the Final EIS identify where existing groundwater monitoring wells are located and consider inclusion of new dedicated groundwater monitoring wells where appropriate to detect spill events in remote or sensitive areas which otherwise may go undetected until significant impacts have already occurred. Groundwater monitoring wells should be located both up- and down- gradient of production or injection wells to identify contamination before impacts to USDW or groundwater supported springs, seeps or CRCT habitat become significant. This is particularly important for retained leases under the Settlement Agreement, in those portions of the leases that overlap with the natural recharge area of the Piceance Basin as displayed in Maps 11 and 18. Please clarify whether or not any groundwater-specific monitoring programs will be required.

In the Settlement Agreement (Exhibit 2, Part F.), disclosure of drilling and production chemicals are required for activities within the retained leases. In addition we recommend considering the required disclosure of all chemicals introduced to the wellbore (including maintenance chemicals) for leases above the rim at a minimum. Knowledge of the chemicals present is necessary to evaluate the potential for impacts related to unintended releases of flowback, produced water, drilling fluids, etc., as well as evaluation of appropriate remediation actions should a release to the environment occur.

Identify potential cumulative impacts related to groundwater drawdown and riparian/wetland areas

Page 4-49 of the Draft SEIS states that “under Alternative IV, 1,892 acre-feet/year depletions of fresh water would be estimated from development of Federal wells (Table 4.2.6).” The EPA recommends identifying how much (if any) of this freshwater use is expected to come from groundwater. Consider discussing the maximum groundwater drawdown that seeps and springs can tolerate before negative impacts develop. Please also consider timing limitations for groundwater use to minimize impacts to wetlands, seeps, and springs, particularly those that support perennial streams with populations of CRCT.

Page 4-107 of the Draft SEIS states that “a large number of riparian/wetland areas would be expected to return to PFC over time, resulting in moderate beneficial impacts within the Planning Area. Please clarify whether “return to PFC” means there is an anticipated recovery from current status as a result of development under Alternative 4, or that impacts as a result of development will eventually be returned

0054-2 0054-2 cont'd Water Resources
Continued

0054-3 Water Resources

All known wells and their classification, according to the Colorado State Engineers Office, are described in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4.2 and maps are included in Appendix A. As noted in Section 2, under Alternatives II and IV, baseline water quality data and a monitoring program would be established for drainages prior to allowing surface-disturbing activities, disturbance-related water quality changes would be assessed, and mitigation measures would be identified and implemented to meet water-quality standards as needed. In addition, as the approved RMPA is being implemented, BLM would monitor and evaluate how well the plan is guiding the Planning Area toward desired or acceptable resource conditions. If management issues are not being resolved or suitable conditions are not being met, the RMPA may be further amended or revised within the constraints of valid existing rights (Section 1.6).

0054-3

0054-4 Hazardous Materials

Alternative IV, the Proposed Plan, includes specific stipulations consistent with the Settlement Agreement. However, BLM has the authority to determine if additional disclosures, or application of potential BMPs, are warranted at site-specific project implementation. In addition, development activity must adhere to state and Federal law, including applicable disclosure requirements in effect at the time that development occurs.

0054-4

0054-5 Water Resources

Because the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a planning-level document, the BLM cannot determine what portion of estimated water depletions under Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative, would be derived from specific groundwater sources. Project specific, on-site evaluations of existing seeps and springs would be conducted during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process. Streams, riparian areas, and wetlands are protected under Alternative IV by NGD/NSO and SSR/CSU protections.

0054-5

0054-6

0054-6 Water Resources

This excerpt is under the "Upland Vegetation and Riparian/Wetland Areas Management" subsection (4.3.1). As such, this statement refers to management actions for riparian/wetland areas that, when implemented, would result in returning areas to PFC. The following subsections specifically address oil and gas leasing and development, grazing and rangeland management, etc.

to PFC.

Surface Water Resources

A number of streams in the planning area fall into Colorado's Integrated Report Categories 2 and 3 (insufficient data to determine if designated uses are being met). We recommend attempting to fill in these water quality data gaps. For example, operators could work with the United States Geological Survey to reopen some existing monitoring stations that had provided data through the 1980s (assuming the stations are still there but have been shut down). More recent monitoring data would help CDPHE determine water quality status for some of these streams. Given the sensitivity and high-quality of these resources, we recommend a specific commitment to monitor water quality on a regular basis, perhaps quarterly (pre-construction for baseline conditions, as well as during operations).

(2) Air Resources

The EPA has a number of comments and recommendations regarding the air quality analysis completed for the Draft EIS. We believe working together to address these concerns will result in an analysis that will allow decision-makers and others to better understand potential air quality impacts from the project. These comments focus on the following: uncertainties in the far-field photochemical grid modeling (PGM); the ozone analysis; the air quality related values (AQRV) analysis; criteria pollutant analysis; and the near-field modeling analysis.

Uncertainty in Far-Field PGM Modeling Analysis

Given the uncertainties in the model performance, it is possible that the predicted impacts are underestimated for ozone, ARQVs, and other criteria pollutants. For instance, the Colorado Air Resources Management Modeling Study (CARMMS) Model Performance Evaluation (MPE) results indicated that the model was biased low for ozone and its precursors. The MPE also indicated that the wet sulfur and nitrogen deposition were underestimated, and it is possible that the predicted impacts are underestimated. We recommend including a section in the Final EIS that discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the modeling platform based on the results of the CARMMS MPE. This section should also explain how these uncertainties found in the MPE should be used to interpret the model results.

Ozone Analysis

In October 2015, the EPA strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone from 75 ppb to 70 ppb, based on extensive scientific evidence about ozone's effects on public health and welfare¹. We recognize that this change occurred just prior to the publication of the Draft SEIS and recommend, to the extent possible, that the ozone analysis results in the Final EIS be presented relative to this revised ozone standard of 70 ppb.

To more comprehensively understand the modeled impacts to ozone in the planning area, we recommend that the ozone analysis includes the total or cumulative modeled concentration associated with the maximum contributions of the planning area contained in Table 4.2.17, and the location(s) of the maximum contributions predicted in the model domain. This is important because it aids in

¹ Ozone Standard – Final Rule: <http://www3.epa.gov/airquality/ozonepollution/actions.html#current>

0054-6 0054-6 cont'd Water Resources
Continued

0054-7 0054-7 Water Resources
As noted in Section 2, under Alternatives II and IV, baseline water quality data and a monitoring program would be established for drainages prior to allowing surface-disturbing activities, disturbance-related water quality changes would be assessed, and mitigation measures would be identified and implemented to meet water-quality standards as needed. In addition, as the approved RMPA is being implemented, BLM would monitor and evaluate how well the plan is guiding the Planning Area toward desired or acceptable resource conditions. If management issues are not being resolved or suitable conditions are not being met, the RMPA may be further amended or revised within the constraints of valid existing rights (Section 1.6). Specific requirements for surface water monitoring would be determined during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process, based on the specific proposal.

0054-8 0054-8 Climate and Air Quality
The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS references the CARMMS report, which contains detailed information and an appendix dedicated to describing the Model Performance Evaluation (MPE) for the 4-km modeling domain (covering all of Colorado and portions of nearby states). An MPE is developed to determine how well the model predicts base year conditions (i.e., actual measured values) and therefore, assists in determining the accuracy of analysis. When and where monitoring data are available (including many locations for the modeled base year), the model results for the MPE have been used in a relative sense through the use of USEPA's Modeled Attainment Test Software (MATS) which mitigates potential model biases. Using EPA performance metrics, the MPE shows that the model performed acceptably for predicting ozone and other impacts. Results of the MPE, including both strengths and weaknesses, can be found in the CARMMS report available at http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/air_quality.html.

0054-9 0054-9
0054-10 0054-10

Although the MPE shows that the model performed acceptably, the reliability and usefulness of the CARMMS future year 2021 modeling analysis should not be determined based solely on the MPE. The modeling analysis features multiple simulations accounting for a range of future oil and gas emissions

scenarios all of which are relative to each other in terms of performance metrics. These data are useful for estimating a range of expected air quality impacts for each source apportionment area and for describing the atmospheric response from emissions loading from specific groupings of oil and gas sources, as well as the residual impacts from the analyzed mitigation methodologies.

0054-9 Climate and Air Quality
Chapter 3, Section 3.2.5, Table 3.2.14 - Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5 were updated throughout to reflect the new standard.

0054-10 Climate and Air Quality
The cumulative modeled ozone concentrations were added to Table 4.2.17 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS and the locations are shown in the associated figures.

understanding the nature of the projected impacts and their potential severity. In addition, we recommend a discussion, with appropriate references to figures, explaining that the ozone analysis includes an ambient concentration analysis using absolute modeling results and relative modeling results. This information will assist in understanding the relevance of the planning area contributions to the total ozone impacts.

The 2011 to 2014 ambient air quality monitoring ozone data presented in the DSEIS (page 3-45, Table 3.2.16) shows an average design value for monitors with three years of data of approximately 67 ppb and the predicted impact of an additional 1.7 to 3.8 ppb ozone increase (page 4-66, Table 4.2.17). In light of this we recommend that mitigation be considered, even for the low scenario that BLM believes is closest to the Preferred Alternative, since the modeled impact may be underestimated and the average design value is 95.7% of the revised ozone standard of 70 ppb in and around the planning area. It may be beneficial to consider mitigation measures from Table VI-I Best Management Practices and Air Emission Reduction Strategies for Oil and Gas Development in the BLM's current Comprehensive Air Resources Protection Protocol.

AORV Analysis

In reviewing the cumulative visibility analysis starting on page 4-77, we found it difficult to interpret the information presented in this section, specifically the results presented in the tables on pages 4-79, 4-87, and 4-88. As outlined in the CARMMS modeling protocol and discussed during past workgroup meetings, it is our understanding that the cumulative visibility analysis would follow the procedures, or the six steps, outlined in the February 10, 2012 Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) letter on the subject. However, we were unable to determine whether these steps were followed to generate the results included in this section. For instance, it is not clear whether the "2008 Base" visibility results included in tables 4.2.22b and 4.2.22d were generated from monitoring data or the 2008 base year modeling. Therefore, we recommend either including a discussion of procedures used to generate the results for the cumulative visibility analysis in the Final EIS, or sharing this information with us through a future technical workgroup meeting. We anticipate that our confusion regarding the presentation of cumulative visibility impacts would be alleviated if we were able to understand how the information presented in this section aligns with the steps outlined by the 2012 FWS letter.

We also found it difficult to interpret Tables 4.2.21a, 4.2.21b and 4.2.21c (page 4-79). The results do not appear to summarize the baseline visibility and total visibility impairment, but instead provide the improvement in visibility from 2008 to the future year. Additionally, these results do not compare impacts to the No Action alternative, as recommended in the 2012 FWS letter. The reader could potentially make the comparisons between the emission scenarios. However, the results do not necessarily capture the impacts associated with the Action Alternatives. This makes it difficult to understand whether cumulative visibility goals may be impeded by the project.

The presentation of cumulative impacts from all Colorado oil and gas sources in the quasi-cumulative analysis, which uses the 0.5 dv and 1.0 dv thresholds as cumulative metrics, is not clear and seems to indicate that there is reason for concern regarding visibility impairment from all Colorado oil and gas (both federal and non-federal). Given that these metrics have not been used to assess the significance of visibility impairment from such a vast source group (statewide oil and gas emissions), we recommend reassessing whether there is value in presenting the quasi-cumulative analysis that compares all Colorado oil and gas emission impacts to the FLAG2010 visibility thresholds. If relevance cannot be

0054-11 0054-11 Climate and Air Quality
Additional information has been added to the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS in Section 4.2.5.3 to describe the relationship between relative modeling approach and the absolute ozone analysis. Figures 4.2-14 through 4.2-16 in Section 4.2.5.5 show the predicted Planning Area contribution to ambient ozone for the fourth highest 8-hour average daily maximum period for the high, medium, and low development scenarios.

0054-12

0054-12 Climate and Air Quality
Mitigation is required on a case-by-case basis for specific projects or when CARMMS modeling suggests the need for emissions controls on planning areas or specific source groups. For this SEIS, the CARMMS source apportionment impacts do not suggest the need for additional emissions control requirements to be applied plan wide.

0054-13 Climate and Air Quality
Visibility impacts are included in Section 4.2.5.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. BLM uses the FLAG2010 baseline concentrations as a basis for projecting visibility contribution impacts. For making adequate decisions, it is understood that BLM should not only make its decisions using source area specific (source apportionment) concentrations but also cumulative concentrations, and in addition, cumulative Colorado Federal contributions since this is BLM's decision space. The difference between Source Groups R and S sheds light on the non-Federal contribution and the analysis clearly explains that for some geographic regions / Class I areas that the Colorado Federal contributions are less and sometimes more than Colorado non-Federal contributions. This information is relevant for the decision maker.

0054-13 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

0054-13
Continued

assigned to the quasi-cumulative impacts that are above these thresholds, we recommend removing these results and discussion from this section.

The EPA has consistently made recommendations on the methodology for presenting the visibility analysis. Specifically, we continue to recommend comparing the visibility results among the development scenarios, in addition to comparing or disclosing the differences between the future year (2021) and base year (2008) modeled visibility results. A comparison or difference among the future proposed development and the base year would be expected to show an overall net improvement (or reduction in impacts) as a result of state and federal control measures (including Regional Haze Regulations). Therefore, presenting the results in a manner that shows the difference among the development scenarios assists in evaluating the range of effects attributable to each alternative. Note that this approach should also be used for NAAQS pollutant analyses (i.e. pages 4-90 to 4-96).

Finally, the CARMMS results indicate that the planning area’s contribution to nitrogen deposition is above the DAT at many of the locations analyzed. However, the magnitude of the cumulative (or total) nitrogen load was not presented to assess whether the area is projected to experience nitrogen deposition exceeding the critical load. We recommend that the analysis connects the planning area impacts with the cumulative impacts to better gauge the significance of the planning area’s activities within the cumulative context.

Criteria Pollutant Analysis

Certain analyses that are typically included in NEPA air quality assessments are missing from the Draft SEIS. Specifically, assessments of the following impacts are missing: NAAQS for 1-hour SO₂, 1-hour and 8-hour CO, and 24-hour PM₁₀ for planning area contributions and cumulative impacts; and a comparison of planning area impacts to Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) increments. For consistency with other NEPA air quality assessments and to ensure full disclosure, we recommend that these missing analyses be included in the Final EIS. Such information will further support any decisions related to project development.

Near-Field Modeling Analysis

The Draft SEIS (page 4-97) states that a project-specific near-field impact analysis was not performed because the scope of analysis for this EIS is regional and cumulative, and project-specific near-field analyses will be completed when detailed information for future proposed actions is known. We recommend that this important commitment to conduct near-field modeling at the project level included in the Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD), along with a commitment to mitigate adverse air quality impacts identified through the future project-level near-field analyses.

(3) Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change

The Draft SEIS compares total expected Roan Plateau planning area GHG emissions with projected Colorado, U.S. and global GHG emissions. We strongly recommend this be deleted from the Final EIS because these comparisons obscure rather than explain how to consider GHG emissions under NEPA. Climate change is a global problem resulting from the emissions of many individual sources whose impacts are cumulative. The environmental impacts are best described by using emissions as a proxy when comparing the proposal, alternatives and potential mitigation. Similarly, it is not meaningful to

0054-13 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

0054-13
Continued

0054-14 Climate and Air Quality

0054-14

As stated in the CARMMS Report, the cumulative visibility impacts were developed following the recommended procedure provided by the FWS and NPS that uses base year monitored and modeled concentration results for determining future year visibility impacts. The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS presents a comparison of base year 2008 and future year 2021 cumulative visibility concentrations and visibility impact contributions from the Roan Plateau Planning Area-specific source group and from Source Groups R and S for each CARMMS scenario, allowing the reader to compare impacts for the various CARMMS scenarios. Furthermore, these CARMMS scenarios form bookends for the development scenarios, such that all of the alternatives fall between the low and high CARMMS scenarios. The low CARMMS scenario is lower than Alternative I, and the high is equivalent to Alternative II. The medium CARMMS scenarios are roughly equivalent to Alternatives III and IV. Details and more information for the visibility analysis and results are presented in Section 5.3 of the CARMMS Report.

0054-15

0054-15 Climate and Air Quality

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS provides planning area specific contribution to nitrogen deposition for all CARMMS scenarios. As described in the SEIS, the DAT is not an appropriate metric to use for the planning area specific impacts because the projected level of oil and gas development for the alternatives would be made up of multiple "projects," and the DAT is used for comparing single project deposition impacts. Full cumulative nitrogen deposition predicted improvement from year 2008 through year 2021 is currently presented in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS; quasi-cumulative deposition for Source Groups R and S contribution is also presented. Cumulative deposition was added to Tables 4.2.20a, 4.2.20b, and 4.2.20c.

0054-17

0054-18

0054-16 Climate and Air Quality

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS currently provides information for relevant pollutants for oil and gas assessments. SO₂ and CO results for air quality analyses are seldom an issue for oil and gas projects. NO₂ is by far the major combustion-related

0054-18
Continued

pollutant for oil and gas emissions sources and therefore impacts for NO₂ are used as surrogate for other combustion-related pollutants (i.e., CO and SO₂). Likewise, PM_{2.5} impacts are used as surrogate for PM₁₀ impacts. Consideration of PSD increments is available in the CARMMS report, available at http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/air_quality/carmms.html.

0054-17 Climate and Air Quality

The CARPP describes BLM's framework for the use of near-field impacts analysis as part of its NEPA analysis of future project proposals. Mitigation will be required if determined necessary by the project-specific near-field impacts analysis.

0054-18 Climate and Air Quality

The comparison of GHG emissions to the state and the U.S. by relevant sectors is meaningful in that it provides a context of the magnitude of the analysis area emissions. Climate change is a global problem, and it is the cumulative aggregation of sources that should be considered. Given that there is no substantial advancement in the use of models to provide specific impacts due to the emissions on the analysis area of this Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, the only possible proxy is the disclosure of the GHG emissions. The 2008 USEPA modeled source that is being referred to is the single source that EPA modeled to estimate climate change impact contribution and we compare new oil and gas emissions to the single source emissions rates modeled by USEPA to determine how the new oil and gas would contribute to climate change. BLM's methodology of quantifying the estimated GHG emissions from a proposed action, placing them in a regional or global context, and providing qualitative analysis of climate change impacts is consistent with the approach that has been approved by the Interior Board of Land Appeals in Powder River Basin Resource Council, 180 IBLA 119, 134-35 (2010), and Bristlecone Alliance, 179 IBLA 51, 57 (2010), and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in *WildEarth Guardians v. Jewell*, 738 F.3d 298, 309-310 (D.C. Cir. 2013).

0054-18 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

compare either the GHG emissions or impacts from planning level oil and gas activities to a USEPA modeled source referenced in a 2008 memo on Endangered Species Act and GHG Emitting Activities to determine that the projected annual planning area federal oil and gas related emissions would have no measurable impact on the climate. We also note that, given the substantial advancements in climate science and associated models since 2008, we do not recommend referencing the 2008 memo in general.

Lastly, the Draft SEIS considers potential changes to the affected environment that may occur due to climate change (Section 4.2.4). We recommend considering climate change adaptation measures where appropriate.

The EPA’s Rating

In accordance with our responsibilities under the CAA Section 309, it is the EPA’s responsibility to provide an independent review and evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of this project. Based on our review, the EPA is rating Alternative IV, the Preferred Alternative, as “Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information” (EC-2). The “EC” rating is based on the identification of environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. The “2” rating means additional information is needed to more fully characterize impacts. Additional information is also needed on proposed mitigation measures. A full description of the EPA’s rating system can be found at: <http://www2.epa.gov/nepa/environmental-impact-statement-rating-system-criteria>.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft SEIS. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 303-312-6704, or your staff may contact David Fronczak at 303-312-6096 or fronczak.david@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Philip S. Strobel
Director, NEPA Compliance and Review Program
Office of Ecosystems Protection and Remediation

cc: Greg Larson, BLM

0054-18
Continued 0054-18 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

0054-19 0054-19 Climate and Air Quality
The BLM Colorado Air Resource adaptive management strategy also applies to GHG emissions and climate change. Following this approach, GHG emissions and climate change will be addressed over the life of the plan as future guidance and analysis suggest the need to, meaning that BLM Colorado analyses will adapt to changing times of the science for future oil and gas authorizations. Adaptive management practices that will be considered include analyzing impact trends, management actions effectiveness and following new guidance requirements.

0054-20 0054-20 Alternatives
Noted. Specific EPA comments on information needs and impacts are provided separately throughout this response to comments document.

ATTN: Roan Plateau SEIS

0055-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Jim Steitz
564 Esslinger Drive
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

February 16, 2016

Colorado River Valley Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652



To Whom it May Concern,

I urge you to enact a management plan for the Roan Plateau Planning Area that **förbids any oil or gas exploitation, and thereby to uphold BLM's sacred responsibility to the public interest**, as well as the spirit of the 2013 settlement of Conservation Colorado Education Fund, et al. v. Jewell, et al. The Settlement Alternative IV in the DEIS best approaches this plain imperative, by cancelling 16 of the 18 existing leases and enacting more stringent conditions for the remaining leases.

0055-1

The initial decision in 2008 to auction 54,000 acres of the Roan Plateau's hydrocarbon rights was grossly immoral, contrary to the public interest, and conducted in the closing days of an Interior Department political leadership that explicitly abdicated the public interest, in favor of a fanatical pursuit of hydrocarbons in collusion with fossil fuel companies. Today's Interior Department should pay no heed to this legally and morally vacuous precedent. **The Roan Plateau is acclaimed nationally as one of the finest biological Edens in the Intermountain West**, nourishing dozens of scarce and declining fish and wildlife species, and some of the rarest plants known in North America. Few places in BLM custody compare with such a gem that has mercifully escaped industry avarice to the present day. While BLM must often contend with local governments that are solicitous for a share of industry revenue and lobby BLM on their shallow behalf, the strong support of local society for protection of Roan Plateau is strong proof for BLM that not even lucrative financial rewards can dissuade people from its protection.

If the notion of rationally apportioning and balancing benefits and costs of management options, as BLM's charter commands, holds any meaning besides lip service to our environment decorating an industry hegemony, then Roan Plateau must constitute a land off-limits. This is plainly one of the finest biological jewels remaining in BLM custody in Colorado. No conceivable cost-benefit calculation exists, in which BLM could justify slashing new roads and drilling pads into the fragile landscape in exchange for the **very hydrocarbon fuels which this Administration has made a commitment to discourage and divest America from**. America has a severe shortage of remaining vestiges of the extraordinarily ecological tapestry that our ancestors encountered, but an embarrassing surplus of the hydrocarbon fuels that threaten our very survival. BLM has no legally or morally plausible excuse for exchanging one for the other.

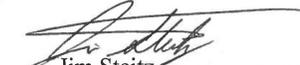
0055-2 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Moreover, the hydrocarbon deposits under the Roan Plateau constitute a net liability to the health and welfare of the American citizenry, not an asset. The US has committed to curtailing its carbon emissions to a level that will leave a habitable climate for our descendants. That commitment is mathematically equal to leaving the vast majority of US fossil fuel deposits in the ground. The lowest-hanging fruit in the tree of policy options for the US government to meet this commitment is to **retain ownership and terminate sales of fossil fuel deposits it already owns, including those under the Roan Plateau.** The Interior Department may not conduct its analysis in a policy and scientific vacuum, pretending for the sake of convenience, institutional inertia, or industry affection that the climate implications of these oil and gas leases are nonexistent. The day is soon coming then BLM will be legally compelled to calculate the economic and social impacts per ton of carbon in its fossil fuel leases, and **subtract them from its assessment of raw economic benefits. Roan Plateau provides a fine opportunity to make that calculation, and to see plainly the negative number that results.**

Again, I urge to select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV) in the new Resource Management Plan for the Roan Plateau Planning Area, and to take all legally available measures to ensure that the remaining two leases are not developed and exploited either. Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,



Jim Steitz

0055-2

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Dan Alvis
Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2016 8:28 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: SEIS comment

I am this letter in opposition to proposed shooting restrictions at Hubbard Mesa. I have been recreating in the area for over sixteen years, and I have participated in clean-ups for thirteen years. I have always been respectful to other users while shooting, and I personally have never seen anyone threatening someone else. I would like to see proof of any incidents that may have occurred in the area. The hyperbole and rhetoric being used by the mountain bikers is absurd and should not taken into consideration. There are already plenty of laws on the books to address any issues that arise, and the fact is that there will always be a percentage of the population either unwilling to comply or are uninformed. I do as much as I can to report any unlawful activity and try to inform people when they are not being safe. I believe that we can police ourselves, but as far as the argument that there is not any law enforcement in the area, I have seen the BLM Ranger on numerous occasions. While mountain bikers have every right to use the area, I do not believe they have the right to just come in and say that they don't agree with how I recreate and that my choice of recreation needs to be banned.

Sincerely,
Daniel Alvis
770 E 17th St
Rifle, CO 81650
(970)309-5368

0057-1 Opinion - Shooting Sports
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft RMPA/SEIS.

| 0057-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Alison Birkenfeld
Sent: Saturday, February 06, 2016 10:28 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard Mesa concerns

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good morning!

My name is Alison Birkenfeld and I am an avid mountain biker and responsible firearm owner, living in Glenwood Springs. I am writing to tell you my concerns with the Hubbard Mesa/JQS area. I have been mountain biking in this area for 2 years now and have had some concerns with the target shooting and the trash left behind from the target shooting user group. I personally choose to unload my firearm in a controlled environment at the shooting range simply out of concern for safety of others. I prefer to ride my bike in an area free of shooting.

My personal experience was witnessing a group of teenagers, pulled off the side of the Fravert road, before the Y in the road-smoking weed, drinking beer and shooting at a TV. This isn't exactly what I would consider a responsible target shooting experience. Granted, there are responsible target shooters but this visual will always stand out in my mind. As I think of all the Rifle locals that like to ride their bikes up from town to get to the trail heads for an afternoon on their bikes, they would have to pass this popular shooting spot where I witnessed these kids being irresponsible. It's just not safe. Do we wait for an accident to happen and then do something about it? Or do we act on preventative measures? I understand that no accidents have been reported due to target shooting but as the mountain biking population grows in Rifle, I can't help but think that the possibilities of an accident will greatly increase.

Using 18 Road in Fruita as a successful model of how we can designate areas for certain user groups is ultimately what I would like to see happen. I support a shooting free zone in the 1/4 mile area discussed at the meeting back in January 2016. This is not about taking away anyone's Second Amendment Rights but more about safety concerns for ALL user groups in the JQS.

Thank you for all the time you all spend managing this area and for being open to our concerns regarding the use of the Hubbard Mesa.

Alison Birkenfeld
 1558 Shepherds Lane
 GWS, CO 81601
 R.A.M.B.O. Rifle Area Mountain Biking Organization supporter
 970-379-3006

0058-1 Opinion - Shooting Sports

Alternative IIIA would prohibit recreational target shooting within 1/4 mile of developed recreation sites (present and future) and, within the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area, within 1/4 mile of the centerline of Fravert Access Road located in Township 6 South, Range 93 West to the Hubbard Mesa Trailhead. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, and Section 4.5.3.4 in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS for discussion related to Alternative IIIA. The analysis of Alternatives I, II, and IV has been revised to note the prohibition on discharge of firearms in present and future developed recreation sites, in accordance with Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.2-5). See Table 2.1, line 173. As noted in Section 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed Plan/FSEIS, under Alternatives I, II, and IV, BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations.

0058-1

February 15, 2016

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652
roanplateau@blm.gov

RE: Comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Colorado River Valley Field Office

Dear Roan Plateau RMPA/SEIS Planning Coordinator:

These comments pertain to the November 2015 climate and air quality analysis in the Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, hereinafter DEIS, for the Roan Plateau Planning Area (Planning Area), including Naval Oil Shale Reserves Numbers 1 & 3.

The climate and air quality analyses for the DEIS do not adequately analyze the air quality impacts that could occur as a result of the actions authorized under the Roan Plateau DEIS, therefore, failing to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA). Specifically; 1) the modeling analysis used in the DEIS does not project emissions for most of the 20-year life of the DEIS, rather, the modeling analysis only extends to 2021, 2) the modeling analysis grossly underrepresents the number of new wells in the Planning Area and therefore air pollution emissions are underrepresented, 3) the DEIS does not include a near-field analysis, 4) the cumulative impacts analysis inadequately demonstrates future impacts from planned projects, and 5) the DEIS does not take into account the already elevated ozone levels near the Roan Plateau.

In the Conservation Colorado Education Fund, et al. v. Jewell, et al. settlement agreement (the 2014 Settlement), the Court remanded the SEIS to the BLM to more fully address three items, two of which were air quality issues. The first being that the cumulative air quality impacts needed to be addressed and the second was that an ozone analysis needed to be included as part of the SEIS. Because of the reasons listed above, the BLM has not fulfilled these requirements. In addition, the DEIS does not satisfy the BLM's obligations under NEPA and FLPMA to disclose whether the proposed development will cause CAA violations.

0059-1 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

0059-2 Climate and Air Quality
The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS air quality analysis utilized the CARMMS Planning Area-specific and cumulative impacts analysis to disclose air quality concentration impact contributions (and relative magnitude) for the projected oil and gas development within the Planning Area. Throughout the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS air quality section, Planning Area-specific impact contributions are presented for air pollutants and related values. As shown in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, in Section 4.2.5.5, Planning Area-specific contributions would be minimal with respect to overall cumulative impacts.

0059-1

0059-2

I have over 16 years of experience working on air quality issues. Thank you for consideration of my comments. Please include me on the mailing list for any future actions on the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan and EIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy = Copeland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Cindy Copeland
Cindycopeland5@gmail.com
1071 Tantra Park Circle
Boulder, CO 80305

Attachment

ATTACHMENT

Detailed Air Quality Comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

I. The Modeling Analysis Does Not Cover the 20-Year Span of the DEIS and Does Not Represent Projected Emissions

The Roan Plateau DEIS uses the Colorado Air Resources Modeling Management Study (CARMMS) developed under the Comprehensive Air Resources Protection Protocol (CARPP). CARMMS uses a base-year of 2008 and future-year projections from 2012 to 2021. CARMMS was developed for the BLM to analyze the air quality impacts from oil and gas and mining development in Colorado. Modeling results are given for three development scenarios: high, medium and low. In the DEIS, the BLM explains that, "Emissions from the high, medium, and low CARMMS scenarios are expected to approximate, but not equal, emissions that could occur from future oil and gas developed under the four alternatives."¹ The high CARMMS scenario is closest to Alternatives II and III from the DEIS while Alternatives I and IV are similar to the CARMMS low development scenario. The development rate is the same for the high and medium scenarios, with the only difference between the scenarios being that the medium scenario includes additional mitigation measures.

Unfortunately, the air quality modeling analysis (CARMMS) is inherently flawed with respect to the Roan Plateau DEIS in that it only extends to year 2021, using a ten-year time period for projections. Given that it's now 2016, the time period for any "projections" is much shorter. The DEIS states that the RMPA would have an anticipated 20-year life,² therefore, the modeling analysis will only cover the first few years of the RMPA being in place. In other words, by the time this DEIS is finalized there will not be many future years left in the modeling analysis. This is a major problem for the air quality analysis because, with a shortened period of analysis, the BLM is not fulfilling basic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for analyzing the impacts of the projected development in the Planning Area. The DEIS does not satisfy the BLM's obligations under NEPA and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to disclose whether the proposed development will cause Clean Air Act (CAA) violations because the analysis does not cover the entirety of the RMPA planning period.

Another significant problem in the DEIS is that although the CARMMS high, medium and low development scenarios are supposed to approximate Alternatives I-IV, the well counts used are much lower in the modeling analysis than in any of the DEIS alternatives. This is significant because well counts were used to determine production rates, and therefore projected emissions from the planned development.³ The high and medium

¹ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-56.
² DEIS, Executive Summary, ES-4.
³ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-56.

0059-3 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

0059-4 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

0059-3

0059-4

0059-4 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

0059-5 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

development scenarios are the most similar to Alternatives II and III (the development rate is the same for the high and medium scenarios), while the low development scenario approximates Alternatives I and IV. But the number of wells used in CARMMS is much lower than projected for all the Alternatives in the DEIS. CARMMS uses only 675 new Federal wells for the high and medium scenarios and 420 (Table 4.2.8) or 464 (in Table 4.2.15) new Federal wells in the Planning Area for the low development scenario during the 10-year time period.⁴ The number of new wells projected in the DEIS for the Planning Area over the 20-year time period are as follows: 1,610 for Alternative I, 3,511 for Alternative II, 2,231 for Alternative III and 2,475 for Alternative IV.⁵ CARMMS is based on a 10-year time period, through 2021, so it can be assumed that the number of wells would be lower than projected for the 20-year life of the RMPA, but even doubling those numbers (a change from 675 to 1,350 for the high scenario and a change from 420 to 840 for the low scenario) does not result in numbers close to the projections in the DEIS. In fact, this analysis is so far off the projections laid out in the DEIS that it is difficult to take the air quality modeling analysis seriously. This is a significant problem and calls into question the entire air analysis portion of this DEIS. Actual emissions will of course be positively impacted by the state of Colorado’s increased requirements for oil and gas development, finalized in 2014 and by EPA’s anticipated final methane rule. But, under NEPA requirements, the full projections in the DEIS must be accounted for in the air quality modeling analysis in order to determine whether the planned project will adversely impact air quality in the Planning Area and surrounding areas.

The DEIS presents impacts for all the criteria pollutants, greenhouse gases and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), but the potential impacts are misrepresented because the modeling analysis does not reflect the actual plans in the DEIS. It can be assumed that future levels of all these pollutants would be higher in the Planning Area due to the planned oil and gas development than the CARMMS modeled impacts show. The results of that modeling analysis are not analyzed or critiqued in these comments because model inputs are so far off the planned alternatives in the DEIS that it’s assumed the results are highly inaccurate.

II. The DEIS Must Include a Modeling Assessment of Near-Field Impacts

The DEIS does not include a near-field modeling assessment, instead, the BLM explains that, “Near-field impacts resulting from individual oil and gas development projects within the Planning Area will be evaluated via separate project-specific NEPA analyses using BLM guidance and the air quality impact tools developed under CARPP and CARMMS specifically for this purpose.”⁶ This is contrary to NEPA requirements and in fact, the BLM’s own Land Use Planning Handbook explains that the analysis of alternatives in the draft EIS must,

“... provide adequate information to evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of each alternative in order to determine the best mix

⁴ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-57 and 4-64.
⁵ DEIS, Executive Summary, ES-8.
⁶ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-53.

0059-4
Continued

0059-5

of potential planning decisions to achieve the identified goals and objectives (the analysis should also specifically address the attainment, or non-attainment, of Land Health Standards expressed as goals). The assumptions and timeframes used for analysis purposes (such as reasonably foreseeable development scenarios) should be documented.⁷

Even though, at the planning stage, many project-specific development details are not well known it is certainly possible for the BLM to determine projected emissions based on the known requirements for economically and technically feasible development, the specifics of the viable development locations and the proposed scale of development.

Without a near-field dispersion modeling analysis the BLM cannot know if the proposed development in the Planning Area will cause NAAQS exceedances or consume more than the PSD increments allow. Putting off any rigorous analysis until source-specific permits are issued or project-specific EISs are proposed means that the BLM is not fulfilling its obligations under NEPA and FLPMA to consider means to mitigate significant impacts to human health or the environment via this EIS process. Furthermore, many of the sources associated with the proposed development (*e.g.*, area sources and smaller point sources) may not trigger the need for the operator(s) to obtain a permit from the state that would include a near-field modeling analysis and therefore, the referenced state analysis will not occur for these sources. It is only fair to the public and those with an interest in developing these resources that the BLM establish, up front, what levels of control may be required in order to accommodate the level of increased development in the region being proposed under the DEIS. And, in fact, other Resource Management Plan updates in Colorado have included a much more comprehensive modeling assessment of impacts, including near-field modeling analyses. For example, the final Little Snake RMP included near-field, far-field and cumulative modeling.⁸

In order to comply with 40 CFR 1502.24 (to ensure the professional and scientific integrity of the air quality analysis), the air quality analysis should include a near-field analysis to assess localized air quality impacts. Such an analysis should be performed to assess whether the activities allowed under the DEIS scenarios would comply with the NAAQS and the PSD Class II increments. The inputs for this analysis should include all of the air pollution source categories allowed under the development scenarios of the DEIS. The maximum emission rates from sources over the averaging times of the standard for which compliance is being assessed should be modeled. The modeling analysis should use an EPA approved model and should be based on at least one year of quality-assured, on-site, representative meteorological data or, if no on-site data is available, five years of meteorological data from the closest meteorological station representative of the area. See, *e.g.*, Sections 9.3.a, 9.3.1.2 and 9.3.3.2 of EPA's Guidelines on Air Quality Models at 40 CFR Part 51, Appendix W. For the NAAQS analysis, appropriate background concentrations reflective of current air quality in the area should be added to the modeling results.

⁷ BLM, "Land Use Planning Handbook," H-1601-1, March 11, 2005, 22.

⁸ See http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/lsfo/plans/rmp_revision.html

0059-6 Climate and Air Quality

Please see response to comment number 0036-25, section 3.

BLM conducts project-specific near-field air quality impact analyses when reviewing specific oil and gas development proposals which provide the detailed information on timing, location, and emissions source equipment and operations needed to conduct a complete analysis. The BLM Colorado Air Resources Program has already developed an Instruction Memorandum (IM) addressing the adequacy, consistency, and efficiency of project-level emissions inventories and procedures for conducting near-field analyses as a result of proposed future project-specific development. The BLM has provided this IM to air quality stakeholder work groups to ensure the approach aligns with accepted methodologies (near-field air quality modeling guidelines, etc.) and approaches for analyzing potential impacts for oil and gas development.

0059-6

Near-field modeling analyses were conducted for previous BLM Colorado RMP EISs when location and project-level information was not known in order to attempt to develop a "one size fits all"- type analysis that could be used or leveraged for subsequent project-level analyses over the life of the plan. BLM Colorado has decided not to follow this approach in this SEIS because the previous analyses have not proven as useful as anticipated, requiring extensive updating once actual oil and gas development information (location, timing, equipment parameter values, etc.) is known.

0059-7

Appendix A of the CARPP describes the oil and gas NEPA analysis process and methodology. This appendix describes the approach for conducting project-specific near-field analyses.

0059-7 Climate and Air Quality

Please see response to comment numbers 0036-25, section 3, and 0059-6.

Clearly, the DEIS failed to model the near-field impacts of the proposed development to determine compliance with NAAQS and PSD Class II increments as required by NEPA. The BLM must perform a quantitative assessment of near-field impacts as part of this DEIS. This analysis is necessary for the BLM, and the public, to understand the potential human health effects of the activities associated with the proposed additional development in the region and in order for the agency to comply with federal statutes and regulations.

The EPA has addressed the need for quantitative impact assessments prior to any further [project-specific] planning decisions under NEPA. Specifically, EPA stated that the BLM “has an obligation under NEPA to fully consider the reasonably foreseeable developments including proposed tar sands and oil shale activities that are likely in the next several decades, as well as the expansion of existing oil and gas operations *regardless of whether or not an application for drilling has been submitted to your office.*”⁹ (Emphasis added). This would indicate that the EPA does not support waiting until there are project-specific requests before fully assessing air quality impacts, including those to ambient ozone concentrations. The EPA also explicitly recommended, for the proposed West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan DEIS, that the BLM “prepare a Supplemental Draft EIS that includes modeled demonstrations of both this project and cumulative pollutant emissions sources from other activities in the Uinta Basin demonstrating whether the proposed action will contribute to violations of the ozone NAAQS.”¹⁰

The BLM goes as far as downplaying the potential air quality impacts of the proposed development, stating that,

In general, individual projects will have temporary negative impacts on air quality that will mostly occur during the construction phase...Construction will also produce short-term emissions of criteria, HAP, and GHG pollutants from vehicle and construction equipment exhausts...Emissions will result from vehicle exhausts from the maintenance and process technician visits. Well pads can be expected to produce fugitive emissions of well gas, which contains mostly methane and a minor fraction of VOC. Fugitive emissions may also result from pressure-relief valves and working and breathing losses from any tanks located at the site, as well as any flanges, seals, valves, or other infrastructure connections used at the site. Liquid product load-out operations will also generate fugitive emissions of VOCs and vehicular emissions. Most operations will be subject to some portions of existing pollution control regulations, which would mitigate some or all of the expected fugitive emissions from flashing, load-outs, and leaks. Some control equipment (e.g., flares) will produce emissions of criteria, HAP, and

⁹ February 8, 2008 letter from Larry Svoboda, EPA region 8, to William Stringer, BLM Vernal Field Office, Re: Draft Modeling Protocol for the Uinta Basin Air Quality Study, p. 1.

¹⁰ February 4, 2008 letter from Larry Svoboda, EPA region 8, to William Stringer, BLM Vernal Field Office, Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for EOG Resources Inc., Chapita Wells-Stagecoach Area Natural Gas Development, CEQ #20070549, p. 3.

0059-8

0059-8 Climate and Air Quality

Please see responses to comment numbers 0036-25, section 3, and 0059-6.

The West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan DEIS analyzed impacts for an actual natural gas development project, and therefore, evaluated much more detailed information for development than is being analyzed for this planning-level analysis. For actual submitted plans similar to the West Tavaputs Natural Gas Full Field Development Plan, BLM Colorado would conduct project level impacts analysis and near-field impacts analysis following the methodology described in the CARPP Appendix (IM).

GHG emissions via combustion.¹¹

This is not an accurate representation of the ongoing air emissions from oil and gas operations. The amount of emissions, including volatile organic compounds (VOC) and methane are significant even after the construction phase has ended. And while it's true that existing pollution control regulations should result in reduced emissions from these sources, the potential emissions still need to be analyzed and accounted for in the DEIS. Fugitive emissions from leaking equipment are a far more significant problem than the above language conveys. Recent top-down emissions studies using air monitoring equipment in aircraft show that oil and gas emissions are higher than official estimates. One such study conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Denver-Julesburg Basin in Weld County, Colorado concluded that with respect to the state's inventory, VOC emissions were twice as high, methane emissions were three times higher and benzene emissions were seven times higher.¹²

III. The Cumulative Impacts Analysis Falls Short of Demonstrating Projected Impacts for the Entire Life of the DEIS

For the cumulative impacts analysis, the DEIS again relies on CARMMS, which uses 2008 as the base-year and projects emissions from 2012 through 2021. Unfortunately, ending at year 2021 for future year projections, does not cover much of the 20-year life of the DEIS, which is expected to be finalized during 2016. This failure to consider the full cumulative impacts of the planned development violates NEPA requirements:

Cumulative impact is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.¹³

In the CARMMS analysis, the BLM has included projected impacts from planned projects in the region that will have cumulative impacts in and near the Planning Area. This is an improvement over the 2006 Roan Plateau FEIS, but the cumulative impacts must be considered for the life of the DEIS. The BLM must ensure that all potential sources of emissions are included in the source inventory, that maximum impacts are modeled and that any control technology assumptions used in the analysis are made enforceable in the final EIS. The BLM has an obligation under NEPA to fully consider the cumulative impacts of the project.

¹¹ DEIS, Chapter 4, 4-97.

¹² Pétron, G., et al. (2014), A new look at methane and nonmethane hydrocarbon emissions from oil and natural gas operations in the Colorado Denver Julesburg Basin, J. Geophys. Res. Atmos., 119, 6836–6852, doi:10.1002/2013JD021272.

¹³ 40 CFR §1508.7

0059-9

0059-9 Climate and Air Quality
VOC, HAPs, and GHGs (methane) emissions were calculated and disclosed for the CARMMS scenarios for construction and production phases of projected new oil and gas within the Planning Area. In addition, down-stream / end-use combustion CO2 emissions were estimated for projected Planning Area oil and gas production. The total GHG (including methane) emissions for the Planning Area were included in the GHG emissions and Climate Change impacts analysis, and projected Planning Area VOC emissions were included in CARMMS future year modeling for ozone impacts and other analyses. VOC and methane estimates for the Planning Area are included in Tables 4.2.9 through 4.2.14.

0059-10

0059-10 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

0059-11

0059-11 Climate and Air Quality
Please see responses to comment numbers 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4, and 0054-17.

0059-12 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, section 5.

IV. The BLM Must Acknowledge and Address the Existing High Ozone Levels Near the Roan Plateau Planning Area and Nearby Class I Areas

The BLM must acknowledge the existing high ozone levels in and near the Planning Area and recognize that high background levels of air pollutants can mean that even if the activities analyzed in the DEIS will result in only minor increases in certain pollutants, the aggregate level of pollution that could result might have significant detrimental effects on human health and the environment (*e.g.*, visibility and ecosystems).

Elevated ozone concentrations have been recorded in recent years at monitors near the Planning Area. The highest 8-hour average values for these monitors are mostly in the 60 parts per billion (ppb) range, but there are several higher values at 70 ppb and above (see Table 1, below). These high values are of particular concern because the 8-hour average ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) was lowered to 70 ppb in December 2015.¹⁴

Table 1. Recent 8-Hr Ozone Air Monitoring Data for Northwest Colorado

Site (County)	Site Number	Year	1st high 8-hr O ₃ (ppb)	4th high 8-hr O ₃ (ppb)
Rifle (Garfield)	08-045-0012	2013	65	62
		2014	62	61
		2015 ¹	70	68
Palisade (Mesa)	08-077-0020	2013	68	66
		2014	64	62
		2015 ¹	70	65
Battlement Mesa (Garfield)	08-045-0019	2013	70	69
		2014	63	61
Glenwood Springs (Garfield)	08-045-0020	2015 ¹	65	64
Silt-Colbran (Mesa)	08-077-0022	2013	68	65
		2014	71	63
Grand Mesa (Mesa)	08-077-0021	2013	64	60
Flattops #3 (Garfield)	08-045-0014	2013	69	67
		2014	73	66
Rangely (Rio Blanco)	08-103-0006	2013	106	91
		2014	66	62

¹Year 2015 data were not yet complete at the time of compilation.

Results from the modeling in CARMMS predict that emissions from development in the Planning Area would have a minimal effect on the 4th highest daily 8-hour modeled ozone exceedances. But, for the reasons explained above, the modeling analysis does not

0059-12

0059-13 Climate and Air Quality
Chapter 3, Section 3.2.5, Table 3.2.14 - Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5 were updated throughout the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to reflect the new standard.

0059-13

¹⁴ 80 FR 65292

calculate the full amount of potential emissions and therefore, under predicts the impacts. And because the ozone NAAQS were just lowered in December 2015, the DEIS uses 75 ppb as the standard. As Table 1 shows, there are already ozone monitors recording values at or near the new ozone standard of 70 ppb, so any increase in emissions could increase the number of ozone exceedances and possibly lead to NAAQS violations. Additionally, none of the “current year” ozone design values used in CARMMS are from counties in or nearby the Planning Area. Instead, most of the 8-hour design values used for the 2021 cumulative scenario are from the Front Range.¹⁵ Although these values are generally higher than ozone values near the Planning Area, there are closer ozone monitors (Table 1 above) and the data collected from those monitors should be used in order to be representative of air quality in the actual Planning Area.

Background concentrations of ozone in the Planning Area are at or exceed the NAAQS and leave virtually no room for additional growth in emissions. For the BLM to present alternatives in the DEIS that allow for growth in the emissions that contribute to this existing air quality concern is inconsistent with the CAA’s goal to protect human health and the environment. The importance of protecting the air quality for those people who live in the region, most importantly for sensitive populations, including children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions is huge. Exposure to ozone is a serious concern as it can cause or exacerbate respiratory health problems, including shortness of breath, asthma, chest pain and coughing, decreased lung function and even long-term lung damage.¹⁶ According to a report by the National Research Council “short-term exposure to current levels of ozone in many areas is likely to contribute to premature deaths”.¹⁷

There is virtually no room for growth in emissions (namely, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and VOCs) that contribute to these harmful levels of ozone pollution in the Roan Plateau and surrounding areas. Yet, the BLM is contemplating between 1,610 and 3,511 additional wells in the Planning Area. And as explained above, the modeling analysis (CARMMS) severely underrepresents the expected impacts from this development because it: 1) only covers a fraction of the 20-year planning period for the DEIS and, 2) the number of projected wells, and thus the expected emissions used in the modeling are grossly underrepresented. The BLM must rectify these issues with the modeling analysis in order to meet all of its NEPA and FLPMA requirements.

¹⁵ Environ, Colorado Air Resources Modeling Management Study (CARMMS) 2021 Modeling Results for the High, Low and Medium Oil and Gas Development Scenarios, Final, 181-2, table 5-39a, table 5-39b and table 5-39c.

¹⁶ See EPA’s National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulates and Ozone, 62 FR 38,856 (July 18, 1997).

¹⁷ <http://www.nationalacademies.org/morenews/20080422.html>

0059-13 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

0059-13
Continued

0059-14 Climate and Air Quality

0059-14

All current monitoring data for the Region (see Chapter 3) as well as photo-chemical grid modeling (CARMMS) results that describe the sensitivity of the atmosphere with respect to emissions loading from future oil and gas development are being used to inform the decisions being made for the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS as well as future oil and gas projects.

The CARMMS future year 2021 cumulative ozone analysis used in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS (also see CARMMS Report) provides detailed information for changes in ozone concentrations from base year to future year for all Regional monitors that were in operation for the base year. Some existing western Colorado monitors were not in operation for CARMMS base year modeling, but the SEIS analysis (and CARMMS Report) also provides results for an Unmonitored Area Analysis (UAA) for remote locations or where monitors did not exist for the base year analysis. The UAA tool provides spatial interpolation for concentrations between the existing monitors in the base year to fill in the gaps that inherently exist in any monitoring network. Despite the lack of nearby monitoring, the monitors used by the UAA tool for more recent base year studies (2011) have similar if not equivalent design values compared to the 2008 base year used by CARMMS. Given these similarities (as well as emissions similarities) we would not expect large variances in our model results had this data been available. This is evidenced by the fact that CARMMS picked up on the elevated ozone levels in the Roan Plateau Planning Area (see SEIS figure 4.2-17). We should note that more recent IMWD models with CAMx have shown elevated or biased (i.e. over predicted) ozone in the exact same area; however more investigation is needed to figure out exactly why this is occurring in the model. (http://vibe.cira.colostate.edu/wiki/Attachments/Modeling/WAQ_S_Base11b_MPE_Draft_21Jan2016.doc)

0059-15

BLM is aware of the fact that nearby monitor values are elevated in relation to the newly lowered ozone NAAQS.

However, as shown in the CARMMS Report, most areas of the Rocky Mountain Region are expected to see an overall cumulative decrease in ozone for future years. BLM will utilize the adaptive management strategies identified in the CARPP to manage development as appropriate.

0059-15 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1,
2, and 4.

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Adam Cornely
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 8:22 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Cc: kmendonc@blm.gov; gwolfgan@blm.gov; dboyd@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau Planning Area RMPA Public Comment

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thank you for taking time to provide the public meetings in both Silt and Rifle. I enjoyed chatting with David, Greg and Karl.

I will first summarize how my family uses the public lands at Hubbard Mesa. Living in New Castle, our sole trail opportunity, Colorow Trail has seasonal wildlife closures which limit our ability to get out on our mountain bikes, go hiking and trail run until mid April. When the snow starts to melt we find ourselves travelling west to Hubbard Mesa to mountain bike and hike. My two sons enjoy playing around on the small little dirt bike training loop near the parking area. This area could obviously be bigger but for a 2 and 5 year old they sure do have fun. My wife and I generally take turns doing small loops on the single track on our mountain bikes. In addition a large group of local New Castle riders and myself generally take part in the Roan Cliff Chaos, although sadly it was not held in 2015. In addition my wife and I will typically put the kids in the bike trailer and haul them up the JQS road for some exercise and some scenic and wildlife viewing.

To summarize our experiences out there is simply to explain the good and the bad. We like how convenient of an area it is. 20 minutes from our front door and we are outside which is nice. We always comment how unusually beautiful of an area it is once you get off the beaten path. There is some really unique terrain in that area that is truly amazing. The negative side of the experience is obviously the large amount of trash dumping, the occasional out of place individuals that you run into that make you question your security and of course the open shooting. I have had several instances riding my mountain bike, with my kids and with adults where we encountered uncomfortably close shooting situations. Sadly our approach as always been wear bright clothes and ring a bike bell, but when you come up on a person shooting it makes me nervous to think what could happen if you startled someone with either bad aim or an anxious trigger finger.

As far as what I would like to see at Hubbard Mesa, it is pretty simple. I think several factors indicate that the land needs to be used by multiple user groups, primarily OHV users, shooters, mountain bikers and hikers. Being so close to Rifle, it is unreasonable in my mind to exclude any particular user group that has come to appreciate this land. That said I believe your proposal to limit open shooting to certain areas is a wise idea. We need to figure out a way to satisfy the needs of all user groups, while keeping safety priority number one. I can't comment specifically on where to locate the open shooting areas, but I would focus on the following:

- avoid areas where currently in place mountain biking and hiking trails exist. Folks are used to riding these trails and in my opinion they will continue to use them despite the changes that this study may result in.
- avoid areas where the local biking community has indicated the possibility of future trail expansion.
- avoid parking area where families may be parking to load kids on their bikes, have post ride picnics, etc. Families like mine are not gun owning families, and for better or for worse do not feel comfortable being that close to open shooting when we are recreating outside.

Again thanks for taking time to address this problem. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to help with this process.

0060-1 Shooting Sports

As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.

Alternative III in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS has been revised to include two sub-alternatives, IIIA and IIIB, that proposed different areas of shooting closures in the vicinity of developed recreation sites and in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, and Section 4.5.3.4 in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS for a description of these sub-alternatives and potential impacts on recreation management.

0060-1

Adam Cornely
RFMBA/New Castle Trails

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Michael-Leonard Creditor
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 10:37 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0061-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I urge you to adopt the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) in your final management plan (RMP) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

This alternative reflects the need to keep fossil fuels in the ground to protect public health, the climate, and public lands for present and future generations.

Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV) in the new RMP for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

Sincerely,

Michael-Leonard Creditor

92038

0061-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Judy (Larson) DiMario
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 10:51 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0062-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

This is one of the last things we need, or rather, we don't need at all. We are losing so much of our wild habitats, forested areas, etc. over the years, that PROTECTION is the most important thing we need. Land management doesn't mean development, drilling, loss of our remaining valuable lands. Please "protect"!

| 0062-1

Sincerely,
Judy Larson DiMario
Vermont

Judy (Larson) DiMario

05673

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Bryan and Jennie Dorr
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 10:32 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau EIS Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed EIS plans. Our family would like to show our support for the Alternative IV plan and to strongly oppose the Alternative III plan.

We moved to Rifle in 1997 to start our family. We discovered the Hubbard Mesa area, referred most commonly by everyone as "the Res" soon after moving here. Throughout the years, we have used the area to 4-wheel, target practice/shoot, hike, picnic, ride our ATVs, then later our UTVs, and go sledding, just to name a few. In fact, when our daughter was in middle school, a club from RMS hosted a sled race that featured sleds that the students had built out in "the Res", in the area of the proposed shooting ban. My point being, in all the years that we have been recreating in the area, we've never felt in danger or felt the need to spread the drama that has been exhibited lately in the press. There will always be a few 'bad apples' in every user group, this cannot be avoided and no amount of new laws or restrictions will prevent them.

We are very concerned that if Alternative III is chosen, it will actually create more safety concerns than it will address the ones outlined in the proposal. Banning shooting from these known, established shooting areas will push shooting to areas that may not have safe backdrops. These areas have been chosen by folks for years because of safety in mind, the area provides hillsides that protect bullets from traveling to unintended targets. Most other areas, especially outside of the 610 acre prohibited do not have the same land features. Also, most people expect to watch more diligently around these known areas as the shooting seems to, for the most part, stay in the general area. Once it is spread out, it becomes a dispersed area that really leaves people having to question where the next new shooting areas will form. Another issue that concerns us is that one user group seems to be pushing for regulations that will affect all other user groups in an area that is designated as open use. No single user group should have that much influence, and no single user group should be banned in an area that is designated as open use. Instead of banning an interest/use, let's facilitate a meeting between the user groups and hash out the differences and issues and come up with a plan or some understanding of the issues. There has to be a solution that does not cut off any group but is able to allow everyone a way to recreate safely and respectfully.

We have been members of a local off-road club since 1999. This club has been cleaning and maintaining this area since 2004 (officially as an event) because we saw a need. We continue this annual clean up to this day and have included a local ATV club. To my knowledge, no other interest/user group has gone to this level to better this area and assist BLM as we understand your resources are limited. I have never witnessed any other user group try to limit or prevent another user group until recently with the addition of the mountain bike trails. These trails have popped up across preexisting shooting areas, across private land, and have cut down fences to access different areas. This is a relatively new group to begin using this area, and this is completely fine, but it is frustrating that they demand so many changes to appease their needs and not see any error in their ways. Again this is an open use area, for ALL.

Safety education may be the best way to work with the conversation that has begun regarding this proposal. Education for shooters to shoot in safe places and hikers and riders to keep their eyes and ears open. If Alternative III were chosen, I am sure that it would not come with extra funding, so extra help with enforcement is not an option. BLM can only do what their resources allow. Your time and resources could be better spent educating, maintaining, and installing signage to this area to ensure that our future generations have the freedom to enjoy the multiple uses in this RARE open use area. This scenario is becoming so scarce in our country and it would be a shame for any user group to lose open use access. Responsibility is the key. Laws to not prevent tragedy or stupidity. If we succumb to this demand, what's next? We are so worried about who is dictating these proposals and the mentality behind them.

0063-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0063-2 Shooting Sports

0063-1

0063-3 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0063-2

0063-3

Please consider our comments when making your choice and thank you again for giving us the opportunity to voice our opinions. We've enjoyed the many years we've worked with the BLM to maintain our precious public lands.

Sincerely,

Bryan and Jennifer Dorr

bryanandjennie@msn.com

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: wayne edgeton
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 12:55 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard concerns

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Comments/Concerns

Has field office been to Loma Exit, Prince Creek, Mushroom Rock, Lunch Loops, Rabbit Valley, Moab? Does staff recreate? On BLM property? Those areas don't include all users.

I lived in GJ when they shut down the established shooting range on 28 road or near on BLM ground, because you don't want concentrated lead deposit to have to clean up in the future. I know the saying "solution to pollution is dilution" Did it work down there? Are they having shooter issues? Is it still concentrated use? What is the acreage difference of areas, population difference? Are there private outdoor ranges near? County owned facilities available for use?

Enforcement: whatever you do or don't do there needs to be enforcement. Securing budget money for enforcement officer should be on field office's priority list. This area has been neglected and it is obvious, people do whatever they want out there.

Concerns with no shooting area.

Shooter will be pushed farther off road and in some case encroach on trails that currently are not impacted, more opportunity for shooter to shoot across existing trails, that they may not even know are there. Currently users know where shooting areas are and work with according to use.

Force shooter to make worse decisions when they don't have available backstops that are appropriate for citizen protection, more firearms discharged in general direction of Hwy 13 and Rifle if they go beyond lift station and past no shooting zone. Where do you expect these shooter to find new location at, is that West side of road next to open area, Hwy 13 side, private property on way in, Dry Rifle Creek?

0064-1

Wayne Edgeton

Tax payer

American Citizen

531 East Ave

Rifle, CO. 81650

0064-1 Shooting Sports

In response to public concerns regarding shooting sports at Hubbard Mesa, Alternative III in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS has been revised to include two sub-alternatives, IIIA and IIIB, that propose different areas of shooting closures in the vicinity of developed recreation sites and in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, and Section 4.5.3.4 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for a description of these sub-alternatives and potential impacts on recreation management. The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

wedgeton@hotmail.com

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Bruce Gallagher
Sent: Thursday, January 07, 2016 10:51 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard Mesa Shared Use

This is a very big deal!

Since I will not be able to attend, here's some input. BLM's proposal of the 1/4 mile rule is downright scary to me as a recreational Mtn. Bike rider in the Hubbard Mesa area. In my opinion it only adds to the existing danger in that area! Pushing target shooting inward 1/4 mi. from the road only puts the flying lead even closer to our existing trail system! How does this proposal, in their eyes, create a safer environment for all recreational users in that area? I am definitely an advocate of shared use in that area, but use that is shared safely! Their proposal, in my opinion does not share that philosophy. There are certainly many other neighboring towns/communities in our area that would present a safer guideline for them to follow when shared use includes target shooting in a recreational area!
from FirstClass with my iPhone

Sent from Garfield School District No. Re-2

0066-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Section 4.5.3.4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to address potential safety considerations associated with the proposed recreational shooting closures under Alternative III (see Table 2.1, line 173). In addition, the analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0066-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: GrandValley Audubon
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 5:01 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Revision to the Resource Management Plan

This letter represents the nearly 500 members of Grand Valley Audubon Society in Grand Junction, Colorado. With reference to the Draft Supplemental EIS to amend the Resource Management Plan for the Roan Plateau, we wish to express our support for Alternative IV.

We note that there are a number of streams and stream reaches that currently protect rare fish and plant species. Where there are pristine areas for plants and fish, there are important areas for birds. Bird species of interest include Northern Goshawk, Willow Flycatcher and several species of owls.

Oil and gas development has already significantly impacted many formerly-near-pristine locations on the Western Slope. I had a recent conversation with one of our members who was born and raised on the Western Slope, and has been a hunter since he was old enough to shoot a gun. He told me that the "Roan Plateau used to be one of our favorite places to hunt, but we don't go there anymore. The roads and traffic have ruined it." Thus, the previous compromises that were to protect the Roan have not been that successful. By choosing Alternative IV, the BLM can do much to preserve what remains of this unique area.

We also recommend adding additional protections as listed in Alternative III such that eligible stream reaches could be included under the Wild and Scenic River Act to ensure that wilderness characteristics can be maintained within the three wilderness study units.

Nic Korte, Conservation Chairman

Grand Valley Audubon Society

Grand Valley Audubon Society
P O Box 1211
Grand Junction CO 81502-1211
audubongv.org
(Follow us on Facebook!)

0067-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0067-1 cont'd Opinion - Alternatives

| 0067-1

0067-2 Alternatives

Alternative IV presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment. Wild and Scenic Rivers were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

| 0067-1
Continued

| 0067-2

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Rick Hasbrouck
Sent: Saturday, January 30, 2016 1:12 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau draft SEIS (BLM/CO/PL-16-001), public comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

1105 12th St.
Golden, CO 80401
January 30, 2016

Bureau of Land Management
Roan Plateau SEIS (BLM/CO/PL-16/001)
roanplateau@blm.gov

Dear Bureau of Land Management,
The following are my comments for the public record on the Roan Plateau Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement:

1. Of the Alternatives presented I urge you to adopt the Settlement Alternative (Alternative 4), but I'd like to see the following additions:
2. I support BLM canceling the leases as agreed in the 2014 settlement, but I also support closing the entire top of the plateau to drilling, and strong stipulations for drilling at the base to minimize negative impacts on fish and wildlife.
3. All lands with wilderness characteristics should be protected under the new plan, including Anvil Points and the Southeast Cliffs.
4. The final plan should stipulate that all streams eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation are suitable for such designation.

My rationale for the above additions is that the Roan is one of the crown jewels of Colorado public lands: it is home to dozens of threatened fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America, key winter range for elk and deer, is a popular spot for outdoor recreation, and contains thousands of acres of lands with wilderness character. The BLM and Colorado Natural Heritage Program have described the top of the Plateau as one of the most biologically rich areas in the state, and comparable in importance to several of our national parks and monuments.

Thank you for your consideration,
Richard C. Hasbrouck

0068-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Alternative IV presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations, and public comment. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and ecological resources were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0068-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Renee
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 9:55 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard Mesa Comment

To Whom It May Concern,

Hubbard Mesa, particularly the Alternative III area, historically, has been a place for shooting, offroading, and teaching our youth these skills. We've never had a problem sharing the space and have never needed officially designated areas or outside intervention. The folks who have trouble sharing the space are few compared to the many who use the space. Mountain bikers, specifically, seem to cause the most concern in sharing space. Firearms can be heard and shooters are stationary, mountain bikers are not heard, are often not seen, nor are they stationary. Those who are mobile ought to bear the responsibility of avoiding the area where a loud and stationary activity is taking place. Common sense dictates that. However, they often use ear buds playing loud music, thus willfully neglecting their natural ability to hear what's going on around them. This is the heart of the problem. Take responsibility for your own safety in everything that you do. It is unlawful for a motor vehicle operator to use ear buds as they are expected to hear emergency vehicles and the horns of other vehicles on the road. Bicyclists are generally considered part of traffic and are obliged to follow the rules of the road. This common sense practice is no different in this situation for sharing space. They ought to be required to practice their sport safely by not wearing earbuds while riding as well as wearing brightly colored (hunter's orange or other reflective/fluorescent color that can be readily seen) clothing, at least 500 square inches. This reflective/fluorescent clothing is a requirement for all motorcyclists who wish to ride on military installations and helps them to be seen by other motorists sharing the road. This could be easily instituted and enforced for mountain bikers as well who wish to utilize the trails on Hubbard Mesa. I think that mountain bikers ought to take heed of their own safety and should gladly take the responsibility to practice their sport safely, just as shooters and other offroaders have historically done. We shoot safely, and suffer the consequences when we don't. We hunt safely also, observing all of the laws regarding that activity. Mountain bikers could stand to share in the responsibility of practicing their own sport safely instead of proposing restrictions on those who already do. I am in favor of EIS Alternative IV, no change to the current usage area.

Thank you for your time and consideration. This letter is resent due to my mistake in not including my contact information.

Renee Valenzuela
 780 NW Sage Ave.
 PO BOX 709
 Cedaredge, CO 81413
 970-856-3240

0069-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

| 0069-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Aaron Humphrey
Sent: Saturday, February 06, 2016 9:18 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Rifle Trail system comments

To Whom it May Concern,

I am in full support of developing more mountain-bike friendly trails in the JQS and Hubbard Mesa areas. I have ridden these areas a few times and have enjoyed them, and I think they can contribute to the further encouragement of cycling in western Colorado.

My concern is that there is no dedicated shooting area. Since gun users can go anywhere and shoot in these areas, I am concerned about stray bullets and irresponsible gun owners. I was once shot at on Basalt Mountain by some people who had been kicked out of the Basalt gun range because they were drinking, so they went to the Mill Creek area and were shooting towards a trail head.

As user groups expand into areas, it is important for each to respect other users and spaces. I think a gun range or zone makes perfect sense; I promise not to ride there if they promise not to shoot at or near trails. It seems to work quite well at 18 Road in Fruita, where I also ride regularly. At that location, user groups are able to recreate, spend money in local businesses, and get along without conflict.

Please work with all the users to encourage outdoor recreation, but also please educate the groups so that there can be no tragic shooting accidents of trail users. I am sure even the most ardent supporter of guns does not want to accidentally kill a hiker or cyclist.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aaron Humphrey
President
Alpenglow Lighting Design, Inc.
Carbondale, CO
(970) 948-2637



0070-1 Shooting Sports

As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0070-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Lou Illes
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 1:46 PM
To: Roanplateau, BLM_CO
Subject: Re: Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Re: Protect the Roan Plateau

Yours is the first response I have ever received from the BLM on any issue I have had with them which are many. NO private businesses should ever be allowed to use or drill or mine or pasture animals on any public lands whether is it a park, reserve, monument, or any land the BLM is supposed to keep for the people of America. The BLM should be dismantled as a US government agency and all its land put under the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

LOU ILLES

From: Roanplateau, BLM_CO <blm_co_roanplateau@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 2:25 PM
To: Lou Illes
Subject: Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Re: Protect the Roan Plateau

Thank you for your email regarding the Roan Plateau Supplemental EIS/RMPA.

--
 Roan Plateau SEIS Planning Team

Lou Illes
lilles@linnllc.com / (direct)

Linn & Associates
 800.254.1753 (toll free)
 312.896.2050 (fax)
 Chicago Board of Trade
 141 W. Jackson Blvd. Ste. 1220-A
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0071-1 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0071-1

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Hernandez, Bernadette

From: ejisenhart@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2016 2:44 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Public Comment Letter

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To BLM Colorado River Office

RE: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment. Specifically, the Hubbard Mesa Recreation Area.

Hello, My name is Jennifer Isenhart. I frequently enjoy many recreational activities in the Hubbard Mesa area. Some of the activities I have enjoyed are target shooting, exploring the area via atv/utv and 4x4 off road vehicles and exploring on foot to experiment with my photography.

Aside from personally utilizing the open use areas of Hubbard Mesa I am also a member of the Hi Country 4 Wheelers, White River Trail Runners and the newly formed shooting club Gage. As a member of these clubs I have participated in outings in the Hubbard Mesa area as well as participated in the annual cleanups the clubs put together each year with the BLM.

I appreciate how special the Hubbard Mesa area is. There are not many truly "open" use areas anymore. Therefore I am writing to say I do not support Alternative III with the closure of the 610 acres area to target shooting. I find fault in the closures as it would create dangerous conflicts by pushing target shooters out to unsafe areas.

I am in support of Alternative IV with no closures. I believe that the uniqueness of the Hubbard Mesa area should be preserved for all to use in a responsible manner. To my understanding there is concern from one user group with target shooting in the 610 acre proposed closure area. I have lived here for many decades and have found a way to recreate in the open use area safely without conflict. I understand that as more users come to the area they may not be fully aware of the potential uses. And I believe with the help from citizens like myself and willing user groups an educational approach to promote safe use of the area will allow others a safe experience.

I am hoping the BLM will take into consideration that there are many citizens and multi-user groups that are willing to participate in finding a solution to the conflicts without severely restricting one user group over another and therefore negating the true experience one can have in our unique open use area.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinions.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Isenhart

54 Pear Court

0072-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Dylan Johns
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 7:25 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard Mesa

Good morning,

This letter addresses the proposed closure of recreational target shooting in a 610-acre area of the Hubbard Mesa OHV area as an alternative in its Roan Plateau Supplemental EIS. I strongly urge that additional restrictions are not put into place. This action will not likely reduce the numbers of people who are taking part in recreational shooting, but it will move these activities to other areas which may not be as suitable for this type of activity.

1. This proposed closure of recreational target shooting is a direct result of the 2011 Obama administration directive to the BLM that enables these types of closures. The section of the announcement that concerns millions of shooters across the country reads: "When the authorized officer determines that a site or area on BLM-managed lands used on a regular basis for recreational shooting is creating public disturbance, or is creating risk to other persons on public lands; is contributing to the defacement, removal or destruction of natural features, native plants, cultural resources, historic structures or government and/or private property; is facilitating or creating a condition of littering, refuse accumulation and abandoned personal property is violating existing use restrictions, closure and restriction orders, or supplementary rules notices, and reasonable attempts to reduce or eliminate the violations by the BLM have been unsuccessful, the authorized officer will close the affected area to recreational shooting." At the time the directive was issued a spokesman for the BLM told U.S. News and World Report that the proposed ban was being enacted in response to "urbanites" who "freak out" when they hear shooting on public lands. The spokesman also acknowledged that the impetus for this restriction was not rooted in safety, rather it was introduced to reduce "social conflict." Please reference the attached U.S. News and World Report article by Paul Bedard on November 16, 2011. RSC believes that public lands are held in trust for the public, and that BLM should manage its lands under its multiple use mandate while not bowing to radical environmental pressure.

2. Recreational shooting has been recognized as a traditional, legitimate activity on Hubbard Mesa for decades. Generations of people have enjoyed shooting on Hubbard Mesa without serious incident.

3. The proposed closure area would force shooters from a safe location with many backstops to a less safe area with fewer safe backstops and more roads and trails.

4. Closure would push shooters from safe public land onto private property on Hubbard Mesa and to the southeast of Fravert Reservoir Road. BLM's Proposed Closure of 610-Acres to Recreational Target Shooting Page 2 of 2

5. Federal regulations already prohibit shooting across roads, trails, bodies of water, and toward areas where people are camped, picnicking, or otherwise gathered. Any violations can be easily self-policed by the public and reported to local law enforcement under existing laws.

6. BLM has not met its own Federal Land Policy and Management Act which requires the agency to perform the required balancing of multiple uses to show, specifically in this case, that the benefit of prohibiting target

0073-1 Opinion - Alternatives

In response to public concerns regarding shooting sports at Hubbard Mesa, BLM has added Alternative IIIB for analysis in the FSEIS to consider the potential impacts of prohibiting recreational target shooting in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Riding Area. Including Alternative IIIB allows BLM to consider a range of management options for recreation in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Riding Area. Please see Chapters 2 and 4 for analysis and impact conclusions related to Alternative IIIB. The issues raised in your comment have been addressed as part of the analysis of Alternative IIIB in Chapter 4.

0073-1

0073-2 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM policy is to manage public lands, including recreation areas, so they "can be used by the maximum number of people with minimum conflict among users and minimum damage to public lands and resources" (43 CFR 8365.0-2). The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to include a greater range of alternatives for addressing shooting sports at the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Two sub-alternatives have been added to Alternative III to allow consideration of different areas of shooting closures. The analysis of Alternatives I, II, and IV has been revised to note the prohibition on discharge of firearms in present and future developed recreation sites, in accordance with Federal regulation (43 CFR 8365.2-5). Please see Table 2-1, line 173, and Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for discussion and analysis related to recreation management.

0073-2

0073-3

0073-3 Opinion - Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0073-4

0073-5

0073-4 Shooting Sports

In response to public concerns regarding shooting sports at Hubbard Mesa, Alternative III in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to include two sub-alternatives, IIIA and IIIB, that propose different areas of shooting closures in the vicinity of developed recreation sites and in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, and Section 4.5.3.4 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for a description of these sub-alternatives and potential impacts on recreation

0073-6

0073-7

management. The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

0073-5 Shooting Sports

The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

0073-6 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0073-7 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The on-going management process would be undertaken with the goal of allowing use of the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area by "the maximum number of people with minimum conflict among users and minimum damage to public lands and resources" in accordance with Federal law (43 CFR 8365.0-2).

shooting in the Hubbard Mesa OHV area outweighs the substantial benefits of target shooting to the American people.

7. In many cases the BLM is justifying its decision to close recreational shooters out of public land because it claims that shooting is a "resource-harming" activity. At the same time, the agency will allow other activities to continue, like camping, mountain biking, off road vehicle use, and grazing that clearly have more impact on the area as a whole.

8. BLM does not have the staff to enforce any recreational shooting closures, and all enforcement will be placed on local law enforcement. Our local law enforcement is already stretched thin covering the 2,947 square miles in Garfield County.

9. While hunting and firearms for self-protection would still be allowed in the Hubbard Mesa OHV under the this proposed closure, it would set a dangerous precedent for the future of all firearms usage on public lands in the area.

10. Public land should be kept open to all recreational activities. Note the BLM motto: "Public Lands USA: Use, Share, Appreciate."

Thank you for your consideration,
Dylan Johns
--
Zone 4 Enterprises
Po Box 2493
Aspen, CO 81612
970.948.6787

0073-8 0073-8 Shooting Sports
Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Management actions related to shooting sports have been included under each alternative in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to protect visitor safety by minimizing the potential for accidental shootings, in accordance with Federal regulations (43 CFR 8364.1). Table 2.1, line 173 summarizes these management actions. The impact analysis in Section 4.5 discusses potential indirect impacts to all resources as a result of these management actions.

0073-9 0073-9 Shooting Sports
Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0073-10 0073-10 Shooting Sports
Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Federal regulation directs BLM to manage public lands, including recreation areas, so they "can be used by the maximum number of people with minimum conflict among users and minimum damage to public lands and resources" (43 CFR 8365.0-2). Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components related to shooting sports in order to minimize user conflicts in recreation areas, specifically the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components.

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Dave Kirk
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 3:27 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

0074-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV) in the new RMP for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

| 0074-1

Sincerely,

Dave Kirk

12737

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Daniel Laemmerhirt
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 7:04 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0075-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I will keep this very brief. If we want to simply survive the next one hundred years, we need to keep ALL fossil fuels in the ground. Even those that desperately want to extract the fuels to get easy money are in grave danger. Many different renewable fuels have become cheaper and cheaper as the intelligent people of the world realize this. Basically, there is absolutely NO LONG TERM MONEY in fossil fuels. It is simply no longer a viable option in any way. Please keep the Roan Plateau free of these greedy businessmen and protect our gravely injured planet!

0075-1

Sincerely,

Daniel Laemmerhirt

14150

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Mary Mac
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 11:40 AM
To: Roan comments
Subject: comments RE:preferred alternative

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear reviewer,

I wanted you to know that I have hiked up on the Roan Plateau (approx. 8 years ago) and was entranced by its beauty and the unique lush flowers in early summer. I was also surprised by the huge waterfall. In general, it seemed to be blessed with a more pristine appearance than similar land forms, perhaps because of its geologic isolation. More specific comments follow, but in general I support your preferred alternative IV, with a few additions.

In order to preserve the trout population, containing five conservation populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout (90% genetically pure) with two of these as core conservation populations (99% pure), the most appropriate wild and scenic stream segments need to be declared and managed for the trout. Giving either ACEC status or wild and scenic stream reaches status would help accomplish the objectives for the fish and plants.

For the plants: Eight globally or State-ranked rare plant communities are found in the Planning Area as well as seven special status plant species. This is what I was seeing that looked so different to me. Two of the plant species are listed as Federally threatened, and two (of five known) populations of Parachute penstemon, one of the rarest plant species in North America. This penstemon has been ignored in some locations by another field office and it would help if it is preserved on the Roan. Again, the Roan has the advantage of being a relatively isolated land mass.

In addition, road building could be minimized by following the recommendations in Alternative IV to limit drilling. Again, finding wild and scenic status for those eight stream reaches mentioned in Alt III would offer a stronger level of protection. Water is our most precious resource globally. We need to preserve its quality whenever there's an opportunity to do so. I can live without oil if I have to. I will die without water, and so would you.

Thanks for reading,

Mary McCutchan
(phone)970-986-8129 **please hide personal info in public record if possible**

Mary
Please note snail mail:
624.5 Shadowbrook Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81504

0076-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Alternative IV presents a balanced management approach that allows multiple use of the Roan Plateau Planning Area and takes into account the Settlement Agreement, Cooperating Agency considerations and public comment. ACECs and Wild and Scenic Rivers were fully considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0076-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Margaret
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 4:47 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To Whom it may Concern:

After perusing the contents of the various proposals regarding the Roan Plateau areas of interest I wish to advocate Alternative IV as the best step. It contains something for everyone. and should provide for adequate fish habitat for the Roan Plateau, adequate access for mineral development, and flexibility for the Bureau of Land Management going forward.

Thank you,

Respectfully,

David L. McWilliams

0077-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

| 0077-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Aaron Mattix
Sent: Sunday, January 17, 2016 7:55 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard Mesa shooting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

The Hubbard Mesa area north of Rifle is a recreational gem in the rough, riddled with bullet holes, and littered with trash. The presence of irresponsible "target" shooters who indiscriminately spray bullets and trash over the landscape is a detriment to the environment, and the safety of all users.

The safest location for shooting is stretch is the north side of the Fravert Res. Rd, from approximately the rc airplane field to the gas handling facility at the Y in the road. The steep cliff band provides a natural backstop, and trail traffic is limited. Ideally, shooting should be limited to this area, as combining open cross-country travel, and open shooting areas can only be an inevitable recipe for disaster.

The North Fruita Desert Special Recreation Management Area provides an excellent example to consider in managing similar challenges.

Continuing to allow unregulated shooting in the area effectively inhibits the freedom of all other users; impinging on its status as an Open OHV area.

Aaron Mattix
631 CR 321
Rifle, CO 81650

0078-1 Shooting Sports

As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components to minimize user conflicts in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components.

0078-1

0078-2

0078-2 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The on-going management process could include additional studies and consideration of management models provided by other public recreation areas.

0078-3

0078-3 Shooting Sports

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components to minimize user conflicts in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Air Resources Division
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

N3615 (2350)

February 17, 2016

Memorandum

To: Greg Larson, Project Manager, Colorado River Valley Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Silt, CO

From: Susan Johnson, Branch Chief, Policy, Planning and Permit Review Branch, Air Resources Division, National Park Service

Subject: National Park Service Air Resources Comments on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment, Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, CO

The National Park Service (NPS), Air Resources Division (ARD) has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Roan Plateau Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) is supplementing the 2006 Roan Plateau Planning Area RMPA and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Roan FEIS). BLM's supplemental planning effort addresses previous alternatives analyzed in the 2006 environmental analysis, supplemental information developed in response to issues identified through a 2012 judicial order from the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado, and additional issues identified in scoping. Major issues raised by the 2012 Judicial Order included concerns with the air quality analysis.

Federal actions undertaken by the BLM in western Colorado, including oil and gas development activities, could impact units of the National Park System. There are three NPS units that are located within the vicinity of the Roan Plateau Planning Area; one of these units is designated as a Class I areas under the federal Clean Air Act, and the remaining two are identified as "Sensitive Class II areas" by the NPS in accordance with the multi-agency air quality Memorandum of Understanding for oil and gas planning, leasing and development. These include: Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (Class I), Dinosaur National Monument (Sensitive Class II), and Colorado National Monument (Sensitive Class II). The remaining areas included in the air quality modeling analysis discussed in the SDEIS are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, including the Maroon Bells-Snowmass and Flattops Wilderness areas, which are located much closer to the Roan Plateau Planning Area than the NPS areas. This letter constitutes the NPS ARD comments on the Roan Plateau SDEIS air quality analysis and associated planning decisions.

0079-1 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

Air Quality Modeling Assessment

The SDEIS analysis relied on results from the Colorado Air Resources Management Modeling Study (CARMMS). In general, we believe that the CARMMS assessment is a robust analysis and concur with the proposal to include the CARMMS results in the Roan Plateau SEIS. However, we have several comments and concerns regarding how the results of CARMMS were applied and discussed in the Roan Plateau SDEIS. This includes how the high, medium and low emission scenarios were characterized in light of the Roan Planning area RFD and Alternatives, the number of NPS Class I and sensitive Class II areas included in the SDEIS discussion and how impacts to AQRVs were presented in the SDEIS Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences Climate and Air Quality Section.

Emissions Scenarios Modeled and the RFD

The NPS questions whether the emissions scenarios modeled represent the full range of potential activity that *could* occur under the various alternatives. We are concerned that the “high scenario” may underestimate the full development potential considered elsewhere in the SDEIS. The NPS agrees that evaluating a high, medium and low development/emissions scenario, which is not precisely tied to the alternatives, is an appropriate way to consider the range of air quality impacts that may occur under the alternatives considered. We also recognize that neither the reasonably foreseeable development (RFD) nor the emissions scenarios provide an accurate prediction of the numbers and locations of wells that could occur should the RMPA and subsequent leasing decisions be approved, and that considering a range of development is an adequate way to address this uncertainty. However, at the very least, we believe the maximum development assumed in the air analysis, i.e., the high scenario should encompass the maximum level of activity assumed within the range of alternatives (i.e., the “scaled” RFD).

For example, based on Table 4.215, the high development scenario in the air modeling analysis assumed 675 new federal wells in the first 10 years; the low development scenario in the air modeling analysis assumed 464 new federal wells in the first 10 years. Both the high and low development scenarios assumed 520 new non-federal wells in the planning area in the first 10 years of the planning period.

Based on Table 5 in Appendix G, Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario, the unconstrained RFD assumed up to 3,520 total new federal wells and 1950 non-federal wells over the 20-year life of the plan (above and below the rim). Based on Chapter 4, it is assumed that the unconstrained RFD estimate was revised for each alternative to account for alternative-specific constraints, as summarized in table 4.1.2 of Chapter 4. Table 4.1.2 summarized “the assumed level of oil and gas development (BLM 2014b) and associated surface impacts under the four alternatives.” Based on this table, the unconstrained RFD is closest to Alternative II, which represents the 2006 Roan RMPA decisions, in which the entire planning area was open to mineral leasing. From Table 4.1.2, total approximate new federal wells that could be developed in the planning area over the 20-year life of the plan are as follows:

0079-1

- Alternative I: **1,610** total new federal wells in the planning area.
 - The high development scenario used in the modeling analysis (project year 10) represents roughly 42% of the total wells estimated for this alternative.
- Alternative II: **3,511** total new federal wells in the planning area.
 - The high development scenario used in the modeling analysis (project year 10) represents roughly 19% of the total wells estimated for this alternative.
- Alternative III: **2,231** total new federal wells in the planning area.
 - The high development scenario used in the modeling analysis (project year 10) represents roughly 30% of the total wells estimated for this alternative.
- Alternative IV: **2,475** total new federal wells in the planning area.
 - The high development scenario used in the modeling analysis (project year 10) represents roughly 27% of the total wells estimated for this alternative.

0079-2 Climate and Air Quality

Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

0079-3 Climate and Air Quality

Please see response to comment number 0036-25, sections 1, 2, and 4.

Recognizing the different time frames (planning year 10 vs. 20), it appears that the high emissions scenario assumed either lower or slower rates of development than the development estimates for each Alternative in the SDEIS. The air analysis section does not clarify how the emissions assumptions account for or capture the highest potential levels of development assumed under each of the Alternatives, or why the year 2021 represents the maximum emissions year. Further, page 4-56 states: “For projected Colorado oil and gas development, the high-development scenario for oil and gas is based on the RFD.” This section does not explain why the high development scenario estimate, even at year 10, is significantly lower than the unconstrained RFD (3,520 new federal wells) and/or alternative II (3,511 new federal wells).

0079-2

Page 4-56 also states:

Emissions from Alternatives I (no new leasing above rim) and IV (partial leasing above rim) are expected to be closest to the *low* development scenario because of the reduced level or lack of potential Federal oil and gas development above the plateau rim that would be associated with these alternatives. Emissions from Alternatives II and III are expected to be closest to the *high* scenario because of full Federal oil and gas leasing and potential oil and gas development that could occur above the plateau rim for these alternatives.

Please note that the total estimated number of potential new federal wells does not differ significantly between Alternatives III and IV (2,231 and 2,475 new wells, respectively), and that the low emissions scenario assumed a significantly lower level of activity than either of these alternatives (464 new wells in year 10 of the planning period or roughly 19% of the projected maximum number of wells over the life of the plan). Again, the BLM should clarify how the high emissions scenario adequately represents the maximum emissions year based on the maximum potential development under each of the alternatives (technically, this should be 3,511 new wells under Alternative II). In addition, if the “low” emissions scenario is not actually reflective of the maximum development potential for Alternative IV, this text should be revised in the SDEIS.

0079-3

Sensitive Class I and Class II Areas Included in the SDEIS Air Analysis

In March of 2015, we requested that the SDEIS should present results for each Class I / sensitive Class II area within the vicinity of the Roan Plateau (i.e., within 200 km). We note that SDEIS did not report results for Colorado National Monument (NM), which is within the vicinity of the planning area and is included in the CARMMS modeling assessment outputs. Please include results for this sensitive Class II park in the SEIS analysis.

SDEIS AQRV Analyses

Based on the results presented in the SDEIS, impacts to AQRVs do not exceed FLM concern thresholds for deposition or visibility in Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park or Dinosaur National Monument. However, as stated previously, the analysis did not report results for Colorado NM. Based on the CARMMS information, it appears that nitrogen deposition in Colorado NM due to emissions from potential oil and gas sources in the Roan Plateau planning area (source group D) may exceed the NPS Deposition analysis threshold (DAT) for nitrogen. In addition, we recommend that the analysis clarify whether the high emission scenario represents the maximum emissions year for the levels of development projected for each Alternative elsewhere in the SDEIS prior to drawing final conclusions regarding the severity of AQRV impacts.

Page 4-66 states: “The maximum modeled annual nitrogen deposition contributions for each scenario is minimal with respect to the cumulative critical nitrogen deposition load of 2.3 kg/ha-yr value.” Please note, a critical load is a cumulative assessment tool, it is not appropriate to compare the deposition results from a single planning area to the nitrogen critical load for a specific Class I area(s). By definition, a critical load of nitrogen is the amount of nitrogen deposition below which no harmful effects to an ecosystem are expected. It is a cumulative number based on ecosystem response, and should only be compared to cumulative modeling results (e.g., source group W in the CARMMS assessment). The NPS DAT of 0.005 kgN/ha/yr would be an appropriate threshold to compare planning area impacts to. Please revise this in the SDEIS.

Climate Change

As described on page 4-99, the greenhouse gas (GHG) and climate change analysis is “limited to comparing total expected Planning Area GHG emissions with projected Colorado and U.S. GHG emissions.” Focusing the analysis on such comparisons detracts from the overall goal of the assessment (to make more transparent and informed decisions) and is contrary to recently revised draft Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance on evaluating the impacts of GHGs and the effects of climate change in NEPA decisions¹. In their draft revised guidance, CEQ states:

CEQ recognizes that many agency NEPA analyses to date have concluded that GHG emissions from an individual agency action will have small, if any, potential

¹ The Federal Register Notice for the CEQ Draft Guidance is available here: <http://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/revised-draft-guidance-consideration-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-climate-change-nepa>

0079-4 Climate and Air Quality

Modeled nitrogen deposition impacts for Colorado National Monument were not specifically reported in the SEIS because there were higher predicted impacts at other locations according to the CARMMS model. The CARMMS-predicted impacts for Colorado NM can be found in the CARMMS Report and associated impacts reporting tools (http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/air_quality.html).

For the SEIS, the maximum nitrogen deposition impacts for each CARMMS scenario were reported for Class I and sensitive Class II areas where highest impact contributions for future RPPA Federal oil and gas are predicted to occur according to CARMMS. There are several other Class I and sensitive Class II areas in the immediate area that are as close or closer to the Roan Plateau Planning Area where impacts are predicted to be higher than those that would occur at Colorado National Monument and these predicted impacts could be used as a surrogate for Colorado National Monument.

Even though nitrogen deposition impacts are disclosed in the SEIS and CARMMS Report for future oil and gas development in the Roan Plateau Planning Area, the DAT is not an appropriate metric to use for the planning area specific impacts because the projected level of oil and gas development for the Alternatives would be made up of multiple "projects" and is based on a hypothetical oil and gas growth trajectory for a planning-level assessment/decision, and the DAT is used for comparing single-project deposition impacts. Full cumulative nitrogen deposition predicted improvement from year 2008 through year 2021 is also currently presented in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0079-4 cont'd Climate and Air Quality

0079-5 Climate and Air Quality

The projected oil and gas development for the Planning Area for CARMMS and the SEIS would be made up of many "projects" and these projections are current hypothetical oil and gas development values not based on actual operator proposed oil and gas development plans. BLM agrees that the critical load value is a cumulative assessment tool intended for evaluating impacts at a larger cumulative scale than the

Planning Area. However, it provides a point of reference for projected oil and gas development at the sub-cumulative scale. Because the DAT is a project-level assessment tool, it is not appropriate for evaluating impacts for projected oil and gas development expected to include multiple projects across a Planning Area. The BLM has requested that the Technical Workgroup develop quasi-cumulative thresholds that would be more appropriate in evaluating impact significance for projected oil and gas development across Planning Areas.

climate change effects. Government action occurs incrementally, program-by-program and step-by-step, and climate impacts are not attributable to any single action, but are exacerbated by a series of smaller decisions, including decisions made by the government. Therefore, the statement that emissions from a government action or approval represent only a small fraction of global emissions is more a statement about the nature of the climate change challenge, and is not an appropriate basis for deciding whether to consider climate impacts under NEPA. Moreover, *these comparisons are not an appropriate method for characterizing the potential impacts associated with a proposed action and its alternatives and mitigations*. This approach does not reveal anything beyond the nature of the climate change challenge itself: The fact that diverse individual sources of emissions each make relatively small additions to global atmospheric GHG concentrations that collectively have huge impact. (Emphasis added, 79 FR 77825)

We recommend that the GHG and climate change section should focus on the potential differences in emissions between alternatives, as well as the effect mitigation implemented through the planning decision may have on reducing GHG emissions. Further, the analysis should discuss the cumulative contribution of the oil and gas industry to GHG emissions nationally and globally, as the industry as a whole is a significant source of these pollutants.

Mitigation

Appendix C, Stipulations, does not contain any constraints for protection of air resources. Again, while we agree with the CARMMS and CARPP concepts in theory, we continue to have concerns about how and when air resource mitigation will be implemented. The CARPP proposal is not prescriptive in terms of how and when mitigation will be applied – there is high degree of subjectivity in the plan’s language regarding mitigation. This concerning considering that the magnitude of potential impacts from the Roan Plateau Planning area analysis may underestimate the potential maximum level of activity, as described above. Further, these documents tie subsequent mitigation decisions to an adverse effect. However, many individual projects may not rise to the level of adverse, but when considered cumulatively, can have a significant impact on air quality and AQRVs. We believe the RMP is the most effective and appropriate place to incorporate air mitigation (as stipulations) to ensure adequate cumulative air resource protection into the future.

Miscellaneous Comments

Page 4-51 states: “Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the BLM provides for compliance with all applicable Federal, tribal, State, and local air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans.” We believe that FLPMA not only provides for compliance with existing regulations, but also provides broad discretionary authority to manage public lands “in a manner that will protect the quality of . . . air and atmospheric . . . values.” (43 U.S.C 1701). It is appropriate to reflect this authority within the text of the SDEIS.

0079-6 Climate and Air Quality

This Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a planning-level document; for oil and gas development, the specific locations, drilling technology, equipment to be used, and duration of development stages is not known at this time. Project-level GHG emissions and potential mitigation will be evaluated during site-specific NEPA analysis. Currently, the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS discloses GHG emissions (including downstream) for the projected new oil and gas activity associated with the CARMMS high and low production scenarios that represent the anticipated limits on new development for the alternatives.

0079-6 0079-7 Climate and Air Quality

Because the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a planning analysis without site-specific information about most of the oil and gas development that could occur in the Planning Area such as facilities equipment and drilling technology, it is premature to identify the appropriate mitigation measures that would apply to individual projects. Emissions control requirements for projects would depend on existing air quality, updated air quality analyses and the applicable regulations at the time when actual oil and gas development is proposed. As stated in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS and in CARPP, additional mitigation measures may be required on a case-by-case basis.

Please see response to Comment 0036-25 sections 1, 2, and 4.

0079-7 0079-8 Climate and Air Quality

BLM fully explains FLPMA regulations pertaining the land use planning in Chapter 2.

0079-8

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SDEIS for the Roan Plateau SDEIS RMPA, we look forward to addressing these comments in coordination with the BLM. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Stacy of my staff at 303-969-2816.

cc:

Mike George, NPS, Intermountain Region
Linda Dansby, NPS, Intermountain Region

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Susan Nichols-Alvis
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 4:49 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Cc: Gregory Wolfgang; Gregory Larson; kmendonc@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau Comments

Hello,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan. As an avid user of both the Roan Plateau trails and Hubbard Mesa, I appreciate all the hard work the BLM does with it and all of our open lands, especially considering your limited resources.

I support the BLM's Alternative 4 reflecting no changes to the Hubbard Mesa area, and allow leasing below the rim.

In the 14 years of using the Hubbard Mesa area to recreational target practice, camp and ATV, I personally have had no conflicts with others and their enjoyment. A specific example: A few years ago, a group of us were target practicing, and 2 motorcycle riders headed up the trail to our location. We observed this, communicated to them that it was safe for them to continue, and we ceased fire until they were out of our vicinity.

Unfortunately, lately firearm enthusiasts and ATVers have been under attack by hikers, joggers and mountain bikers. They seem to not understand the concept of personal responsibility and communication. Instead of focusing on what they can do to help the different user groups get along, they have touted firearm shooters, trash, ATVs, and whatever else they can as problems. This casts a dark shadow over an area generations have used, adored and appreciated.

As I stated to BLM officer Gregory Wolfgang during one of the January BLM meetings, I am deeply saddened and disappointed these user groups continue to point out the negatives of the area. Yet one ponders why they still continue to use the area, sometimes bringing guests as well.

The mountain biker agenda goes back to at least July, 2014, when a Rifle Visitor Improvement Fund member was quoted in the newspaper saying Rifle's Hubbard Mesa has a "'huge possibility' of becoming a mountain biking destination, if more trails can be developed."* This is true, but why should other user groups be penalized because of it?

*Source: <http://www.postindependent.com/news/rifle/12224369-113/rifle-ramp-vif-board>

Along with other ATV club members, I have happily offered my time to the BLM to provide education of the area to others. I also suggested in a past meeting we post bi-lingual signage. Because they are so quiet, perhaps hikers, joggers and mountain bikers should be required to wear orange reflective gear while enjoying the area. (This is something I do while ATVer during hunting season.) Mountain bikes could be required to have a flag, just as we do while riding sand dunes.

It's been my pleasure to work with the BLM for years via the ATV and Jeep clubs. I am hopeful we can continue the mutual communication and working relationship for years to come.

Thank you very much for your time,

Susan Nichols-Alvis
 770 E 17th Street
 Rifle, CO 81650
 970-309-7042

0081-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0081-2 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has considered your suggestion for requiring certain recreational users to wear reflective gear while in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Riding Area. However, BLM's preference is to recognize that all users of this multiple use area are responsible for their own safety, as well as the safety of others who may be affected by their activities. Target shooters are responsible for ensuring that they shoot safely in the open area, just as they must on all other BLM lands open to shooting, where other users are always a consideration. Therefore, this alternative mitigation measure is not considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

| 0081-1

| 0081-2

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Tris Ozark
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 11:08 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0082-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I am writing to urge you to adopt Alternative IV to protect the Roan Plateau in Colorado from drilling and other energy extraction and development.

0082-1

I am not from Colorado, but I have visited and have been awed by its stunning beauty. I believe we have a moral and legal responsibility to leave public lands as pristine as possible for the appreciation and enjoyment of future generations.

We do not need the fossil fuels that might be produced by destroying public lands nor the profits that might be gained by exporting them; we need alternative, renewable fuels.

I urge you to select the Alternative that best protects the current and future beauty and biodiversity of the Roan Plateau region.

Sincerely,

Tris Ozark

15221

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Eric Page
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 10:00 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

0083-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

The tide is turning in the fight for humanity to be actual stewards of the earth rather than exploit it and degrade it. Play a role in this cause, a cause every human has an interest in, or become obsolete.

| 0083-1

Eric Page

66205

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: elainepilz@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2016 4:51 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Comment for Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan

Dear Bureau of Land Management - Roan Plateau
In your new RMP for the Roan Plateau, please select the Settlement Alternative 4 **and** add the following two management provisions from Alternative 3 of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The Alternative 3 additions would be

- to manage the 3 wilderness inventory units to protect the wilderness characteristics
- to protect all eligible river reaches suitable for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers

I'm a member of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness group in Grand Junction, Colorado. I have not yet seen the unusual hanging gardens and water falls there on the Road Plateau, nor had the opportunity to catch and release a rare cutthroat trout in the region's streams. Please select the above management recommendation so that these and other unique features will remain for future enjoyment and study.

Elaine Pilz
2387 W. Plateau Ct.
Grand Junction, CO 81507
970-257-7064
elainepilz@aol.com

0084-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0084-1 cont'd Opinion - Alternatives

| 0084-1

| 0084-1
Continued

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Betty Sabo
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 5:28 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0085-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I urge you to adopt the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) in your final RMP decision.

| 0085-1

Betty Sabo

89120

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Mary Seeber
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 10:31 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0086-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

HANDS OFF ALL PUBLIC LANDS!

| 0086-1

Mary Seeber

80232

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Kathy Slaughter
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2016 12:10 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Comment on Roan Plateau

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft management plan for the Roan Plateau. The Roan Plateau is an iconic landscape for Coloradans and should be protected from oil and gas drilling that is scarring the surrounding lands in the Piceance Basin.

I support the proposal to include the terms of the settlement agreement into the new management plan, including closing most of the top of the Plateau to oil and gas leasing and putting strong stipulations in place for drilling that occurs at the base of the Plateau to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife. The Roan Plateau is one of the last homes of native cutthroat trout.

However, the BLM's "preferred" alternative would not go far enough to protect the exceptional wilderness-quality lands that make the Roan Plateau one of our state's most treasured landscapes. The BLM should adopt a plan for the area that would protectively manage all of the lands with wilderness characteristics on the Roan Plateau.

The final plan should document that all of the streams which are eligible for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers are also suitable for that designation. That action is critical to protecting the valuable water resources on the Roan. This includes Parachute Creek and Trapper Creek, which provide important habitat for the Colorado River cutthroat trout.

The Western Slope economy owes a lot to the big game and fishing guides and outdoorsmen, both local and visiting. Please make these changes and keep working towards protecting all of the important wilderness, wildlife and water resources on the Roan Plateau. Colorado flourishes because of its beautiful natural landscapes.

Sincerely,

0090-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0090-2 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0090-1

0090-2

Kathy Slaughter
2990 1/2 Red Willow Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81504
512-228-2288
katslaughter@msn.com

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Tristan Sophia
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 10:35 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0091-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV) in the new RMP for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

| 0091-1

Sincerely,

Tristan Sophia

59001

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Steven Spevere
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 9:49 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard Mesa

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I would like to see BLM enforcing current regulations for firearm safety. I don't feel that closing off any area to shooting is necessary in Hubbard Mesa. I do think that there needs to be signage, stating that the area is multi-use and firearms need to be discharged in a manner which does not impact other recreational users. I don't think it would be " out of line " for a BLM officer to make suggestions to those people discharging firearms in an inappropriately or asked to carry off wood, televisions, couches that they choose to use as targets. I personally use the area for target practice and always pick up my targets, brass and trash.
Thank you for helping resolve this issue.
Steven Spevere

0092-1

0092-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The on-going management process could include consideration of additional signage and other methods to educate users of the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area.

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Sean Strode
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 9:00 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Draft SEIS comment

February 18, 2016

Dear BLM,

This letter is in reference to the open comment period for the draft SEIS in regards to the Hubbard Mesa OHV recreation area. I am suggesting that BLM close the entire OHV area to shooting. With the topics of conflict, outreach, and education, I hope you will see my side of the perspective.

Conflict. In the BLM draft SEIS it is stated that there is a conflict among user groups. This statement is inaccurate. The conflict is between user groups and BLM's management practices. There are many shooters that are doing nothing wrong, they simply are shooting in a space where other people recreate and, therefore creating a dangerous situation. Shooting and other types of recreation do not mix well. The only conflict that exists is with negligent shooters (which is a small, but impactful group), and people who litter. Closing the area to all shooters will negate negligent shooters.

Management practices that once worked for the Hubbard Mesa OHV area, are not effective anymore. The area has evolved, accessibility has improved, and it is being used by more people. BLM's management of the area must evolve too, in order to accommodate the new and different users.

Outreach. Over the past few years, I have tried to talk to every shooter shooting across a trail or road, when possible. If I see a shooter shooting in an unsafe way or in the vicinity of a trail/double track, I always approach kindly and cautiously. I dismount my bicycle, wait till they are aware that I am there, say hello and introduce myself. I try to let them know that there are trails in the direction that they are shooting at to keep an eye out for people. I've never, ever, suggested that someone can't or shouldn't shoot in any spot. It's their right at Hubbard Mesa. I simply let them know of the trails in the area and ask the shooter to keep an eye out.

After having approached nearly one hundred shooters, I have yet to meet one that is receptive or even respectful. I've had all sorts of responses. From "I've been doing this for years and I ain't shot nobody" to blatant profanity and name calling. Outreach is a noble idea, but based on my field research, I fear that it will be completely ineffective.

Enforcement. There is no way to enforce the rules, that BLM has already established, in the Hubbard Mesa OHV area. Many people don't know where trails, double track, and even roads run in the OHV area. With extremely limited signage, how can they know? For example, I was riding with a friend and on a hill descending towards the main road. In a moment of having fun, my friend yelled out, "Woohoo" as we descended a steep hill. Then we come around a brushy corner and there's the road. Except this time, there was a man and his son there pointing guns at us. Not trying to threaten us, but the father had been teaching his son to shoot in this small gully. He had no idea there was a trail there and he was doing nothing wrong. But if my friend hadn't yelled out because he was having fun, we would have most likely been shot that day. No one is at fault and there is no real way to enforce any rules here. Or for another example, there is a spot where some people commonly shoot, and an established dirtbike trail crosses the shooting path three times. How is a shooter supposed to know that they are shooting across a trail three times? It is an open designation shooting area and they are not at fault. Yet the trail has been there so long, and used by so many people, that it shows up on BLM maps now.

0093-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Alternative III has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to consider two sub-alternatives, Alternatives IIIA and IIIB. Alternative IIIB includes closure of the entire Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area to recreational target shooting. Please see Table 2-1, line 173, for a description of this alternative and Section 4.5.3.4 for analysis of the potential impacts of this alternative.

0093-1

0093-2 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. Alternative III has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to consider two sub-alternatives, Alternatives IIIA and IIIB. Alternative IIIB includes closure of the entire Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area to recreational target shooting. Please see Table 2-1, line 173, for a description of this alternative and Section 4.5.3.4 for analysis of the potential impacts of this alternative.

0093-2

0093-3

0093-3 Recreation

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/Final SEIS.

0093-4

The Roan Plateau Planning Area is not managed to emphasize recreation, but is managed under all alternatives to meet basic recreation and visitor services and resource stewardship needs including visitor health and safety, use and user conflicts and resource protection.

0093-4 Recreation

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users

of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additional measures to minimize user conflicts could be considered as part of this on-going management process. BLM does not designate trails or areas for particular uses in open OHV areas. Section 3.5.3.3 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to note that many mapped and unsigned cross-country trails exist in the Hubbard Mesa area.

All public lands are required to have OHV area designations (43 CFR Section 8342.1). Areas must be designated as open, limited, or closed to motorized travel activities as defined in 43 CFR Section 8340.0-5, (f), (g), and (h) respectively. Hubbard Mesa is designated as *Open* to OHV travel in Alternatives II, III, and IV. The *Open* designation means an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, anywhere in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards. the delineation of Travel Management Areas (TMAs) addresses other modes of travel not covered by OHV area designations (43 CFR Section 8432.1). The Hubbard Mesa TMA delineation allows muscle-powered travel and mechanized (wheel conveyance) travel cross-country year-round consistent with the *Open* OHV designation for motorized travel.

These points don't even address the fact that no one I have spoken with has ever seen a BLM officer at Hubbard Mesa, and to my knowledge, no tickets have been issued in the past decade.

When I recreate at Hubbard Mesa, I only go after work Monday through Thursday, and Saturday and Sunday before 10:00 am. The rest of the times are generally too dangerous. Last September I couldn't get out there until 2:00 pm on a Saturday afternoon. Instead of riding any trails, I stayed on the road the entire time because I was too scared of what might happen. This is not an equally shared open space.

I feel that shooters have rights, and those rights should be respected. The first two miles, on the north side of the JQS road, should be a recommended shooting area due to the safe backdrop. Otherwise, Hubbard Mesa OHV should be closed to shooting because of the reasons stated above. Having an area designated as OHV within an open shooting area, is irresponsible. It's not "if" someone will get shot, it's "when." And as a user who prefers a silent mode of recreation, I don't want to be that person.

Thank you for your consideration and review of my personal testimony.

Sincerely,
Sean Strode
President of Rifle Area Mountain Biking Organization.

0093-5 Shooting Sports

As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.

0093-5

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Becky Tedrow
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 8:53 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau, Greg Larson

It is difficult to know which alternative is best due to the length and detail of the environmental impact statement. I'm sad that the area will change. All of the alternatives will undoubtedly damage this wonderful Rifle asset. Community alternative III seems the most thought out except for the restriction of target shooting. Who ever thought this would be better? We are already used to the target shooting along the bottom of the main road. The shooters are easy to see and hear. By leaving these already popular areas available to shooting it is actually safer. It also concentrates the trash. Think of the remote pockets of trash that would be created if target shooting is restricted to areas away from the main road. If target shooting is encouraged on the rest of the largely open areas up there it puts motorcycle riders, bicycle riders, and hikers, to name a few, at risk. There are many trails out there. We don't need shooters to be shooting over single track trails or small road trails and run the risk of the surprise jogger or bike rider. No. Leave the target shooting to the main areas already established along the main road.

Another observation and comment. Dust suppression by graveling roads with the 1 1/2 to 2 in. crushed rock I have seen up there is awful. You can't ride a bike or a horse on it and it is uncomfortable to run on. The four wheelers and dirt bikes just throw the rocks. So do not think this reverses the damage of large road building by gas and oil companies. It doesn't. The roads are only good for cars and trucks , not recreation. Think of something else.

Thank you for your work
Sincerely, Becky Tedrow

0094 County Road 227
Rifle, Colorado

970-379-5915

0095-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comments on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. In response to public concerns regarding shooting sports at Hubbard Mesa, Alternative III in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to include two sub-alternatives, IIIA and IIIB, that propose different areas of shooting closures in the vicinity of developed recreation sites and in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, and Section 4.5.3.4 in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for a description of these sub-alternatives and potential impacts on recreation management. The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

0095-1

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

0095-2

0095-2 Recreation

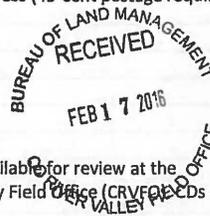
The impacts of oil and gas development, and associated road widening and maintenance, are discussed in Section 4.5.3.1. The section analyzes impacts to recreation from direct management actions and management actions directed at other resources, such as oil and gas development, that impact recreation. As noted in that section, BMPs would be implemented for all surface-disturbing activities under the Action Alternatives, as appropriate to individual projects. A list of selected BMPs that may be implemented is provided in Appendix H and includes use of horizontal drilling to limit surface disturbance and road construction or widening in the Planning Area and enforcing reduced speed limits for construction and operations-related traffic.



Public Comment Form Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

We want your comments! If you have any comments on the Roan Plateau Planning Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, please complete and submit this comment sheet to ensure your input is considered. You can submit this comment sheet at the public meeting, or mail to the following address (49-cent postage required):

Roan Plateau Comments
BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652



You may also email comments to roanplateau@blm.gov.

The Draft EIS is available on the BLM's Website at: <http://www.blm.gov/co/crvfo>. Hard copies are available for review at the Parachute, Silt, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale public libraries, or at the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO). CDs are available in limited quantities by request from the CRVFO.

Effective Public Commenting: The most helpful comments are those that identify: 1) an error in analysis that may affect the outcome; 2) additional information that would change analysis and conclusions; 3) something that should be clarified; or 4) a substantially different alternative that meets the purpose and need statement and has not been considered. Comments are most effective when they are as specific as possible; contain references to page numbers and sections of the document where applicable; and are backed with explanations, facts, and references, as appropriate.

All public comments are due by February 18, 2016.

If you have no comments or questions, but would like to be on our mailing list, please complete the contact information on the reverse side.

Thank you for considering my comment.

1) I do feel there is an error in your analysis. The idea that by restricting the outdoor activities of some will help us ALL get along better is wrong. We as a people do not enjoy (or are more compatible with) each other if some are restricted and some are not.

2) Your plan for restricting target shooting on Public Land has a familiar ring, "A Danger to Public Safety". See attachment. American Rifleman.ORG January 2016.

3) I would like to clarify: the land used most often for target shooting has the best backstops and this is the land where most people target shoot. Why restrict the best location for this particular recreation?

4) An effective consideration, would minimized risk to all could be to start bicycle trailheads just past the OHV parking. There is a place for ALL on Public Lands.

0096-1 Shooting Sports

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. The analysis of all alternatives has been revised in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components to minimize user conflicts in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components.

0096-2 Shooting Sports

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components to minimize user conflicts in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2.1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for discussions of potential impacts to all resources under each alternative as a result of these management components. The issues raised in your comment have been noted in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS analysis in Section 4.5.3.4.

0096-3 Shooting Sports

The analysis of all alternatives has been revised to note that BLM would continue to address concerns surrounding recreational target shooting through existing partnerships with the Town of Rifle, Garfield County, and users of public lands; visitor information and education; and enforcement of existing regulations. See Sections 4.5.3.2, 4.5.3.3, 4.5.3.4, and 4.5.3.5 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Additional measures to minimize user conflicts could be considered as part of this on-going management process. BLM does not designate trails or areas for particular uses in open OHV areas. Section 3.5.3.3 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to note that many mapped and unsigned cross-country trails exist in the Hubbard Mesa area.

0096-1

0096-2

0096-3

All public lands are required to have OHV area designations (43 CFR Section 8342.1). Areas must be designated as open, limited, or closed to motorized travel activities as defined in 43 CFR Section 8340.0-5, (f), (g), and (h) respectively. Hubbard Mesa is designated as *Open* to OHV travel in Alternatives II, III, and IV. The *Open* designation means an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, anywhere in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards. the delineation of Travel Management Areas (TMAs) addresses other modes of travel not covered by OHV area designations (43 CFR Section 8432.1). The Hubbard Mesa TMA delineation allows muscle-powered travel and mechanized (wheel conveyance) travel cross-country year-round consistent with the *Open* OHV designation for motorized travel.



Resistance to Nazi oppression was hampered by the lack of civilian arms possession. One of the most notable exceptions was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943, which began with a few incredibly brave Jews armed with handguns. They were able to temporarily stop the deportations of Jews to Nazi extermination camps.

HISTORICAL

Ufred Flatow was a German Jew who won first place in gymnastics events during the 1896 Olympics. In 1932, he registered three handguns as required by a decree of the liberal Weimar Republic. The government warned that the police must carefully store the registration records so that no extremist group could ever obtain them. That feat was realized, however, when an extremist group led by Adolph Hitler seized power the following year and used those very same registration records to disarm "enemies of the state." In 1938, the records were used to disarm Jewish gun owners such as Flatow, whose arrest report stated: "Arms in the hands of Jews are a danger to public safety." He would later die in Theresienstadt concentration camp.

Shortly after confiscating firearms from Flatow and numerous other Jews, the Nazis instigated the pogrom known as the "Night of Broken Glass" (*Reichskristallnacht*) against a defenseless Jewish population. All members of the German Jewish community were victims of the Nazi ideological pretext that every Jew was dangerous and must be disarmed. Given the premise that any Jew with a gun threatened the Reich, the universally cited excuse to ransack Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues during *Reichskristallnacht* was to search for and seize weapons of any kind. Those who actually possessed weapons had them seized and were subject to 20 years in a concentration camp.

Some personal reminiscences and other accounts relate these victims' experiences, and some, though few, of the stories here show what kinds of self-defense were possible for Jews under threat of arrest and attack.

The seemingly benign gun-registration laws of the Weimar Republic were used by the Nazis to disarm their political opponents and the nation's Jewish population. Searching for arms was one of the pretexts of the "Night of Broken Glass" and here, in these few words, is the story of Ufred Flatow, a Jewish sportsman.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Jeff Thompson
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2016 12:19 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Comments on Draft SEIS

The following are my comments on the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement:

1) The Executive Summary fails to adequately describe and summarize the impacts of oil and gas operations on the human environment. Section 1500.4(h) of the CEQ Regulations implementing NEPA require agencies to summarize environmental impact statements and circulate the summary instead of the entire environmental impact statement if the latter is unusually long. Section 1502.7 of the CEQ Regulations imposes a 300 page limit for environmental impact statements of unusual scope or complexity. The text of the subject Draft Supplement is much longer than the 300 page limit. In this case, good decisions cannot be made by the BLM and other agencies, and members of the public cannot reasonably be expected to comment, without a good summarization. Section 1502.12 of the CEQ Regulations requires that each environmental impact statement contain a summary which adequately and accurately summarizes the statement and stresses the major conclusions, the areas of controversy (including issues raised by agencies and the public), and the issues to be resolved including the choice among alternatives. I request that the BLM circulate a draft summary for comment that meets the requirements of the regulations stated above.

2) Section 1508.8(b) defines "impacts" or "effects" to include cumulative direct and indirect impacts. Accordingly, the summary section should describe the cumulative direct and indirect impacts of oil and gas operations as cumulative impacts are defined in Section 1508.7 of the CEQ Regulations.

3) With respect to impacts to water resources, I request the summary section include cumulative impacts on the Colorado River and Colorado River Basin, which would include impacts to water quality and impacts to water quantity. I believe oil and gas operations would permanently remove a large quantity of water from the basin, and remove that quantity of water from the earth's hydrologic cycle.

4) It is my understanding that as a result of the "COP 21" international summit on climate change in Paris in November and December, 2015, it is officially the policy of the United States Government that it will implement measures which, together with the measures implemented by other governments, will ensure that global temperatures do not rise more than 1.5 C. I believe it is the consensus of credible scientists that, in order for this goal to be met, something like 80% of the earth's fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground. Accordingly, if any of the alternatives considered in the Draft Supplement would allow more than 20% of the fossil fuels underneath the BLM land in question to be recovered, that alternative would not be in accordance with the policies of the United States Government. Further, the cumulative impact on the human environment of such alternative must be described as "catastrophic." I request that another Draft Supplement be circulated which recognizes and evaluates this significant new information.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Jeff Thompson

0097-1 Executive Summary

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS Executive Summary, is found in Section ES, pages ES1 through ES10. This Executive Summary summarizes impacts for all resources, not just oil and gas. 40 CFR 1502.10 specifies that the "standard format for environmental impact statements should be followed unless the agency determines that there is a compelling reason to do otherwise." BLM determined that the information and analyses in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS were necessary to understanding the decisions that would be made in the ROD. 40 CFR 1502.19 states that "Agencies shall circulate the entire draft and final environmental impact statements except for certain appendices..." and that "the agency may circulate the summary instead". As stated above, BLM determined that the information and analyses in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS were necessary to understanding the decisions that would be made in the ROD and therefore circulated the entire RMPA/SEIS. Major issues and areas of controversy (raised by the agencies and public) are described on page ES-1, in paragraph 1. Alternatives are described on pages ES-3 to ES-6. Because the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a planning document, decisions that will be made include how BLM will manage all resources in the planning area, as described in the section on Purpose and Need (pages ES-2 and ES-3).

0097-1

0097-2

0097-2 Executive Summary

Impacts from oil and gas operations and cumulative impacts as defined in 40 CFR 1508.7 are too lengthy to include in a summary (15 pages as specified in 40 CFR 1502.12). Oil and gas impacts are included in each appropriate resource section (for instance, impacts to wildlife are in Section 4.3.2 and 4.3.4). Impacts to oil and gas are included in Section 4.5.5.

0097-3

0097-4

0097-3 Water Resources

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS Executive Summary summarizes impacts for all resources, including oil and gas. Additional site and project-specific analysis will be conducted during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process. Cumulative impacts to the Colorado River and Colorado River Basin from oil and gas development are discussed in Section 4.2.4 - Water Resources under Offsite and Cumulative Impacts for each alternative. Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources are evaluated in Section 4.6.

0097-4 Climate and Air Quality

The BLM Colorado Air Resource adaptive management strategy also applies to GHG emissions and climate change. Following this approach, GHG emissions and climate change will be addressed over the life of the plan as future guidance and analysis suggest the need to, meaning that BLM Colorado analyses will adapt to changing times of the science for future oil and gas authorizations. Adaptive management practices that will be considered include analyzing impact trends, management actions effectiveness, and following new guidance requirements.

The consensus of credible scientists does suggest the need to consider mitigation, but there is currently no formal guidance that requires such measures for future oil and gas development. Multiple factors need to be considered when determining whether oil and gas development would contribute to climate change impacts. For instance if the BLM denies future Federal oil and gas development in the Federal leases, the development could still occur on nearby private surface at a potentially increased rate or with different oil and gas practices which would not result in a net zero contribution to GHG. Denying Federal oil and gas development in the Planning Area could potentially displace the oil and gas development closer to populated areas or other areas. Denying oil and gas development does not immediately imply that the overall global levels of GHG emissions would be reduced and remain unchanged. The demand for this resource exists, and it is likely to be developed somewhere else (if not authorized in the Planning Area) until other incentives drive the desire for alternative sources of energy.

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Matthew Vencill
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 8:50 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

What is just is just. What must be done must be done. What is just must be done. What is just and undone shall take its toll from those responsible, through action, or through inaction. So it is. So it was. So it always will be. May it be that you are wise enough to do what is just.

"Now his life is full of wonder, but his heart still knows some fear from the simple thing he cannot understand: Why they try to tear the mountains down to bring in a couple more...more people, more scars upon the land..."

Regards.

Matthew Vencill

78681

0098-1 Opinion
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0098-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Richard Villastrigo
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 11:19 AM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau

0099-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I urge you to adopt Alternative IV in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in your final RMP decision so that the Roan Plateau remains the rich ecosystem that it is today..

The 2014 settlement will protect the Roan Plateau especially from environmentally destructive oil and gas development. I urge the Bureau of Land Management to continue to look for ways to eliminate, rather than increase, fossil fuel production on public lands.

Thank you for selecting the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV) in the new RMP for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

Sincerely,

Richard Villastrigo

16870

0099-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Dave Way
Sent: Sunday, February 14, 2016 8:39 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Dave Way, I grew up in Western Colorado fishing and enjoying the great outdoors and small streams that flow down from our high country.

As a teen I was fortunate to discover a very remote little stream called trappers creek. I am now 55 years old and other than a few unsightly gas drilling projects it has remained a pretty wild place.

I was involved with TU in the mid 90,s as the vice president of Northern Nevada TU working closely with TU on recovering habitat on places like Dixie Creek and the Maries river in Northern Nevada. Both projects were very successful in recovering Lahontan Cutthroat.

I have also raised thousand of dollars for GVA by donating float trips on some of my favorite rivers. I have listened to both sides of the Roan argument.

This area needs to be protected, in my eyes and mind it is very sacred to me. Not only the streams but the landscape and wildlife that abounds on the Roan, it is still very wild.

Realize that all it takes is one mishap, a spill or road washing out in the wrong place to ruin the trout spawning areas that Mother Nature has so generously protected for thousands of years.

These are beautiful trout, we should be proud to have them in our backyard, unharmed and unmolested.

When they are gone...they are gone forever.

If you have not figured it out by now I am on the side of GVA to protect the streams and its habitants at all costs.

Sincerely,
Dave Way
970-623-0787
gofishway@yahoo.com

0100-1 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

| 0100-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Susan Nichols-Alvis
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 5:38 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Roan Plateau SEIS comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello Esteemed BLM Representatives,

The White River Trail Runners (WRTRS) ATV/UTV Club was formed in 2009. It is a non-profit, family oriented club with approximately 30 families, representing more than 100 members. The WRTRS Club has had the privilege and honor to work with the BLM for over six years. We have worked closely with BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner Greg Wolfgang on specific projects such as the Hubbard Mesa Annual Clean Up and the Squirrel Valley MOU. We value this relationship, and the hard work Greg and the BLM puts in every year on behalf of citizens who use our open lands.

As an ATV/UTV group, we feel we must address the recent accusations from other user groups. In a recent City Council meeting, a mountain biker claimed firearms and ATVs are dangerous. We take issue with this, and know when used properly, firearms and ATVs are no more dangerous than mountain bikes. In fact, we'd be interested in seeing a report of the number of ATV riders vs mountain bikers users, and reported accidents and incidents for each.

It is our goal to keep the Hubbard Mesa open, accessible and safe for everyone. As mentioned during our November meeting with BLM representatives, we would like to help with education and communication. We are true believers in leading by example. For instance, last year when several of our club members were headed up JQS, and came upon some mountain bikers. One was stopped, so we offered assistance and a bottled water to him. When we approach mountain bikers, we slow down and move to one side so as to not crowd them.

When these other user groups lament about the amount of Hubbard Mesa trash, one can't help but feel discouraged considering the history of the hundreds of volunteer hours we've happily and willingly donated. The complainers are new to the area, and haven't bothered to research the generations of community members who have donated sweat and elbow grease in keeping the area beautiful and open.

As ATV/UTV riders, we have never felt threatened by firearm users. We ride with our eyes and ears open. One suggestion is perhaps the hikers, joggers and mountain bike riders wear orange reflective clothing. Mountain bikes could have flags on them. Just as other operators of transportation, perhaps they shouldn't be allowed to wear ear buds.

We propose riders start registering their mountain bikes and affix a sticker onto them. A part of their \$25 registration fee can be used to maintain our trails, just as a part of our OHV fee does. Frankly, we are amused at the fact Hubbard Mesa mountain bikers feel exclusively entitled to our trails, considering the fact they didn't help pay for, nor help build, them.

Regarding the Roan Plateau SEIS, the White River Trail Runners ATV/UTV Club supports BLM's preferred alternative 4 reflecting no changes to Hubbard Mesa, and no changes to the lease settlement.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Susan Nichols-Alvis, President/Secretary
 White River Trail Runners ATV/UTV Club
 970-309-7042
 770 E 17th Street
 Rifle, CO 81650

0101-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

| 0101-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Amy Wittenberg
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 8:29 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Hubbard mesa

My name is Amy Wittenberg. I have lived here for 16 years. My family and I enjoy mtn biking and hiking in the Hubbard mesa area. We have encountered piles of trash and garbage from shooting all over. There has been a few times when we have been stuck on some of the trails towards the top of the mesa, unsure of which way to come down because we hear shooting. It would be so much safer if there was designated shooting areas. I don't bring my kids with me mtn biking there anymore for their safety!

Thank you for your consideration and time!

Amy Wittenberg

0102-1 Shooting Sports

As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination.

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components related to shooting sports in order to minimize user conflicts in recreation areas, specifically the Hubbard Mesa Open OVH Area. Please see Table 2-1, line 173, for a description of these management components and Section 4.5 for a discussion of potential impacts on recreation management.

| 0102-1

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: Rider, Kent
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 3:33 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: WPX Energy Final Comments Draft Roan SEIS
Attachments: WPX Energy Final Comments Draft Roan SEIS.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Mr. Larson,

Attached please find WPX Energy's comments on BLM's Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Planning Area. Hard copies have been sent to your office as well. If you have any questions about our comments, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Kent Rider | Environmental Specialist Sr. Staff
WPX ENERGY | 1058 County Rd 215, Parachute, CO 81635
O: (970) 623-8934 | C: (970) 250-7328 | kent.rider@wpxenergy.com
WPXENERGY.



February 17, 2016

VIA FEDEX PRIORITY OVERNIGHT and E-MAIL

BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office
Roan Plateau Comments Attn: Greg Larson
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

roanplateau@blm.gov

RE: Submittal of Comments on BLM's Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Management Plan Amendment

To BLM Representatives:

WPX Energy Rocky Mountain, LLC, formerly Williams Production RMT, (WPX), hereby submits the following comments on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Management Plan Amendment (Roan Draft SEIS) as announced in the Federal Register on November 20, 2015. (80 Fed. Reg. 72732, Nov. 20, 2015.)

The Roan Draft SEIS responds to a June 22, 2012, ruling by the United States District Court for the District of Colorado remanding the 2007 and 2008 Roan Plateau Records of Decision (ROD). The Judicial Order stated that the Final EIS was deficient and failed to sufficiently address:

- (i) The "Community Alternative" that various local governments, environmental organizations, and individual members of the public recommended;
- (ii) The cumulative air quality impacts of the Plan amendment decision in conjunction with anticipated oil and gas development on private lands outside the Roan Plateau Planning Area; and
- (iii) The issue of potential ozone impacts from proposed oil and gas development.

The Court set aside the Records of Decision for the 2006 Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and remanded the matter to the BLM for further action to address these specific issues. In consideration of the Judicial Order, the BLM determined that a supplemental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and a new proposed

RMPA were warranted. WPX recognizes that BLM's Roan Draft SEIS represents a new planning effort and supporting environmental analysis that:

- addressed information and alternatives analyzed in the BLM's earlier environmental analysis in the FEIS,
- incorporated supplemental analyses needed to address the deficiencies identified above in the Judicial Order, and
- satisfied further internal and external scoping conducted in preparing the Draft SEIS.

However, WPX is concerned whether this additional planning and analysis fully honors WPX's valid existing lease right for the Roan Plateau base lease it legally acquired in 2008. In this regard, WPX incorporates by reference all the comments it raised in the March 27, 2013 Joint Scoping Comments provided by WPX, OXY USA Inc., and Ursa Piceance LLC in response to BLM's January 28, 2013 Notice of Intent to Prepare a SEIS and RMPA for the Roan Plateau, Colorado ("Valley Lessees' scoping comments").

Much of WPX's review of and comments in the instant letter regarding the Roan Draft SEIS focus on whether additional conditions and restrictions are being proposed for future oil and gas development in addition to those assigned as stipulations to the 2008 Roan Plateau base lease, along with those for other prior adjacent BLM leases owned by WPX in the Roan Plateau Planning Area (RPPA). Although BLM must take into consideration significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its effects, and can establish management actions to mitigate such concerns, these actions must not add additional burdens to those stipulations included with WPX's original leases. It is settled law that once BLM "has granted the lease [BLM] may not derogate the rights of the Federal lessee acquired under the Mineral Leasing Act and the lease granted thereto." *Penroc Oil Corp. et al.*, 84 IBLA 36, 40 (1984)

BACKGROUND

WPX provides a brief background on the 2008 lease sale and the subsequent legal challenge and Settlement Agreement as context for comments in addition to its general and specific comments contained herein.

2008 Roan Plateau Lease Sale

In 1998, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998, Public Law 105-85 (Transfer Act), which transferred jurisdiction for lands within Naval Oil Shale Reserve (NOSR) 1 and 3 from the U.S. Department of Energy to BLM. The Transfer Act directed BLM to enter into leases, as soon as practicable, with one or more private entities for the purpose of exploration, development and production of petroleum. Leasing of the former NOSR 3 occurred pursuant to BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office RMPA finalized in 1999.

0103-1 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Under all alternatives considered in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, leases issued under the 1999 FEIS are considered valid existing leases and would be unaffected by the decision that results from this Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. As discussed in Section 1.3.7.3, "specific management actions that have been implemented are now subject to reconsideration in the RMPA/SEIS. If BLM's decisions following the RMPA/SEIS process are different from those in the 2007 and 2008 RODs, BLM may need to undertake additional measures to 'bring into conformance' its previous implementation actions so as to conform with the new planning decisions." This includes the 2008 sale of oil and gas leases.

As discussed in Section 2.3.4, under the Proposed Plan all "base" and "retained" lease areas would be subject to the same stipulations as those prescribed by the 2007 ROD, as summarized in Appendix C, except as modified by the terms and conditions detailed under Exhibit 3 of the Settlement Agreement (Appendix K). As stated in the Settlement Agreement, Section D, 14, the Parties acknowledged that nothing in Settlement Agreement affects BLM's discretion to adopt the plan of its choice among the alternatives (or a combination of the alternatives) analyzed in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS.

The Roan Plateau lease sale held on August 14, 2008 resulted in the highest grossing onshore oil and natural gas sale in BLM history. WPX successfully bid and acquired one of the leases (COC73094) offered during this auction, which comprised a 2,140 acre parcel located below (i.e., at the base of) the Roan Plateau. WPX's interest in acquiring this lease was supported by its proximity to other BLM leases held by WPX and the opportunity to efficiently integrate development of this lease utilizing existing infrastructure supporting production activities at these adjacent leases including access roads, well pads, and gathering lines. WPX's intended use of high efficiency directional drilling technology from existing well pads on adjacent leases to develop minerals under the new lease at the base of the Roan Plateau will minimize additional surface disturbance and related potential environmental impacts.

WPX has a long-standing operational history in the Piceance Basin and has been recognized by federal and state agencies for advancement of its operational practices. WPX is committed to responsible natural gas development that is protective of public safety and welfare and the environment and contributes to the regional economic and social well-being of local communities.

Most of the opposition by conservation groups in response to the 2008 Roan Plateau lease sale was focused on the leases awarded by BLM located "on top" of the Roan Plateau. Because the base leases were included in the auction along with the leases "on top" of the Roan Plateau, WPX has not been able to develop its lease as a result of the extended legal challenges, court ruling, settlement negotiations, and supplemental environmental analysis.

While WPX opposes any action that would unilaterally result in "cancelling" legally issued leases, WPX does recognize the right of a leaseholder to voluntarily relinquish a lease or leases and receive reimbursement due to a business decision made during settlement negotiations. Therefore, WPX does not consider there to be a conflict between its support for Alternative IV and the firmly held principle that a federal mineral lease is a legal contract that conveys property and contract rights to the lessee and it cannot be unilaterally canceled or voided.

Settlement Agreement

The Roan Draft SEIS is the product of a Settlement Agreement reached between BLM and the plaintiffs (conservation groups) and interveners (operators) in a Federal lawsuit over the original Roan Plateau FEIS. As a party to this settlement, WPX generally supports the adoption of Alternative IV, the Settlement Alternative (Preferred Alternative) subject to specific comments addressed below and subject to an assurance that BLM will implement this alternative in a way that honors WPX's valid existing lease rights. The Settlement Agreement states that if BLM's final Record of Decision (ROD) adopts the Settlement Alternative, the parties will not pursue legal challenges to the ROD. It is our understanding the plaintiffs will not challenge any BLM-approved Applications for Permit to Drill (APD), Master Development Plan (MDP), geographic area plan, or other plan for oil and gas activities on leases, that complies with the applicable

0103-2 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0103-2

requirements of the Settlement Alternative. Further, as a party to the settlement, the Lessees (operators) will not challenge any decision by BLM to:

- (i) modify the leases as defined for those closed, retained and open for oil and gas development (see Paragraph 5),
- (ii) modify the leases as defined in Exhibit 2 (only applies to BBC's retained leases on top), and
- (iii) modify the leases as defined in Exhibit 3 (only applies to Base leases), or
- (iv) impose applicable terms and conditions from Paragraph 5 and Exhibits 2 and 3 on the approval of any APD, MDP, geographic area plan, or other plan for oil and gas activities on these leases.

Except for these limitations to sue, the Settlement Agreement does not otherwise limit or waive the Plaintiffs and Lessee's rights to challenge the ROD on remand (including a decision not to adopt the Settlement Alternative); or any BLM decision related to oil and gas activities in the Planning Area (including, but not limited to, preserving conservation group's rights, except for limitations above, to challenge the approval of surface disturbing activities at a location identified in a Base Lease as being subject to a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation and the grant of any exceptions, modifications or waivers of lease stipulations).

Further, the Parties acknowledge that nothing in the Settlement Agreement curtails BLM's discretion to adopt the plan of its choice among the alternatives (or a combination of the alternatives) analyzed in the SEIS.

WPX COMMENTS

In addition to its comments provided above, WPX submits the general and specific comments below on the Roan Draft SEIS in response to its potential concerns the final alternative may have upon WPX's ongoing and future operations in the RPPA.

General Comments

Alternative I

WPX adamantly opposes Alternative I as the Selected Alternative which would allow the 24,980 acres comprising the Planning Area to remain unavailable (closed) for further oil and gas leasing and development during the anticipated 20-year life of this RMPA. Under Alternative I, BLM would likely cancel oil and gas leases issued in 2008 for lands within the Planning Area to return to previous conditions. WPX believes this action would violate its valid existing lease rights. Furthermore, this alternative does not honor the Settlement Agreement for which BLM and WPX are signatories.

0103-3 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0103-3

Alternative II

Alternative II was selected by BLM as the original Roan FEIS Proposed Plan Alternative. However, given the marked change in the proposed development of the Roan Plateau leases pursuant to the Settlement Agreement, WPX does not believe many of the provisions in Alternative 2, which contemplate full development of these leases, are appropriate. For example, unitization and/or phased leasing and limits on un-reclaimed surface disturbance are not necessary for the limited oil and gas development allowed under the Settlement Agreement and under the 20-year duration of the Roan RMPA.

Alternative III

Alternative III represents the Community Alternative, which BLM developed from public comments it received on the Draft RMPA/EIS in 2005, as well as public scoping comments for the RMPA/SEIS in 2013. Under the Community Alternative, no BLM surface in the Planning Area would be closed to oil and gas leasing, but surface disturbance on BLM lands above the rim would be limited. WPX strongly opposes this alternative since it does not honor the terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement to which BLM and WPX are signatories, and would violate the lease rights of WPX and the other Valley Lessees.

The Community Alternative designates 62,590 acres with NGD/NSO restrictions which includes the entire BLM surface area above the rim. This severe restriction would force operators to develop federal minerals under the top of the Roan leases from adjacent BLM leases at the base of the Roan Plateau, or from adjacent private surface leases along the rim of the Plateau. Although some of the minerals below the top of the Plateau BLM leases could be accessed via "close-in" directional drilling from the private surface acreage, a significant portion of the interior BLM leases on top of the Plateau cannot be technically and/or economically drilled with "long-reach" drilling given that the Williams Fork and other tight sandstone target formations must be vertically drilled and completed to maximize reserve recovery. Furthermore, this alternative assumes that the lessee of the BLM leases on top of the Plateau will be able to obtain permission to drill from the private surface owner that has already finalized a mineral lease with another operator. Finally, even more difficult drilling and completion technical and economic challenges exist that impede the feasibility to access BLM leases located on top of the Roan Plateau by drilling from those located at the base of the Plateau.

As BLM determines in Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences while summarizing the effects of Alternative III's NGD/NSO for the entire top of the plateau, "These stipulations and restrictions have a major impact on oil and gas development because they reduce the surface available for development." Presumably due to the practical limits of directional drilling, BLM concludes that only 40 wells could be drilled from the limited private land atop the plateau, providing access to a mere 53 BCF of the projected 5935 BCF of recoverable reserves if the

0103-4 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0103-5 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0103-5

necessary number of wells could be drilled to develop them. WPX agrees with BLM that the Community Alternative is limited by technical and economic feasibility of directional drilling.

Alternative IV

Alternative IV serves as both the Settlement Alternative as well as BLM's Preferred Alternative. As stated previously, WPX generally supports Alternative IV and those conditions and restrictions that conform to the terms of the Settlement Agreement. However, WPX expects BLM to honor the valid existing rights for the lease it acquired during the 2008 Roan Plateau lease sale, along with previous adjacent leases acquired from BLM that are also located in the RPPA. WPX recognizes and supports the flexibility that BLM can exercise in selecting the Final Alternative as "nothing in the Settlement Agreement affects BLM's discretion to adopt the plan of its choice among the alternatives (or a combination of the alternatives) analyzed in the SEIS." WPX believes this flexibility to select various provisions from the proposed alternatives in selecting final alternative is only limited by the applicable provisions of the Settlement Agreement and by the protection of WPX's valid existing lease rights. BLM appears to have satisfied these two criteria by stating in the description of Alternative IV that:

- "The basis of Alternative IV is to incorporate the terms of the Settlement Agreement for the Planning Area."
- "On lands below the rim that would be made available to oil and gas leasing and development, leases would be subject to the same stipulations as leases issued (per the remanded ROD and RMPA) in 2008, as modified by the terms and conditions detailed in the Settlement Agreement."

Specific aspects of Alternative IV that raise questions or concerns, or are otherwise of interest to WPX, are discussed in more detail below in the Specific Comments section.

Specific Comments

BMPs

Appendix H to the Draft SEIS includes 40 pages of proposed best management practices (BMPs), and some of these appear to exceed those BMPs and conditions of approval (COAs) that are currently applicable to WPX's leases. Any new BMP or COA that was not included or attached to WPX's original lease cannot be imposed upon WPX's leases without the operator's consent.

Air Quality

Comprehensive Air Resource Protection Protocol (CARPP)

WPX has previously provided its comments on the CARPP which was incorporated by BLM in other recent management plan revisions or amendments in Colorado (i.e. Colorado River Valley, White River, and Grand Junction). Many of WPX's concerns expressed in its comments remain,

0103-6 Opinion - Alternatives

0103-6

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0103-7 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

0103-7

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0103-8 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

As stated in Appendix H (and in the 2006 FEIS appendix of BMPs), "The BMPs identified in this Appendix represent the kinds of activities which may be required; actual BMPs required during the permitting process to mitigate impacts may vary. BMPs and specific methodologies associated with them are expected to change over time to reflect the results of monitoring and ongoing adaptive management efforts. Additional practices may be required, practices may be withdrawn, or practices may be modified during activity, implementation, or project level planning; this may be done without future land use plan (RMP) decisions or amendments, but would likely be analyzed as part of the NEPA analysis associated with the permitting process."

See also Yates Petroleum Corporation, 176 IBLA 144 (September 30, 2008): "When making a decision regarding discrete surface-disturbing oil and gas development activities following site-specific environmental review, BLM has the authority to impose reasonable measures to minimize adverse impacts on other resource values, including restricting the siting or timing of lease activities."

0103-8

especially given the extended downturn in oil and gas development in western Colorado. In addition, new and revised federal and state air quality regulations related to VOC and methane emissions have significantly reduced the further potential for these emissions to occur. The need to conduct extensive monitoring, modeling and other emission forecasting and reporting as allowed under the CARPP for proposed future oil and gas development given these drastic changes in industry activity and regulation is questionable. The results of Garfield County's air quality monitoring program demonstrate that air quality has improved in recent years as potential emissions are captured or controlled, and/or decline along with production from existing wells.

Overall, the BLM must carefully reconsider its entire management approach as outlined in the CARPP, Appendix J. BLM states that "air quality would be managed within the scope of BLM's authority, and would ensure that air quality and air quality-related values are adequately protected by analyzing the effects of activities or resource uses authorized by the BLM and cumulative actions." Yet, even a cursory review of Appendix J suggests that the BLM intends to exercise plenary authority over air quality management. The BLM does not have legal authority over air quality resources within the State of Colorado. *Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership v. Salazar*, 616 F.3d 497, 509 (D.C. Cir. 2010); *Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership v. Salazar*, 605 F.Supp.2d 263, 283 (D.D.C. 2009); 42 U.S.C. §§ 7401 *et seq.*; see COLO. REV. STAT. §§ 25-7-1309 (2012); *Wyoming Outdoor Council, et al.*, 176 IBLA 15, 26 (2008).

Section III of Appendix J proposes that operators submit an annual report of actual emissions for all criteria pollutants, VOCs, and GHGs for any oil and gas authorization. This requirement is redundant with existing State inventory programs (CDPHE Stationary Source criteria pollutant emissions database) and Federal programs (Greenhouse Gas Mandatory Reporting Rule. 40 C.F.R. §98). This redundant requirement imposes not only an unnecessary burden on operators, but also raises many concerns such as ensuring consistency of emission calculation methodologies, standards, and emission source types, between the BLM developed inventories and the existing State and Federal inventories.

The BLM indicates that modeling may be required to analyze the potential impacts of air quality on a periodic rolling basis. The BLM should explain how it intends to conduct this modeling and who will perform said modeling. The BLM should also recognize the cost of such modeling, which can total to millions of dollars over time. As the BLM is well aware, air quality modeling is a time-consuming and expensive proposition. Given current federal budgets, it is difficult to envision the BLM will have the resources and funding to perform and/or review air quality modeling within a reasonable time frame.

In Section III.A.2 of Appendix J, the BLM indicates that it may require project proponents to conduct pre-construction air monitoring within or adjacent to proposed development areas. The BLM indicates this is necessary to demonstrate baseline air quality conditions prior to development. The BLM does not explain how long monitoring will be required or indicate why such monitoring is necessary. The BLM should be aware that the requirement for additional monitoring may substantially delay oil and gas development within the RPPA. Further, to the extent the BLM is delaying potential development; it must be prepared to place non-producing leases in a suspended status so that lease terms are not diminished by prolonged monitoring timeframes. This is of particular concern because the BLM seems to suggest it will require at

0103-9 Climate and Air Quality

Because the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is a planning analysis without site-specific knowledge or information about most of the oil and gas development that could occur in the planning area such as facilities or the specific types of equipment and drilling technology to be used for each lease, it is premature to identify the appropriate to provide certainty on the necessary mitigation measures or site-specific regulatory requirements that would be applied to individual projects. The reference to the CARPP and the lease notice, however, discloses the types of air quality analysis and mitigation measures that may be required at the APD stage of actual proposed oil and gas development. Emissions control requirements for projects would depend on existing air quality, updated air analyses, and the applicable regulations at the time when actual oil and gas development is proposed. Monitoring data showing either improvements or decline in air quality would be used in project-level analysis to inform the decision maker.

0103-9

0103-10

0103-11 0103-10 Climate and Air Quality

Please see response to comment number 0039-3.

0103-11

0103-12 0103-11 Climate and Air Quality

Section III of Appendix J is being misinterpreted as BLM Colorado is not requesting an annual "report" but information from oil and gas operators for proposed projects when BLM is conducting project-specific NEPA analyses; this information is needed to aid BLM in developing adequate and accurate emissions inventories for the proposed development to assist in the NEPA analysis for authorization of the proposed oil and gas development. Without adequate emissions inventories, BLM is forced to make assumptions for the proposed project which would lead to erroneous air quality impacts analysis, etc.

0103-12

0103-13

0103-12 Climate and Air Quality

For cumulative and planning area-wide modeling analyses, the BLM is heavily involved in the Inter-Mountain Data Warehouse (IWDW) for which modeling products are developed using various sources of funds (Government funding, oil and gas operator support, etc.). BLM Colorado has and will continue to leverage these IWDW products for CARMMS which saves

everyone much time and money for CARMMS modeling. The unique CARMMS modeling specific to BLM Colorado (i.e., CARMMS products not part of IWDW) has been supported by Government funding up to this point, and CARMMS is continuously used for all BLM Colorado oil and gas related NEPA assessments (RMPs, EISs, EAs).

For project specific near-field analyses, the CARPP Appendix (IM) describes the methodology that BLM Colorado will follow for conducting oil and gas near-field impact assessment for actual submitted oil and gas proposals. BLM Colorado currently has several near-field modeling screening tools that are used to screen potential air quality impacts for proposed projects and in-house modeling capabilities for proposed projects (several AERMOD / CALPUFF analyses were recently conducted in-house for proposed oil and gas development project EAs). In unique circumstances, BLM Colorado may request an oil and gas operator to submit an AERMOD or CALPUFF near-field analysis for a proposed oil and gas project EA if screening tools suggest the need to conduct such an analysis and there are not previously completed near-field analyses that could be used to describe potential air quality impacts for the proposed project.

Additional modeling tools (not described here) may also be used in future. Further details regarding methodologies for conducting implementation-level decisions is not required at the planning stage.

0103-13 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment number 0039-4.

least a year of baseline monitoring prior to authorizing oil and gas development operations. In addition, the potential requirement that the operator fund one or more air monitoring stations for the life of the project, which could exceed 20 years, is an unrealistic and overly burdensome requirement. WPX believes this condition is wholly unacceptable and requests that it be eliminated.

The BLM's language in Sections IV, V and VI of Appendix J must be revised significantly in the Final SEIS. The BLM suggests that it will utilize modeling to implement control requirements or other mitigation measures on future oil and gas development. Such measures are wholly inappropriate and beyond the expertise or authority of the BLM. The EPA and CDPHE have exclusive authority over air quality measures within the State of Colorado.

WPX is concerned that the basis for when any of the mitigation options will be selected is subjective and uncertain. There is no clarity or certainty for an operator for when these mitigation options may be imposed. This presents a challenge when planning for future projects and capital outlays. The following two mitigation options, which are included in the CARPP, are the most concerning: (i) As an operator, conduct one year of pre-construction baseline air quality monitoring within or adjacent to a proposed development area during the year immediately preceding the proposed project submittal. This includes siting, installing, operating, and maintaining the required air quality monitors. (ii) As an operator, conduct air quality monitoring for the life of the development project.

Overall, WPX questions the need for and value of the comprehensive monitoring, permitting, mitigation and reporting requirements being considered by BLM in its CARPP, when existing federal and state regulatory programs already address most of these requirements. Furthermore, the recently-established federal and state emission controls on oil and gas operations do not appear to have been incorporated into the air quality modeling analysis used to support the Roan SEIS, which is based on an oil and gas development forecast that appears to significantly overestimate likely future rates of development.

Finally, WPX questions the capacity of BLM to meet the commitments it proposes to make under this CARPP and urges the BLM to confer with the other state and federal agencies who are already involved in similar regulatory efforts.

Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife

As stated throughout this letter, WPX supports the adoption of Alternative IV as the Final Alternative. As shown on Table 4.3.10, Alternative IV would have a moderate beneficial effect on Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife. While the Draft SEIS is intended to balance oil and gas development with other resources, including wildlife, WPX feels it is important that additional restrictions that are outside the scope of the Settlement Agreement only be applied as necessary to continue to strike that balance. Adopting a conservative approach, as proposed in Alternative IV, should provide land managers with more flexibility at the site-specific implementation level when attempting to maintain the balance between wildlife and the reasonable accommodation of development activity required for resource extraction. This flexibility allows an adaptive

- 0103-14 0103-14 Climate and Air Quality
Post-development monitoring, although not likely, could be required to validate the air quality analysis (modeling) that was performed for a proposed action because air quality models are not always perfectly accurate to assess potential air quality changes.
- 0103-15 0103-15 Climate and Air Quality
Please see response to comment 0039-3.
- 0103-16 0103-16 Climate and Air Quality
Mitigation measures are included in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS as information. BMPs are determined during the Master Development Plan or Application for Permit to Drill process.
- 0103-17 0103-17 Climate and Air Quality
BLM Colorado will continue to evaluate the relevance of CARMMS for use in analyses and making decisions, and will conduct more modeling as RFDs and emissions inventories are updated, for new applicable rules and regulations and as new monitoring air quality and air quality related values suggest the need for more modeling.

Chapter 3, Section 3.2.5, of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS was updated to include recent regulations.
- 0103-18 0103-18 Opinion - Alternatives
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

management approach to be applied as site-specific conditions, activity-level and other temporal variations are encountered. These considerations, along with the resource management objectives, should form the basis for decision-making in approving development plans and imposing appropriate conditions of approval.

Special Status Fish and Wildlife Species

Again, WPX is supportive of Alternative IV with respect to Special Status Fish and Wildlife. The preferred alternative appears to strike a balance between multiple uses based on Table 4.3.12 concluding it would have a negligible effect on Special Status Fish and Wildlife Species.

WPX also supports Alternative IV in that it recognizes the recent RMPA for the Greater Sage Grouse, which clearly indicates that no known leks or priority or general habitat (see Figure 1-4 in Appendix A of the Greater Sage Grouse RMPA) are known to occur in the RPPA at locations below the rim, including the parcel that comprises WPX's 2008 lease. As such, it is WPX's understanding that BLM will impose no additional conditions or restrictions related to protection of Greater Sage Grouse populations or habitat on or in the immediate vicinity of WPX's 2008 Roan Plateau lease, unless site-specific conditions are observed that warrant otherwise.

Soils and Water Resources

Steep Slopes

WPX requests that the SEIS recognize under the Settlement Agreement that the parties retain the right to challenge BLM's approval of surface disturbing activities at a location identified in a Base Lease as being subject to an NSO stipulation and the grant of any exceptions, modifications or waivers of lease stipulations. However, the conditions that determine whether an exception, modification of waivers is truly necessary should be clarified. Specifically, the use of generalized maps referenced in the SEIS may not accurately depict actual field conditions encountered at a specific location proposed for oil and gas development. For example, broad areas of a map may designate an area subject to an NSO stipulation due to steep slopes. Yet, there could be locations within this area where the slopes do not exceed the steepness criteria based on actual field observations. Assuming that proposed surface disturbance for oil and gas development could avoid steep slopes, even though a map shows the broader area as being entirely comprised of steep slopes, then this should not be considered to represent an exception, modification or waiver and would not be grounds for challenging the decision when site-specific conditions show otherwise. WPX also requests that BLM acknowledge and allow that new oil and gas locations that minimally encroach on a designated NSO area also not be deemed an exception, modification or waiver of lease stipulations especially if site-specific analysis shows that potential harm can be avoided or minimized through sound management practices.

Soil Resources

According to Section 4.2.3: Soil Resources, all alternatives including the preferred alternative appear to provide a net benefit to soil resources when all land uses are considered. Unless soil

0103-19 Opinion

The RMPA/SEIS includes management actions for GRSG even though they are not currently present in the Planning Area because BLM is striving for consistency with the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse RMPA/EIS and priority habitat or a lek could be established in the future.

0103-20 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development Modifications and/or waivers to stipulations for Alternative IV (Proposed Plan) are described in Appendix C, Table C-4, in the column entitled "Standards" of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Alternatives I through III exception/modification/waiver criteria are included in Appendix C, Tables C-1 through C-3 respectively. As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, the original 2008 lease terms apply in accordance with the Settlement Agreement. Known current conditions of soil resources are found in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3.

0103-19

0103-21 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development Modifications and/or waivers to stipulations for Alternative IV (Proposed Plan) are described in Appendix C, Table C-4, in the column entitled "Standards" of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. Alternatives I through III exception/modification/waiver criteria are included in Appendix C, Tables C-1 through C-3 respectively. As stated in Chapter 2, Section 2.2 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, the original 2008 lease terms apply in accordance with the Settlement Agreement. Known current conditions of soil resources are found in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3.

0103-20

0103-21 cont'd Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

0103-21

0103-21
Continued

0103-21 cont'd Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

resources are currently impaired, BLM should more fully accommodate uses of public lands instead of restricting other uses by means of NSO, CSU, and travel and grazing restrictions to protect soils to the degree all four alternatives do. If soil resources are currently impaired, BLM should identify them as such in the Draft SEIS, and provide sufficient justification for this conclusion.

Appendix C provides tables that describe NSO/CSU stipulations applicable to river valley, riparian and wetland areas. While the acreage numbers provided for each stipulation in Tables C-1 through C-4 presumably reflect the polygons shown in the maps, the actual application of restrictions for resource protection should be based on the extent of the sensitive resource that's being protected when more accurate information about presence of the resource can be collected by way of on the ground surveys, improved data collection technology, etc. As stated above, generalized map depictions of resource conditions may not accurately represent site-specific conditions, which should be verified by field surveys, prior to review and decision-making of proposed oil and gas development. Once the absence of a sensitive resource is demonstrated, the restriction should be deemed inapplicable and categorically waived from the requirement for without requiring the formally granting of an exception, modification or waiver.

Water Resources

The Draft SEIS contains several erroneous assumptions and some out of date information. While it's understandable that BLM would not attempt to update all information used in the original EIS for the purpose of the Supplemental EIS, it's also difficult to draw a clear connection between background information and the management strategies in each of the alternatives. Therefore, WPX provides the following updates and corrections for BLM to use as necessary:

Section 4.2.1 under Chemical Pollution:

"Up to 100 cubic yards of cuttings (for an 8,000-foot-deep well and a 7.875-inch gauge bore) may be left in mud pits at each drill pad per well drilled." In our experience, the actual volume of cuttings generated per well of these dimensions is closer to 600 cubic yards. Also, it is now not accurate to consider the pits 'mud pits' as most operators are using closed-loop drilling systems to recycle mud before it goes to the pit.

"While disposal of produced water by underground injection is common in some regions, it is not common in the Roan Plateau area, and the BLM has not approved any injection wells in the Planning Area." Current practice does not support this statement as WPX operates multiple produced water injection wells, including several within the RPPA, some of which are approved by BLM.

"Use of pits or ponds to dispose of produced water by evaporation (and, to a lesser extent, infiltration into the soil) is also common in some areas but less so in the Planning Area." Infiltration into soil is not, to any extent, a practice that is used for disposal of produced water in

0103-21

Continued

0103-22 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development

The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is an availability decision and the specific applicability of a given stipulation is determined at the time of the lease sale (and per BLM NEPA Handbook 1790-1 and LUP Handbook H 1601-1). Exceptions, modifications, and/or waivers to stipulations for Alternatives are described in Appendix C, Tables C-1 through C-4 respectively. As stated throughout the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, oil and gas lease stipulations under the Proposed Plan reflect the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

0103-22

0103-23 Water Resources

Alternative IV, the Settlement Alternative, is the only alternative that specifies that closed loop drilling be used. As stated in the Executive Summary, "much of this Proposed RMPA/FSEIS integrates the language and analyses of the original RMPA/EIS process. This Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is updated to reflect supplemental analyses required by the Judicial Order, any new significant resource information, and revised maps and tables." As such, the paragraph from which the text is quoted has been revised to, "Drill cuttings, including rock fragments and unsalvaged mud, typically are not removed from the site. This analysis has assumed that up to 100 cubic yards of cuttings (for an 8,000-foot-deep well and a 7.875-inch gauge bore) may be left in pits at each drill pad per well drilled; however, operator experiences may vary, and the volume of cuttings generated may be closer to 600 cubic yards. The pits have typically been unlined, 8 to 10 feet deep, and backfilled with the excavated soil and subsoil material after drilling is completed. The COGCC has developed a Notice to Operators that includes new design requirements for pits, including liners and base compaction and conductivity, which would reduce impacts to the surrounding environment."

0103-23

0103-24

0103-25

0103-24 Water Resources

As stated in the Executive Summary, "much of this Proposed RMPA/FSEIS integrates the language and analyses of the original RMPA/EIS process. This Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is updated to reflect supplemental analyses required by the Judicial Order, any new significant resource information, and revised maps and tables." As such, the quoted text has been

revised to, "In the State of Colorado, produced water may be treated, disposed, reused and recycled, or used for mitigation purposes."

0103-25 Water Resources

As stated in the Executive Summary, "much of this Proposed RMPA/FSEIS integrates the language and analyses of the original RMPA/EIS process. This Proposed RMPA/FSEIS is updated to reflect supplemental analyses required by the Judicial Order, any new significant resource information, and revised maps and tables." As such, the quoted text has been revised to, "In the region, produced water is typically reused and recycled (after treatment, if necessary) and/or disposed either via underground injection or evaporation in a lined pit or pond."

0103-25 cont'd Water Resources

the Planning Area. COGCC requires that all produced water storage pits be constructed with an impervious liner system.

Vegetation and Reclamation

Upland Vegetation

Management actions described in Alternative IV appear to be directed towards Greater Sage Grouse (GRSG) habitat and should not be appropriate or practical for application outside of GRSG habitat, such as leases located below the rim. To the extent that it would not conflict with the requirements of the Settlement Agreement, WPX recommends adoption of management objectives from Alternative I in lieu of those included in the proposed Settlement Alternative.

Special Status Plants and Significant Plant Communities

To the extent that it would not conflict with the requirements of the Settlement Agreement, WPX is opposed to the addition of restrictions for special status plants protection as proposed in Alternative IV. Rather, WPX supports the habitat for special status plant species populations and significant plant communities identified in Alternative II as referenced in the map in Appendix C (C2-38). WPX believes this is an example of where the SEIS process has gone beyond what is required by the Judicial Order remand and the Settlement Agreement. WPX requests that the BLM provide evidence that this greater restriction is the result of "new information or changed circumstances that may result in significantly different environmental effects" as stated in the Settlement Agreement. BLM should acknowledge that advancements in directional drilling and use of multi-well pads have resulted in a significantly reduced surface disturbance. These arguments should be recognized given WPX's ability to utilize and directionally drill from existing well pads located on adjacent leases to access most of its 2008 base lease.

Reclamation

It is unclear whether "undesirable species" refers to all species which are considered not desirable or specifically to the two listed species, Russian Thistle and Kochia. WPX suggests removal of this language entirely because lack of clarity can result in inconsistent and unpredictable implementation. Instead, BLM should adopt and incorporate by reference the listed noxious weeds according to the objectives and management recommendations for Colorado A, B, and C list species.

WPX requests that BLM provide clarification in response to the following questions related to management actions for reclamation in the Draft SEIS:

0103-25
Continued

0103-26 Biological Resources

As stated in Chapter 3 Section 3.3.4, Colorado Parks and Wildlife has mapped the top of the Roan Plateau as general habitat for GRSG and a small area of priority habitat (30 acres) which is on private land. Management actions identified for GRSG will be applied based on site-specific habitat suitability during the leasing and development stage. Currently, neither PHMA nor any active leks have been identified on Federal surface in the Planning Area. However, if updated mapping were to include PHMA or an active lek was identified at a later time, additional stipulations and/or management actions would apply.

0103-26

0103-27

0103-27 Special Status Species

In accordance with BLM's NEPA Handbook H 1790-1 (BLM 2008c), BLM must address significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its effects (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)). New circumstances and information integrated into the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS include changes in special status plant designations that have occurred since the completion of the FEIS. Two species, DeBeque phacelia (*Phacelia submutica*) and Parachute penstemon (*Penstemon debilis*), were candidate species for Federal listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) during the original analysis. Both of these species were listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 2011 (USFWS 2011), and Critical Habitat for both species was designated by the USFWS in 2012 (USFWS 2012). Critical habitat for Parachute penstemon was designated within the Planning Area, and includes a

0103-28

1-kilometer buffer around known populations of this species.
- Under Alternative IV, the Proposed Plan, GS-CSU-Roan-12: Habitat for special status plant species populations and significant plant communities (Appendix C, page C4-41) is reflective of 2007 ROD/lease mapping, per the terms of Settlement Agreement.

0103-29

- Under Alternative II, CRVFO-CSU-Roan-12: Habitat for special status plant species populations and significant plant communities (Appendix C, page C2-38) is reflective of this new information and shows a reduced area of special status plant habitat relative to the Proposed Plan/FEIS, because of the shift of classification from "special status species habitat" to "designated Critical Habitat for a T&E species".

- Per Alternative IV, the Proposed Plan (Settlement Alternative), leases would be managed with stipulations reflective of what was attached to leases in 2008, even if there is new information.
- The Proposed RMPA/FSEIS has been revised to clarify that GS-NSO-Roan 24: Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Species Habitat would not apply to designated Critical Habitat under Alternative IV, the Proposed Plan (Settlement Alternative), except where it applied under the 2007 ROD. However, the ESA still applies and BLM will fulfill its Section 7 consultation obligations.
- Finally, a note has been added to Appendix C in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS to explain the apparent contradiction between the wording of GS-NSO-Roan 24 and the illustrative map on page C4-34.

0103-28 Biological Resources

The Disturbed Site Reclamation Standards, Monitoring and Success Criteria is provided in Appendix I of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS. The stated goal of these standards and criteria are to mitigate anticipated impacts to vegetation, soil and water resources from ground-disturbing activities by re-establishing a self-sustaining, diverse vegetation community composed of species native to the region in sufficient species density and diversity to closely approximate natural, undisturbed vegetation potential.

BLM is responsible for implementing these standards and compliance with monitoring requirements. Project proponents for all permitted activities will typically perform the reclamation work, and effect on-the-ground implementation.

The standards do specifically incorporate by reference current State of Colorado noxious weeds in Lists A, B, and C. The inclusion of *undesirable species* is intentional, to allow BLM to address site-specific factors that may impede for future reclamation success against the stated goals. Specific decisions regarding undesirable plant species would be discussed during project-specific planning and formalized in the project-specific reclamation plans.

0103-29 Biological Resources

As noted in Appendix I of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, reclamation plans will be submitted for BLM review and approval prior to surface disturbing activities. Reclamation

plans will be considered as COAs for oil and gas exploration and development activities as well as other activities.

Specific details for reclamation activities, such as the use of containerized stock, will be included in project-specific reclamation plans. These plans would also specifically address reclamation monitoring, included a statistical basis to demonstrate 85 percent adequacy for plant species composition and cover, sampled either point intercept transect or plot level. The statistical adequacy level of 85% is a standard practice in the BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office and represents the desired future condition for reclaimed areas.

- Will reclamation plans be required on all projects? Or will this come as a COA within and APD on sites that may be deemed difficult by the BLM CRVFO?
- Will containerized stock be required on all BLM projects?
- How was the statistical adequacy level of 85 percent determined?
-

Requiring a bond for reclamation through the BLM is unnecessary and is duplicative as the COGCC already requires operators to provide bonds to cover reclamation costs.

The terms control and eradicate are both used in the discussion of reclamation and noxious weeds. Will the project proponent be required to eradicate list A species and control list B and C species as outlined in the Colorado Noxious Weed Act or will eradication be required for all A, B, and C list species? WPX requests that BLM clarify this requirement and establish objectives that are consistent with State programs.

Human Environment

Visual Resource Management

Appendix D: Visual Resource Management Classes and Objectives states that the visual contrast rating system described in BLM Manual 8400 will be used, where appropriate, in assessing proposals for projects on public lands or private lands with federal subsurface mineral rights. BLM Manual 8400 does not prescribe the use of BLM VRM methodology for private land; in fact, it consistently states that VRM objectives, responsibilities, and policy apply specifically to public land. Any visual resource or aesthetics management on private land falls under the sole jurisdiction of private landowners and the county.

Public lands in the RPPA are used for a variety of uses other than for oil and gas development including rangeland, leisure, and hunting. Garfield County designated these lands as "Resource Lands" or "Agricultural/Rural" lands.

On private lands within the planning area, WPX Energy currently implements a variety of BMPs to minimize the visual impact of oil and gas development such as painting our production equipment to match the surrounding area, maximizing the number of wells drilled per pad to avoid building new well pads and roads, constructing a water management system comprised of pipelines and storage reservoirs to decrease hauling of produced water by trucks on lease roads and public roads, and implementing interim reclamation until production is completed, wells properly plugged and abandoned and the location subject to final reclamation. Locations are built discretely to the extent possible. WPX has been complemented for these practices by Garfield County, Rio Blanco County, COGCC and BLM. Simply basing impacts on acreage disturbed fails to recognize the added benefits of other forms of visual mitigation.

0103-29 cont'd Biological Resources

0103-29

Continued

0103-30 Oil and Gas Leasing and Development
Control or eradication are species-specific management goals integrated into the definition of A-, B-, and C-listed noxious weed species, according to the Colorado Noxious Weed Act, and incorporated into Appendix I of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS by reference.

0103-30

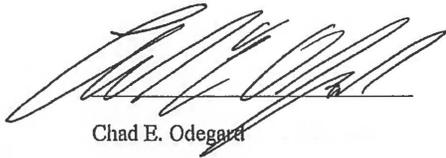
0103-31 Visual Resources
BLM will follow BLM Manual 8400, Visual Resource Management, in assessing impacts to visual resources both on public and private lands where there is Federal nexus. BLM must fulfill its obligation to analyze the impacts. An RMP does not apply to non-Federal lands, including non-Federal surface estates over Federal minerals ('split-estate' lands). The RMP does apply to the Federal mineral estate. As owner of the dominant mineral estate, the United States has both the right to authorize its lessees and their operators to use the non-Federal surface to access the Federal minerals, and the obligation to prevent unreasonable damage to the surface estate. Accordingly, BLM's oil and gas operating regulations apply to facilities and activities on split-estate lands. The BLM's Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 requires operators to make good-faith efforts to reach a surface use agreement with the surface owner. The BLM tries to accommodate the needs of the surface owner, but does not impose permit conditions on split-estates that exceed those applicable on wholly Federal lands. (See The Gold Book, p. 12.) The lease stipulations required by the RMP for particular Federal lands within its scope apply on both wholly Federal lands and split-estate lands, unless the RMP otherwise specifies.

0103-31

WPX recognizes the efforts that BLM has expended in honoring its commitment under the Settlement Agreement to prepare a Draft SEIS for the RPPA in a timely manner. WPX appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments on the Draft SEIS and looks forward to the completion of the Final SEIS and ROD. Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Respectfully,

WPX Energy Rocky Mountain, LLC



Chad E. Odegard

Vice President – Piceance Basin

cc (hard copy only):

Ruth Welch, BLM State Director

Lonny Bagley, Deputy State Director, Energy Lands & Minerals

Karl Mendonca, BLM CRVFO Manager

Hernandez, Bernadette

From: amy shipley
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2016 5:12 PM
To: roanplateau@blm.gov
Subject: Public Comment in response to the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment
Attachments: ohv map.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern:

Please accept this letter as a public comment to the *Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment*. My comment specifically addresses recreational target shooting within the Hubbard Mesa OHV Area north of Rifle, Colorado.

I moved to Rifle 8 years ago, and have enjoyed hiking, trail running, and mountain biking in the OHV since being a resident of the area. This potentially beautiful area could be a treasure to our local economy. We could attract more users of trails to our town. In its current state, however, the OHV is covered in tons of unsightly garbage, but more importantly, its users are in danger of being shot.

Shooting across or from trails and roads is illegal. However, this is not being enforced at the OHV. People seem to think they can shoot anywhere and everywhere in this region. I have seen signs encouraging shooters to shoot safely and not litter, but these signs have become targets as well. Clearly any public education campaign that relies on signage alone is not effective! Regular patrols of the area in combination with ticketing shooters who are breaking the law are essential for getting this dangerous situation under control.

As a trail runner, mountain biker, and hiker, I am particularly at risk of being shot within the OHV because shooters cannot hear me coming like they can an ATV user or dirt biker. Many of the trails are elevated and not visible from the road. I have personally had to leave a trail to avoid walking in front of a loaded gun. I had to leave the trail and join the road to safely walk behind the shooters before regaining the trail further down.

A friend and I recently went out to the OHV to pick up some trash. We collected 9 large bags full of shooting related trash within a short distance from the road. In addition to the trash, one particular very old juniper had been shot to pieces uphill from the road. Directly behind that tree lay a loop of trail that is not visible from the shooter's location. The next day, after having picked up 9 bags of trash, the area was once again littered with mounds of spent shells and shot up kitty litter containers.

Please make the areas designated in the attached map **open shooting areas**. Please designate the rest of the OHV as off limits to shooting. In addition, please enforce laws related to shooting on public lands by ticketing offenders and holding them accountable for their actions. Does someone need to die or be injured before this issue will be taken seriously?

0104-1 Shooting Sports

As noted in Section 3.5.3.6 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS, BLM policy does not allow for designation of shooting areas on public lands, due to concerns about lead contamination. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-074 explains BLM's policy for allocating designated target shooting areas through direct sale under Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act or through Recreation and Public Purposes Act Patents, which transfer responsibility for remediation to the holder of the property title.

Alternatives I through IV in the Proposed Plan/FSEIS present and consider a range of management components for shooting sports, particularly in the Hubbard Mesa Open OHV Area. Please see Table 2-1, line 173, for descriptions of these management components and Section 4.5 for a discussion of potential impacts under each alternative.

0104-1

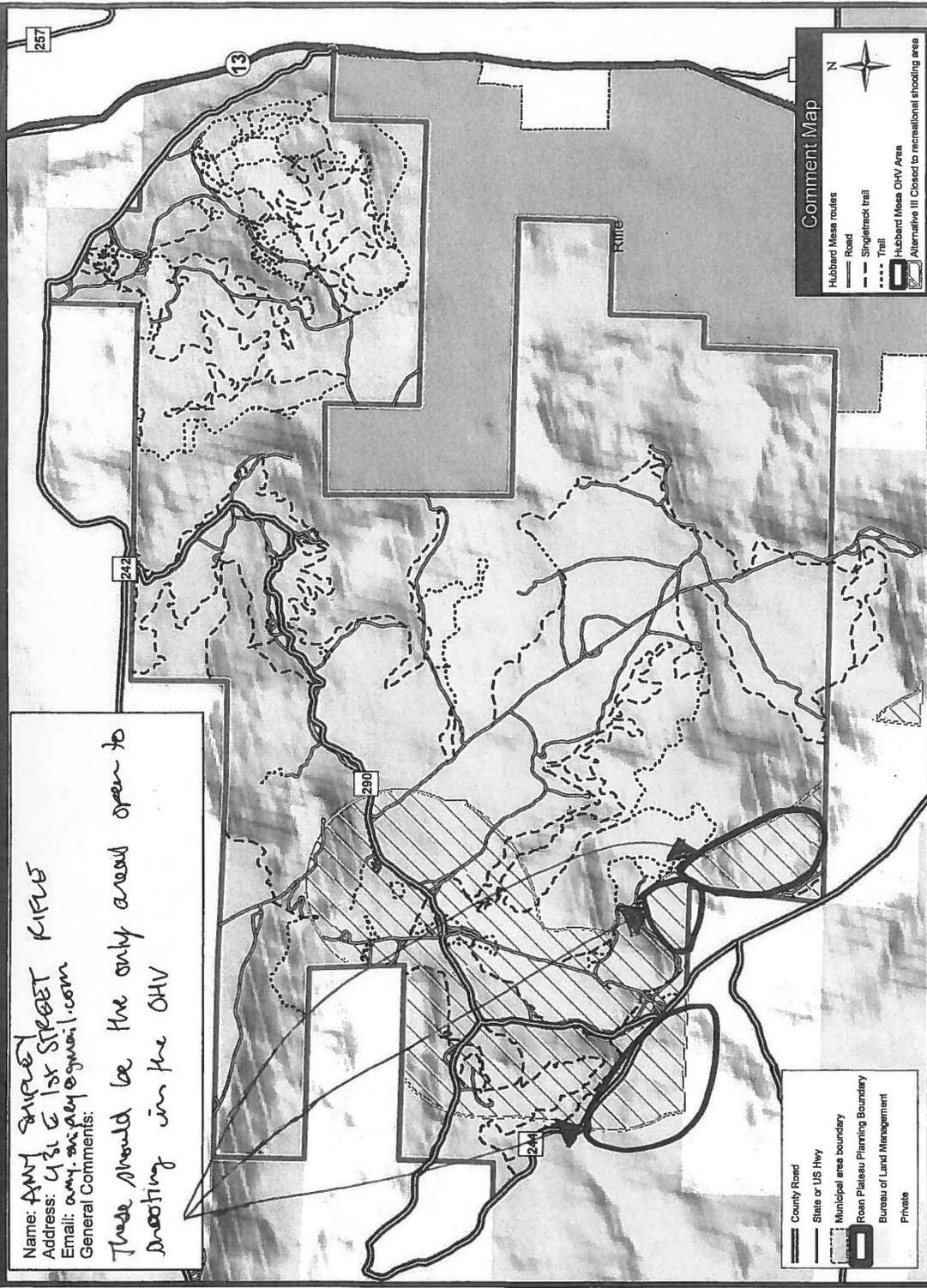
Hubbard Mesa OHV Area

Name: AMY SARGENT KIRBY
Address: 431 E 1st STREET
Email: amy.sargent@gmail.com
General Comments:

These should be the only areas open to shooting in the OHV

County Road
State or US Hwy
Municipal area boundary
Roan Plateau Planning Boundary
Bureau of Land Management
Private

Comment Map
Hubbard Mesa routes
Road
Singletrack trail
Trail
Hubbard Mesa OHV Area
Alternative III Closed to recreational shooting area



Claire Morgenstern

11201-2509

0105-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS. The Proposed Plan incorporates stipulations and other measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural resources and water and air quality. Please refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

Feb 5, 2016

Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau from oil and gas development

Dear Director Welch: Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

I urge you to take the necessary steps to protect Colorado's Roan Plateau from dangerous oil and gas drilling. The Roan is one of America's most biologically-rich wildlands, home to many imperiled fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America and critical habitat for elk and deer. Drilling in these untouched areas would destroy the Roan's irreplaceable landscape and the wildlife that make their homes there while threatening our air, water, climate and health. Please do everything you can to protect the Roan and its wildlife from fracking and other fossil fuel development. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Claire Morgenstern

0105-1

0106-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

Thank you for entering into the 2014 settlement in Conservation Colorado Education Fund, et al. v. Jewell, et al., and for developing a new resource management plan (RMP) for the Roan Plateau Planning Area. I urge you to adopt the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) in your final RMP decision.

The Roan Plateau is one of the most biologically rich areas in Colorado, home to dozens of threatened fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America, and thousands of acres of roadless wilderness lands. The 2014 settlement, reached after years of careful negotiations between the federal government, conservation and sportsmen's groups, and lessees is highly protective of this precious area. The high level of support the settlement has received from a variety of stakeholders bodes well for the long-term protection of the Roan Plateau.

The Settlement Alternative is critical to that agreement because it represents a consensus proposal for future management of the Roan. Alternative IV in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement cancels 16 of the 18 oil and gas leases on top of the Plateau and minimizes the footprint and environmental impacts where oil and gas development is allowed to occur. Adopting this alternative should avoid further litigation over the Roan and finally bring the long-running controversy to a close with a highly protective management plan for these lands.

Furthermore, this alternative reflects the need to keep fossil fuels in the ground to protect public health, the climate, and public lands for present and future generations. Oil and gas development in Colorado has rapidly expanded in recent years. There are now over 42,000 producing wells and over 106,000 wells in the state as of August 2015. Continued expansion of fossil fuel development on public lands will substantially increase the volume of carbon emissions emitted into the atmosphere, jeopardizing the health and vitality of Coloradans and a safe climate future for all. In order to protect our communities and avoid catastrophic climate change, the Bureau of Land Management should be looking for ways to eliminate, rather than increase, fossil fuel production on public lands.

For those reasons, the only reasonable management alternative for the Roan Plateau is one that protects our climate, public health, and preserves our public lands for present and future generations. Please select the Settlement Alternative (Alternative IV) in the new RMP for the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

Sincerely,
Peter Stocker
Browns Valley, CA 95918

0106-1

Mr. Eric Lane
 3291 Osceola St
 Denver, CO 80212-1741
 (303) 981-3660

0107-1 Opinion - Alternatives

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS. BLM has chosen Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS as the Proposed Plan analyzed in the FSEIS.

0107-2 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Management and protection of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics are fully considered within the range of alternatives in the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.8. Several management actions provide indirect protections for these resources in the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. These include numerous stipulations (Appendix C) and parallel surface use restrictions for many resources, as well as special management prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) that comprise portions of lands with wilderness characteristics.

0107-3 Wild and Scenic Rivers

While BLM's Proposed Plan (Alternative IV from the Draft RMPA/SEIS) assumes a determination that all eligible stream segments in the Planning Area are unsuitable for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers and releases them from interim management protections, the Proposed Plan would protect many of the outstanding resource values of these stream segments through other means. Various stipulations, designations, and mitigation measures would protect these stream segments and their corridors from direct impacts and indirect effects of surface disturbing activities. Impacts from suitability determinations on all eligible stream segments were analyzed under Alternative III. Please see Section 4.5.9 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

Jan 11, 2016

BLM Colorado River Valley

Subject: Coloradans want wilderness on the Roan Plateau!

Dear BLM Colorado River Valley,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft management plan for the Roan Plateau. The Roan Plateau is an iconic landscape for Coloradans and should be protected from oil and gas drilling that is scarring the surrounding lands in the Piceance Basin.

I support the proposal to include the terms of the settlement agreement into the new management plan, including closing most of the top of the Plateau to oil and gas leasing and putting strong stipulations in place for drilling that occurs at the base of the Plateau to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife.

However, the BLM's "preferred" alternative would not go far enough to protect the exceptional wilderness-quality lands that make the Roan Plateau one of our state's most treasured landscapes. The BLM should adopt a plan for the area that would protectively manage all of the lands with wilderness characteristics on the Roan Plateau.

The final plan should document that all of the streams which are eligible for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers are also suitable for that designation. That action is critical to protecting the valuable water resources on the Roan. This includes Parachute Creek and Trapper Creek, which provide important habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Please keep working towards protecting all of the important wilderness, wildlife and water resources on the Roan Plateau. Colorado flourishes because of its beautiful natural landscapes.

Sincerely,
 Mr. Eric Lane

0107-1

0107-2

0107-3

Andy Singer
 2103 Berkeley Ave
 Saint Paul, MN 55105-1203

0108-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0108-2 Opinion

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Feb 8, 2016

Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau from oil and gas development

Dear Director Welch: Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

Oil and gas prices are at all time lows. The last six years of fracking is largely responsible for this. Producers have destroyed land and ground water (often public BLM land), created earthquakes, and sickened people so they could make a quick buck and, ironically, in so doing, have driven the price of oil and gas so low that many have gone bankrupt. It's time to stop this madness. The US Government and the BLM can't demonstrate that allowing fracking on public land is in the national interest, economically or environmentally.

| 0108-1

For these and many other reasons, I urge you to take the necessary steps to protect Colorado's Roan Plateau from dangerous oil and gas drilling. The Roan is one of America's most biologically-rich wildlands, home to many imperiled fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America and critical habitat for elk and deer. Drilling in these untouched areas would destroy the Roan's irreplaceable landscape and the wildlife that make their homes there while threatening our air, water, climate and health. Please do everything you can to protect the Roan and its wildlife from fracking and other fossil fuel development. Thank you.

| 0108-2

Sincerely,
 Andy Singer

Bryan Wyberg
12854 Raven St NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55448-2578

0109-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

0109-2 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

0109-3 Alternatives

Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

0109-4 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

Feb 8, 2016

Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau from oil and gas development

Dear Director Welch: Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

I am becoming worried that the BLM may be weakening in its resolve to sustain to its conclusion the expected management safeguards expected with the encouraging news in Spring 2015 for conservation of the Roan Plateau wild lands.

I urge you to take the necessary steps to protect Colorado's Roan Plateau from dangerous oil and gas drilling. The lease cancellations in Spring last year were a huge step in the right direction, but it was done in the expectation that the resulting resource management plan would provide the management protections to make the conservation of the Roan Plateau complete.

The Roan is one of America's most biologically-rich wildlands, home to many imperiled fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America and critical habitat for elk and deer.

Drilling in these untouched areas would destroy the Roan's irreplaceable landscape and the wildlife that make their homes there while threatening our air, water, climate and health.

I expect that the BLM will conclude its duty under the legal settlement agreement to provide the protections necessary to keep the Roan Plateau wild and free of any new energy development.

The preferred and final alternative of the new Resource Management Plan must include undisturbed big game winter ranges at the base of the plateau, intact big game migration corridors, state of the art drilling practices and no development in Colorado River Cutthroat Trout drainages to protect this iconic species.

Please do everything you can to protect the Roan and its wildlife from fracking and other fossil fuel development.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Bryan Wyberg

0109-1

0109-2

0109-3

0109-4

Katherine Fredricks
PO Box 22223
Flagstaff, AZ 86002-2223

0110-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

0110-2 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Draft RMPA/SEIS. The potential for release of chemical pollutants from oil and gas development activities into nearby water resources is addressed in Section 4.2.4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS impact analysis.

0110-3 Opinion - Oil and Gas

Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

Feb 8, 2016

Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau from oil and gas development

Dear Director Welch: Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

I urge you to take the necessary steps to protect Colorado's Roan Plateau from dangerous oil and gas drilling. The Roan is one of America's most biologically-rich wildlands, home to many imperiled fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America and critical habitat for elk and deer. Drilling in these untouched areas would destroy the Roan's irreplaceable landscape and the wildlife that make their homes there while threatening our air, water, climate and health.

Because the cement casings on fracking wells are never perfect, poisonous chemicals chronically escape frack wells, poisoning the surrounding watershed, and all the human and animal life drinking that water.

Please do everything you can to protect the Roan and its wildlife from fracking and other fossil fuel development. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Katherine Fredricks

| 0110-1

| 0110-2

| 0110-3

0111-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan
Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

Mark Gerhardt
798 Gold Run Rd
Breckenridge, CO 80424

Feb 8, 2016

Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau from oil and gas development

Dear Director Welch: Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

I am in favor of expanding the oil and gas production in Colorado.
Reckless is a lie. There are numerous safe guards in place to protect
the environment. it is important the the USA becomes energy independent
from foreign nations. Thank you. Mark Gerhardt

Sincerely,
Mark Gerhardt

| 0111-1

Trucia Quistarc
PO Box 48398
Wichita, KS 67201-8398

0112-1 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Thank you for your interest in and comment on the Roan Plateau Draft RMPA/SEIS.

0112-2 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

0112-3 Opinion - Oil and Gas
Measures to conserve and/or protect special and unique natural and scenic resources have been incorporated into the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the FSEIS. Refer to Section 2.3 and Chapter 4 of the Proposed RMPA/FSEIS for details.

Feb 9, 2016

Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: Protect the Roan Plateau from oil and gas development

Dear Director Welch: Ruth Welch, Colorado State Director, Bureau of Land Management,

Am in full agreement with the following paragraph. In addition, please consider that (1) here in Kansas and Oklahoma there has been a huge increase in earthquakes since the rise in fracking during the past several years, as well as elsewhere that fracking has become prevalent, and (2) that currently, with oil quantity immensely available and prices continuing to remain low and with investor expectations that this will not be changing anytime soon, and (3) that it is time to leave the enslavement to money mentality and genuinely care about the consequences that fossil fuels (and mining) developments have upon the ecological integrity of Earth's natural environments composed with Life-consciousness species great in variety and untold current and future values , and (4) that as public servants you are responsible for wise stewardship of public lands for long into the eras of future generations. Therefore...

I urge you to take the necessary steps to protect Colorado's Roan Plateau from dangerous oil and gas drilling. The Roan is one of America's most biologically-rich wildlands, home to many imperiled fish and wildlife species, some of the rarest plants in North America and critical habitat for elk and deer. Drilling in these untouched areas would destroy the Roan's irreplaceable landscape and the wildlife that make their homes there while threatening our air, water, climate and health. Please do everything you can to protect the Roan and its wildlife from fracking and other fossil fuel development. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Trucia Quistarc

0112-1

0112-2

0112-3