



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

From Peaks to Plains

The Newsletter of the Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan
Volume 5 Issue 1 • June 2019

<https://go.usa.gov/xQcZT>



Flowers on the plains, Royal Gorge Field Office

In This Issue

<i>Draft Eastern Colorado RMP Now Available for Public Comment.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Schedule of Public Meetings for the Draft Eastern Colorado RMP/EIS.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>RGFO Releases New Energy and Mineral Reports.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Steps in the Development of the Eastern Colorado RMP/EIS.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Modern Mapmakers: An Interview with GIS Specialists Molly Purnell and Gordon Bowman....</i>	<i>4</i>

Message From the Field Manager



I am pleased to announce that the BLM published a notice of availability (NOA) in the Federal Register on June 21, 2019, announcing the release of the Draft Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). This began a 90-day public comment period, which will end on September 20, 2019.

The Royal Gorge Field Office will host several public meetings to give people the opportunity to learn about the Draft RMP and meet with BLM staff. Although the BLM welcomes comments at any time, the agency will only formally respond to those comments submitted during the public comment period. See page 2 for more information about public meetings.

In the past two years, the draft RMP went through several revisions as it made its way through the BLM's extensive internal and external review. The article on page 2 of this issue gives an overview of what is included in the draft RMP, and the timeline on page 3 shows where we are now in the RMP development process.

The Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO) also published several documents that provide crucial information to support

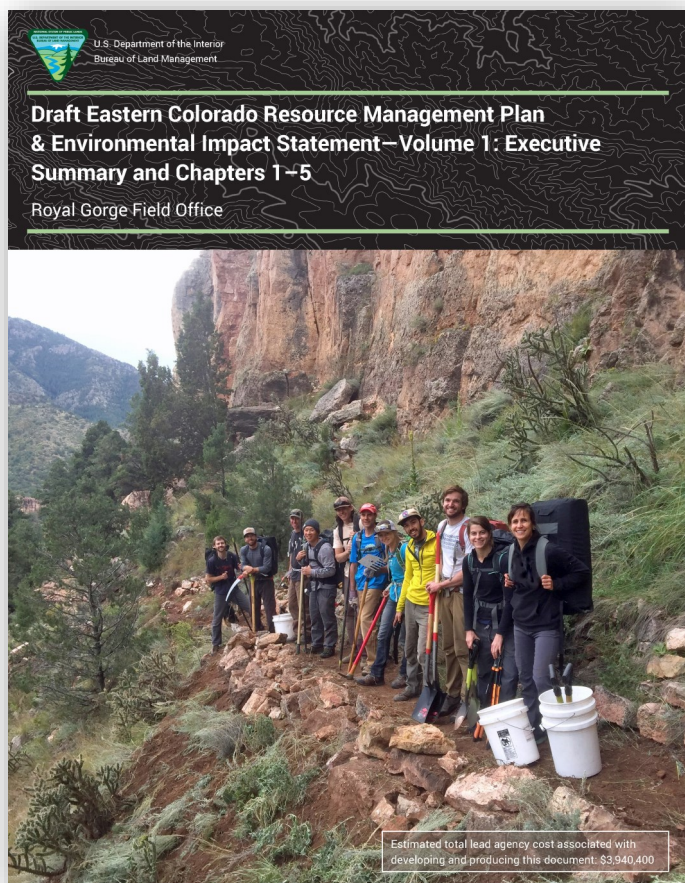
the development of the RMP. These documents are described in the articles on pages 2 and 3. All are available online at the Eastern Colorado RMP ePlanning website. If you are not able to obtain these documents from our website, please call the RGFO at (719) 269-8500.

Maps play a vitally important role in the entire RMP development process, from concept to implementation. On page 4, we interview the mapmaking team for the RMP. This article is the third in our series, "Meet the Specialists," profiling the members of the RGFO's interdisciplinary team for the RMP.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. Have an excellent summer!

—Keith Berger, Field Manager
Royal Gorge Field Office

Draft Eastern Colorado RMP Now Available for Public Comment!



Front cover of Volume 1 of the Draft Eastern Colorado RMP/EIS

On June 21, 2019, the BLM published a NOA for the Draft Eastern Colorado RMP/EIS, beginning a 90-day public comment period, which will end on September 20, 2019. The release of the draft RMP/EIS is the culmination of several years' work on the part of the RGFO's interdisciplinary team, agency cooperators, and members of the public (see the timeline on page 3).

The draft consists of four volumes: Volume 1 includes the executive summary, purpose and need statement, general descriptions of the alternatives, and summaries of the

impacts of the alternatives on the RGFO's resources. Volumes 2–4 (the appendices) discuss the alternatives and their potential impacts in more detail. They also have more information related to the RMP. In addition, there are several supplementary documents that support the draft RMP/EIS posted on the BLM's website (see also the article on page 3):

- ✧ BLM Colorado Grazing Standards and Guidelines
- ✧ Colorado Bureau of Land Management Comprehensive Air Resource Protection Protocol (CARPP)
- ✧ Modeling the Probability of Bighorn Sheep Association with Domestic Sheep and Goats
- ✧ Evaluation of Potential ACECs: Relevance and Importance Criteria: April 2019 Draft
- ✧ Wild & Scenic River Suitability Report—Royal Gorge Field Office: April 2019 Draft
- ✧ Social and Economic Impact Analysis Methodology Technical Report

If you'd like to comment on the draft RMP, become more involved in the planning process, or keep up with the latest news, please visit the BLM's land use planning (ePlanning) website at <https://go.usa.gov/xQcZT>.

PLEASE NOTE

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



SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR THE DRAFT EASTERN COLORADO RMP/EIS

DATE	TIME	PLACE
July 8, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	SteamPlant Event Center, Salida, CO
July 9, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	The Abbey Event Center, Canon City, CO
July 11, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Fairplay Community Center, Fairplay, CO
July 15, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Washington School, Walsenburg, CO
July 18, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Denver Marriott West, Denver, CO
July 22, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Westside Community Center, Colorado Springs, CO
July 23, 2019	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Greeley Recreation Center, Greeley, CO

Please check the Eastern Colorado RMP website for more info and changes to this schedule: <https://go.usa.gov/xQcZT>.

Or call 719 269 8500, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

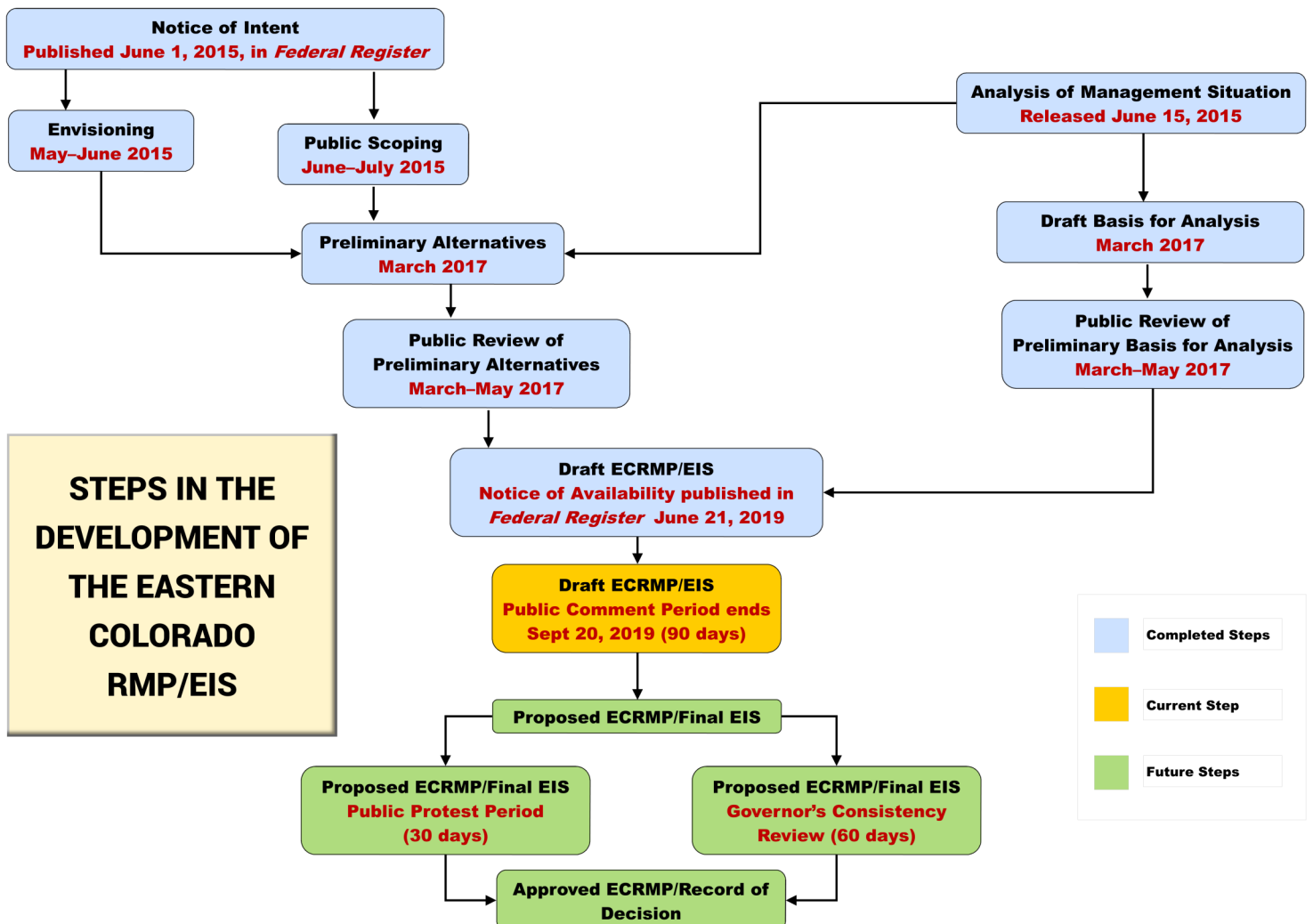
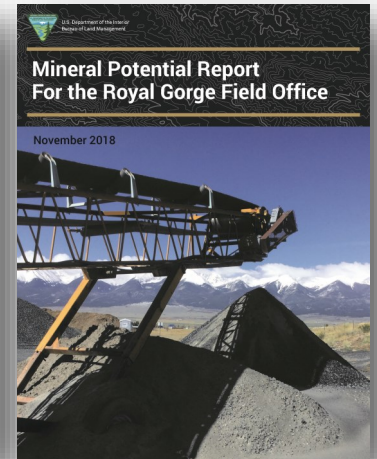
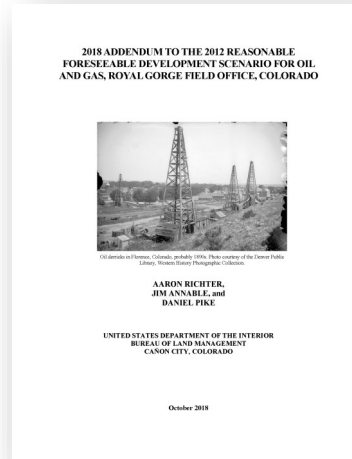
RGFO Releases New Energy and Mineral Reports

In November 2018, the RGFO published two new reports: "2018 Addendum to the 2012 Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario for Oil and Gas" and "Mineral Potential Report for the Royal Gorge Field Office." Both reports are available online at the BLM's ePlanning website: <https://go.usa.gov/xQcZT>.

The 2012 Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario (RFD), which the BLM released in March 2012, was written to help field office staff understand the potential range and trends of oil and gas development in the planning area for the Eastern Colorado RMP. Since the RFD was written, however, there have been additional changes in the economics and methods of oil and gas extraction. The 2018 Addendum takes these changes into account in order to provide better data for understanding possible future effects.

The RGFO is home to a vast quantity and variety of mineral resources, including coal, gold, tungsten (used in making steel), building materials such as gravel, and lesser known but important minerals such as rhenium, an ingredient in

aircraft engine construction. The Mineral Potential Report assesses and documents the mineral resources in the RGFO in order to provide basic, current data for understanding the effects of future management actions on these and other resources.



Modern Mapmakers: An Interview with GIS Specialists Molly Purnell and Gordon Bowman



FPTP: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Molly: I graduated from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs with a BA in geography and environmental studies. I've always had an interest in maps, and early in my career, working as a seasonal in forestry and hydrology, I saw a huge need for mapping and spatial data analysis. I decided to become a GIS specialist, because I found that I really enjoyed using GIS to benefit the programs of a variety of natural resource specialists. I began my career with the Forest Service, and when an opportunity arose to advance in my field, I moved to the BLM.

Gordon: Hi, my name is Gordon, and I like board games! I went to the University of Colorado, Boulder, with a double degree in geology and environmental studies. I've always enjoyed learning about technology and the specifics of computer programs. My "aha" moment came after using GIS for a senior project to predict hill slopes that might be vulnerable to slumping and debris flows. I discovered GIS has countless applications to real-world

problems. I love learning about all sorts of disciplines, so I was attracted by the idea of working with a variety of specialists and resources. I applied to the Geologic Society of America's GeoCorp program for a 3-month internship, which turned into 6 months, and so on. After a year, I was lucky enough to be hired on for a term job!

FPTP: What exactly is GIS?

Molly: GIS stands for Geographic Information Systems. Essentially, GIS provides a way to digitally map and analyze features or themes on the earth's surface to gain information and understanding about them and their spatial relationships.

FPTP: What does a GIS specialist do?

Molly: In the case of land management, we use GIS tools to organize and analyze data and create figures, tables, maps, or other products for natural resource specialists and land managers who require locational intelligence to aid their decision-making.

FPTP: What role does the GIS team play in the development of the Eastern Colorado

RMP?

Molly: We gather and create spatial and tabular data to produce visual products to display information such as acreage amounts and where different resources or uses occur on BLM lands.

FPTP: What is one of your favorite projects that you've worked on for the RMP?

Molly: My favorite thing about working on the RMP is that it has provided so many opportunities to gain new skill sets or refine existing ones and allows me to use new tools to improve workflows and showcase the BLM's work.

Gordon: My favorite project that jumps to mind was a sub-project. In order to run numbers, we needed data from all the specialists; however, some of the specialists needed help creating their data sets. For example, I was given a "recipe" on how to create a fragile soils layer for all of Eastern Colorado. That is a lot of data. I had to devise several workarounds in order to create this massive soil layer. I really enjoyed this project, because it was almost like cooking a meal that kept going wrong, but once it was complete, all the hard work we put into it resulted in a better product!

FPTP: Is there anything else you'd like people to know about your job or the RMP?

Molly: I'm glad to be able to use GIS to bring together the complex work done by all the natural resource specialists and land managers to aid them throughout RMP development.

Gordon: I have really enjoyed how it has pushed everyone to work together. When something goes wrong, we can all groan together, and when things come together, the positive attitudes are infectious. I've gotten to know the intricacies of all sorts of specialists' jobs throughout the office, and this has really helped me feel like part of a wonderful team.