

**Northwest Colorado Stewardship (NWCOS)
Energy and Minerals Subcommittee
June 1, 2005
Meeting Summary**

Action Items

Keystone	Post to NWCOS website BLM Instruction Memorandum on economically versus technologically recoverable resources in preparation of BLM's Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) document. [Facilitator's Note: This document has been posted and is available at http://nwcoss.org/79505/44432.html with the rest of the materials from this meeting.]
BLM/Fred	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide subcommittee with information about how much land is currently leased and how much land might be coming back into system from unused and/or expiring leases. 2. Provide subcommittee with data on the percentage of existing leases that are currently in production. 3. Provide information on where existing oil/gas fields are. 4. Provide definitions on what is meant by "potential" in BLM documents and maps for oil and gas. 5. If possible, get a GIS layer of leases and stipulations governing existing leases.

Attendance

Jennifer Bates, David Blackstun (intermittently), Steve Bonowski, Vanessa Cameron, Jeremy Casterson, Jeff Comstock, Fred Conrath, T. Wright Dickinson, John Husband (intermittently), Suzanne Jones, Jim May, Reed Morris, Claire Moseley, Ann Oliver, Brad Petch, Marianna Raftopoulos, Randy Ray, Renee Taylor, Jane Yazzie, Kristi Parker Celico, and Heather Bergman.

Agenda Items (Each item is discussed below.)

- Criteria for alternative development
- Data needs
- Discussion of alternatives document
- Next steps

Criteria for Alternative Development

The group reviewed a list of criteria that participants were encouraged to keep in mind during their discussion of alternatives for the Resource Management Plan (RMP). The approved the following list (which includes the group's additions):

- Goalposts as wide as possible, within reason (legally possible)
- Combination of alternatives represents full range of options
- Each alternative is implementable/affordable (though the group agreed that something must be obviously unaffordable to not be considered)
- Range of alternatives recognizes the specific unique areas within the Little Snake Resource Area (LSRA) and supports the uniqueness while allowing for multiple use.

(Management for “Best/Predominant Use” of an area, and determining what other uses can be accommodated.)

- Range of alternatives incorporates adaptive management, when appropriate
- Follows all existing laws about valid existing rights, multiple use, environmental laws, etc.
- Must be an RMP-level decision

The subcommittee agreed not to assume that all existing policies were written in stone, because some of these policies (or certain aspects of them) may be negotiable. The group also discussed the extent to which the RMP can drive funding for the LSRA (i.e., if something is written into the RMP, will its inclusion assure that funds are provided to fund it). When John Husband was consulted on this, he said writing something into the RMP will not guarantee funding for it, but that it will be easier to do something later if it is in the RMP, even if funds for it are expected to come from outside of BLM (i.e., from stakeholder partnerships).

Data Needs

Fred Conrath of BLM explained the reasons for the confusion about the data on the level of oil and gas potential in the southern portion of Vermillion Basin. Fred said that he has carefully reviewed his own data and the data he had previously received from staff at Booz Allen Hamilton, and has determined that the southern portion of Vermillion has only moderate oil and gas potential (not high, as was previously stated). Fred’s handout summarizing this situation is available with the other materials from this meeting at <http://www.nwcoss.org/79505/44432.html>. Fred is continuing to examine the available data, and it is possible that further updates may be available.

Fred stated that BLM is required to include oil and gas resources that are technologically (not just economically) recoverable in its Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) assessment. [Facilitator’s Note: BLM’s Instruction Memorandum on this topic has been posted to the NWCOS website and is available at <http://nwcoss.org/79505/44432.html> with the rest of the materials from this meeting.]

Fred also said that the RMP does not control well-pad spacing; that is governed by the state. However, surface disturbance and down-hole spacing are governed by BLM and can be addressed in the RMP.

In response to requests from the group, Fred will try to get a GIS layer that includes existing leases and the stipulations that govern them before the next subcommittee meeting.

One participant encouraged BLM and Booz Allen Hamilton to include in Chapter 3 of the RMP a narrative discussion of the resource protections that are offered by the “Standard Terms and Conditions” that BLM applies to every lease it issues. Table 2-1 of the Rawlins RMP was also cited as an example of useful information.

Discussion of Alternatives Document

The discussion of alternatives centered on the alternatives matrix, which was projected on the wall for the group to see, discuss, and alter. The group discussed the goals and objectives for energy and minerals overall, as well as leasing stipulations across the four alternatives and the

specific management options Vermillion Basin. The changes that the group agreed upon, as well as some ideas that were discussed but not agreed upon, are recorded in a revised version of the alternative matrix, which is available at <http://nwcoss.org/Resources/BLM%20Documents/Draft%20Alternatives%206-01-05.pdf> or at <http://nwcoss.org/44201.html> (in the middle of the page, under “Alternatives”).

Next Steps

[Facilitator’s Note: The following discussion of Next Steps actually occurred at the Travel and Recreation Management Subcommittee Meeting on June 1, which was the last in a series of subcommittee meetings held between May 27 and June 1. It is repeated here because it applies to all subcommittees.]

Prior to discussing what the next steps for the subcommittees should be, the group briefly shared their ideas on what’s going well in subcommittee meetings and what could be changed. The list of what’s going well included getting to the substantive issues, having Booz Allen Hamilton represented in meetings, having John Husband and BLM staff in meetings, making progress in discussions, having a better understanding of how BLM writes RMPs and how hard it is to do so. The list of areas where change might be useful included getting things done faster, stretching out BLM’s deadline, working in smaller groups, keeping momentum, prioritizing topics, giving specific topics for discussion to participants in advance, being more goal-oriented, and possibly doing a pretend land assessment to increase awareness.

The group agreed to have Keystone propose a series of smaller working groups to the Planning Committee. The idea is that smaller groups could tackle specific issues and then bring their work product back to the full subcommittee for discussion. It was believed that this might help the group to accomplish more and proceed at a faster pace. After this discussion, the group agreed to a revised meeting schedule, in which subcommittees will be meeting again on July 6 and 7. Exact scheduling details will be distributed to NWCOS as soon as they are available.