



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
High Desert District
Rawlins Field Office
P.O. Box 2407 (1300 North Third Street)
Rawlins, WY 82301-2407



In reply refer to: 3160 (WYD03)

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Continental Divide-Creston (CD-C) Natural Gas Development Project, which documents the anticipated environmental consequences of developing additional natural gas resources on approximately 1.1 million acres (1,672 square miles) in an existing oil and gas-producing area located west of Rawlins in Carbon and Sweetwater Counties, Wyoming. Under the Proposed Action and the alternatives, up to 8,950 in-fill gas wells would be drilled during the 15-year development period, in addition to the existing 4,700 oil and gas wells. Supporting infrastructure would include access roads, pipelines, electrical power lines, a central gas-processing plant, and water management and disposal facilities. Total new surface disturbance would be up to 47,200 acres, or 4.4 percent of the CD-C project area.

The Final EIS analyzes the Proposed Action and the following five alternatives in detail:

- **Alternative B, Enhanced Resource Protection**, expands upon basic protections that are part of the Rawlins Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP), and includes increased protection for identified sensitive resources, such as big game crucial winter range and the Muddy Creek watershed.
- **Alternative C, Surface Disturbance Cap—High and Low Density Development Areas**, was designed to limit the amount of surface disturbance an Operator or lease-holder could have in a section at any one time, to encourage improved reclamation and the use of directional drilling.
- **Alternative D, Directional Drilling**, was designed to reduce the amount of surface disturbance by requiring directional drilling of all wells within a section from a single well pad.
- **Alternative E, No Action**, assumes that natural gas development as outlined in the Proposed Action would occur primarily on private and state lands within the CD-C project area; individual proposals for exploration or development of federal minerals could still be received and would be subject to site-specific analysis prior to approval or authorization.
- **Alternative F, Agency-Preferred Alternative**, was developed in response to comments received on the Draft EIS that indicated the need for overall reduced surface disturbance, protections for the Muddy Creek watershed, clear and measurable reclamation guidance and criteria, and a CD-C discussion group.

Alternative A was not carried forward from the Draft EIS because it did not resolve resource conflicts identified during scoping and the Draft EIS comment period.

This Final EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA), and other regulations and statutes. The BLM prepared the Final EIS in consultation with cooperating agencies, taking into account public comments received to date. The Draft EIS was published on December 7, 2012, initiating a 45-day public comment period that

was subsequently extended to April 6, 2013. A public meeting was held in Rawlins, Wyoming during the Draft EIS comment period. A summary of the written comments received during the public review period for the Draft EIS and responses to the comments is provided in **Appendix L**.

The Final EIS may be viewed or downloaded from the BLM website at:

http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/rfo/cd_creston.html

The Final EIS is also available for review during normal business hours at the following locations:

- BLM Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming
- BLM High Desert District Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming
- BLM Rawlins Field Office, 1300 North Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming
- Carbon County Library, 215 West Buffalo Street, Rawlins, Wyoming.

This Final EIS is not a decision document. The publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* for this Final EIS initiates a 30-day availability period. Following conclusion of that period, a Record of Decision (ROD) will be prepared and signed to disclose the BLM's final decision and any project Conditions of Approval (COA). Availability of the ROD will be announced through the local media and the project mailing list, and posted on the project website.

The BLM will be accepting public comment on the Final EIS for 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the NOA in the *Federal Register*. All substantive comments will be reviewed and responded to in the ROD. Comments can be sent to:

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Jennifer Fleuret
Rawlins Field Office
P.O. Box 2407 (1300 North Third Street)
Rawlins, WY 82301-2407
Fax: 307-328-4224
Email: BLM_WY_Continental_Divide_Creston@blm.gov

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask the BLM in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Thank you for your interest in this project. If you have questions or need additional information concerning the document, please contact Jennifer Fleuret at (307) 328-4314.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Carpenter
Rawlins Field Office Manager

Enclosure