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Part 02-Start Brad Burritt
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Hutman Media

[Begin Part 02-Brad Burritt]

[Transcriber's Note: First 00:05:02 minutes--room tone and speaking away from mic while presenting video--challenge]

00:00:00

Brad Burritt: Brad Burritt for Citizens for Healthy Communities and I'm going to narrate this four and a half minute [inaudible] area of tour that is put together by the Resource Conservation Center and I'd like to say we put that together and we're very grateful to have access to that.

00:00:20

This shows that 30,000 acres, 22 parcels that has been nominated for the August 2012 lease sale and the red line is outlining the 22 [inaudible] parcels. So here we are at Hotchkiss and we're looking southeast towards Crawford; Crawford is here, you know [Inaudible], Lands End. The blue dots represent springs and park sources. The area south and east of Hotchkiss, out in the adobes; here we are around the high school. These parcels surround the high school, which we'll zoom in.

00:01:23

These are here, the Montessori School swimming pool, again red lines outlining the proposed parcels. Looking north over Crawford, Crawford Elementary School, Young's Peak surrounded by a parcel. [Inaudible], Saddle Mountain--look how steep the slope is on this parcel; intersection of Highway 92 at the bottom, Crawford Road in blue; a huge percentage of this area is approved in these parcels. And this is right after they put

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Lands End, across the state wildlife area, parcels on each side , Paonia Bone Mesa,
collected their water right here, their unfiltered water by the way.

00:02:43

Here you are in Paonia looking northeast; Pitkin, Garvin Mesa, Jumbo Mountain,
taking up from Minnesota Creek, Jumbo in the back, the entire both sides of the
Minnesota Creek with three different parcels. This is Hidden Valley Subdivision here at
the bottom, going up to Minnesota Creek, Minnesota Reservoir in the middle, and then
you have a reservoir right here on the right.

00:03:30

The blue line running through is the county lie; Paonia Reservoir surrounded by
parcels. That's in Gunnison County by the way. Then [inaudible] is the county line and
then you see below—Delta County above, looking down in the Valley and then Highway
133, down in the Mesa with its many organic farms and vineyards. [Inaudible], Stucker,
Stevens Gulch, [Inaudible] Mesa, Sunshine Mesa, Wakefield, Wakfield Fire Area, Fire
Mountain Canal running right below all these parcels, North Fork area north of
Hotchkiss, [Inaudible] below--just below all these parcels--home sweet home.

00:05:02

Gail Schwartz: We'll take the video down and then have our other dignitaries starting
us up here today. I didn't get a chance to introduce her, but [Carol] from [Inaudible],
welcome. [Applause]

00:05:37

Well thank you. That was an excellent video and can that be accessed online?

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On You Tube? What is the address on You Tube?

00:05:50

Brad Burritt: [Inaudible]

00:05:51

Gail Schwartz: Okay; www.conservationcenter.org, I know it's a little--a little hard to see especially if you're in the back of the room. You may want to go and take a little closer look for that to be on You Tube for anyone who would like to look at it. So we're going to begin, and I want to thank the opportunity to have--be joined by again Representative Wilson and Mike King and then we have representatives from the Office of [Inaudible] as well as Michael Bennit and then we have Lori Armstrong from the BLM.

00:06:25

So our first--we have--probably nobody knows our first speaker, Theo Colburn. [Applause] Kyle Tisdell, I'm sorry--will be our first speaker from the Western Environmental Law Center, and Theo give us one second. And you know you have three minutes just like everybody else, Theo. [Laughs] But don't worry; you have a speaker right before you.

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Kyle Tisdel: Good afternoon. Is this on? There we go. Okay; good afternoon. My name is Kyle Tisdel. I'm an attorney at the Western Environmental Law Center. We are a nonprofit, public interest, environmental law center--law firm with offices throughout the West. I work within WELC. I'll say this up front; as an attorney we really love our acronyms so WELC is the Western Environmental Law Center. I work at--within WELC's Climate Energy Program. And we work to fight dirty energy produced from oil and gas, as well as to promote the transition to clean and renewable energy.

00:07:54

We've been working on behalf of Citizens for a Healthy Community for a little over a year now submitting comments, supplemental information, as well as filing protests with BLM for past oil and gas lease sales in the Delta County Region. I'm here to provide just a little background information on August's lease sale proposal as well as to provide the context for relevant environmental laws namely the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. I'm not here to provide legal advice and I'm certainly not here to influence any comments that you may have.

00:08:32

As by way of brief background on the proposal and--and the proposed lease sale in August, on December 7th we learned that BLM proposes 22 parcels consisting of 30,000 acres to be included in the August oil and gas lease sale. As you saw from the video, these parcels are located primarily in the North Fork Valley with a few parcels near Paonia Reservoir and near Henderson Creek.

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Scoping comments are going to be due by February 9th and according to the schedule that BLM has indicated they will be preparing an environmental assessment. That environmental assessment will include a second comment period where the community will be welcomed to offer specific comments with regard to what is included in that environmental assessment. And after taking that comment into consideration BLM will then be making a decision on the proposed lease sale which we anticipate sometime in the spring.

00:09:40

It's important to note that the North Fork lease sale comes within the context of much larger push for oil and gas development in the US. This is evidenced by a lot of news about fracking recently as well as only recently in President Obama's State of the Union Address.

00:10:02

The outcome of this proposed development in the North Fork Valley can indeed have a significant impact on the broader national picture. BLM has the great discretion to deciding what areas they choose to open up for oil and gas development and in the same breath they also have great and broad discretion to choose to remove any parcels from the oil and gas lease sale as well. So they can do that on a parcel-by-parcel basis or indeed their discretion is broad enough that they can simply remove all 22 parcels from the proposed lease sale if they choose.

00:10:44

Part of how BLM makes this decision is through public participation is which I think is why we are all here today. And in fact, NEPA requires BLM to consider what the

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public says before they make a decision. Part of how BLM makes this decision is again through that public participation and whenever we have seen BLM choose to exercise its discretion in the past to remove parcels from consideration it has almost always come in the face of considerable and strong public opposition for that development.

00:11:28

So your comments are important not only because they will help craft a compelling story in terms of putting a face to the sort of community and environmental impacts that very well may result if poor decision-making is the result here. While NEPA at its core is a procedural statute it is not just a checklist for BLM to work through. NEPA's intent is that its framework is used to result in excellent decision-making.

00:12:06

So if BLM decides to repair the--so excuse me; procedurally NEPA requires BLM to consider the impacts of oil and gas development. And they can do this through either--either an Environmental Assessment or through what's called an Environmental Impact Statement. If BLM decides to prepare the more abbreviated Environmental Assessment as they've indicated here and that analysis shows that a significant impact may result from that development, they are required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement which is a much more detailed scientific study of--of those impacts.

00:12:48

NEPA--NEPA also requires BLM to consider any alternatives that can reduce the impacts to the community and the environment including alternatives for no development at all. BLM must also consider other environmental laws, such as you know the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act. If any of those laws are

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violated it can result in a range of possibilities that I won't sort of go into now, but that range includes the possibility that BLM will not be allowed to develop certain parcels.

00:13:23

So on behalf of us Citizens for a Healthy Community, WELC will be submitting the first round of scoping comments by the February 9th deadline. We will also be involved in scrutinizing every step that BLM makes along the way and we'll be ready to challenge BLM on decisions that do not comply with those laws that I have just mentioned. WELC has some materials on the back table. I welcome you all; I know some of you have taken them already. If you have not, I welcome you to take those materials and I will also be available for any specific comments that you have either at the break or at the end of the program. Thank you. *[Applause]*

00:14:08

Gail Schwartz: Thank you Kyle and I'm hoping you heard that comment that if you can direct your specific concerns to perhaps specific parcels that will actually help in the BLM disseminating the information that they receive. So our first five individuals will be Theo Colburn, Bob Lario, Tim Lafferty, Brent Hellickson, and Dave Hiney; so, if you'll just join us and be prepared to lead here and then we'll ask Theo to come with her--her first comment.

00:14:50

Theo Colburn: I'm going to thank you now to save time. My name is Theo Colburn, President of TEDX, a health oriented nonprofit in Paonia and a registered voter in

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Colorado since 1964. I support the withdrawal of all 22 parcels that BLM is proposing. No parcel can escape the inevitable increase in toxic air pollutants in our Valley if these leases are to be industrialized. Many citizens across the country have claimed that when natural gas extraction activity commences near their homes they begin to experience health changes, when drilling starts, before fracking started. More recently, men and women who have took contracts jobs working in the gas fields have begun to speak out about their impaired health.

00:15:50

The laborers admit from the first day on the job, like the residents, they begin to experience one or more of the same nagging chronic health changes that eventually shift from mild to debilitating, irreversible, neurological, and immunological disorders and more leaving many incapable of holding down a job.

00:16:12

Their sleeve of symptoms matches the health effects of the volatile chemicals introduced during drilling and fracking. It also matches the symptoms of the volatile organic compounds in the masses amounts of exhaust from stationary and mobile equipment burning diesel and other petroleum products to keep the extraction machinery running and to keep the huge compressors running to get the gas out of the ground and when the gas is in the delivery system for the life of the well.

00:16:41

And almost overlooked are many native volatile compounds that come to the surface in the crude natural gas along with the methane as soon as the drill bit hits the pad from where their gas is being [inaudible]. It is not apparent that even if you are more than

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a quarter of a mile away from a drill pad you are not far enough away to be free from exposure to a list of volatile chemicals some of which have 11 out of 12 possible health effects.

00:17:15

Our Valley is surrounded by three spectacular mountain ranges which create resistance for the global air masses that move from the southwest to the northeast and like a bowl traps the regional ozone and particulates and the locally derived air pollution. This bowl sets the stage for inversions, full of egregious chemicals. The BLM Office in Montrose already knows about our inversions and has postponed controlled burnings because of that. Because of all of the above and what we do not know what these chemicals will do to our children, I repeat once again all 22 parcels should be removed.

[Applause]

00:18:10

Gail Schwartz: State your name and who you represent.

00:18:13

Bob Lario: My name is Bob Lario. I represent myself and my real estate business. I've been a resident in the Paonia area since 1970. I've been active in the real estate business I Paonia--in the Paonia area since 1976. I'm currently the principal broker, the President, and the majority owner of Re/Max Fountain and West. We have three offices; the primary office location is on Grand Avenue in Paonia.

00:18:42

My main concern regarding the proposed lease sales is the negative economic effect, specifically the effect on real estate market and real estate activity. Our Delta County market according to MLS statistics has decreased every year in both dollar volume and number of transactions from the period of 2006 to 2010. That decrease over that five-year period has been--amounted to about 60-percent.

00:19:13

In 2011 compared to 2010, the dollar volume of residential sales actually increased by 24-percent. And the number of residential transactions in that--in that last one-year period has actually increased by 42-percent.

00:19:32

In the North Fork area the number of residential transactions from 2010 to 2011 increased by 43-percent, so clearly these statistics are showing a real estate market that's beginning to recover--struggling, but beginning to show signs of recovery.

00:19:53

In the North Fork, a large part of this recovery can be attributed to the perception of this area by buyers as a location that offers a healthy, environmentally clean atmosphere--clean air, clean water, healthy lifestyle, etcetera. Unfortunately, the oil and gas drilling activities have a negative connotation and a reputation for many seeking this type of lifestyle.

00:20:24

As a result of the publicity regarding the proposed oil and gas leases, I've already experienced negative effects in buyer-interest in this area, buyers who are deciding not to pursue property interests until the BLM decision the lease sale is made. Therefore, in my

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business it's the perception of a potential environmental threat that is already having an effect.

00:20:50

As this process goes forward and we move out of winter into our prime marketing season this perception could have a serious detrimental effect on our area's real estate market that is struggling to recover. I therefore ask the BLM give serious consideration to these potential economic effects and withdraw the proposed leased sales for all 22 parcels. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:21:27

Gail Schwartz: If you would like to introduce yourself and maybe your helpers and-- and you got three minutes.

00:21:32

Tim Lafferty: You bet. My name is Tim Lafferty and I am here today to ask the BLM to remove all 22 parcels from the proposed August oil and gas lease sale. I have been a resident of this Valley for 15 years; this place is my home. This place is where I have chosen to raise my family. I am angry and fearful that our BLM would even consider leasing these parcels for oil and gas extraction that are in such close proximity to the towns and water supplies of the North Fork Valley. [*Applause*]

00:22:09

There is not a single resident of this Valley that will not be negatively impacted in some way by the development of even one of these parcels. One of the roles that I serve

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in this community is as a President of the Board of the North Fork Community Montessori School, a school that you passed on the way in here today. I am here to represent this school and its members. There are multiple parcels slated for leasing that will have a direct impact upon this school. Parcel No. 6198 is located adjacent to the school to the west, hundreds of feet from where we are right now. It and Parcel No. 6202 surround the school to the south and west. There are over 600 acres within one mile of this school, acres that are current--our children currently take walks and hikes on because they are public lands, lands that are set aside for the use of the public--us, not some random corporation located in another state or even another country that's sole purpose is to make as high a profit margin as possible.

00:23:22

Development of these parcels would have immediate negative ramifications upon the children and staff. Air quality will be reduced as soon as one new road is cut in that adobe soil and will be drastically affected if a well is drilled that will put unknown particulates and chemicals in the air. Our children currently spend quite a bit of time outside each day that I believe would have to be stopped. Large truck traffic would also increase dramatically, trucks that would be using the same roads as our school buses.

00:23:50

Also what would the noise impacts of all this development be? Our school relies on enrollment for survival. We run such a tight budget that the loss of one or two kids means we are fund-raising for textbooks and salaries. I have already heard of families considering leaving the Valley at just the thought of these lands being leased. A stigmatism is already being created just the possibility of this hard situation occurring.

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What will happen to our school if this leasing really comes to pass? This is all too close; why? There are hundreds of thousands if not millions of acres that are leased or can be leased for resource extraction. I don't get it. Why would you take the chance of endangering a town's water supply or air quality to the point that it's not even safe to live there? Who is safeguarding us? Who is safeguarding the future of our children?

00:24:43

I have brought some voices with me today to speak for themselves--voices that need to be heard so that the powers that be that are making decisions for all of us will take them into account. Thank you. *[Applause]*

00:24:59

Gail Schwartz: [Inaudible]

00:24:59

Tim Lafferty: They were not but we were kind of hoping to build them in really quickly.

00:25:01

Gail Schwartz: I think that unfortunately that your comments were a little long but I just want you to introduce yourselves by name and just tell us who you are.

00:25:14

Child: I'm Ben Lafferty.

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Child: I'm Ethan Ball and I'm 11 years old.

00:25:22

Child: I'm Henry Jones.

00:25:25

Gail Schwartz: And I'm going to invite them to write down their comments and--.

Thank you so much. [*Applause*]

00:25:39

Brent Hellickson: Thank you; I'm Brent Hellickson. The meeting we're having today is precisely what the people in the Arab Springs Country are quite literally dying to obtain, the right to peaceable assembly and support of self-determination.

00:25:49

I'm a resident of the Valley. I'm an irrigation stockholder, a farmer, a businessman, and I and my family have Stone Cut Cellars, a vineyard winery in the Valley here. We're part of the West Elks Winery Association which comprises more than 12 wineries and--and vineyards in the Valley. The wine industry has been in development here for something approaching half a decade.

00:26:07

In the past decade and in this most recent--I'm sorry; half a century--not half a decade--this past decade we've been growing between 5 and 15-percent a year and now

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account for about \$2,000,000 in direct sales and nearly \$10,000,000 in indirect sales and economic impact. And nearly 30 families in the Valley obtain at least part of their income from the activities of the wineries and the vineyards in the Valley.

00:26:26

We all reside in an area called the West Elks American Viticultural Area and that is an area that has been determined by the Federal government to have unique soils and climate, geology or geography that would--the hope--the hopes being they would support a unique kind of wine or a new kind of experience for--for winery--wine drinkers.

00:26:44

There are over 200 of these AVAs in the United States; most of them are in places you'd expect--in California, Washington, and Oregon. Two of them are in Colorado and one of them is in the North Fork. That--that--that American Viticultural Area is entirely encircled by the parcels under consideration. Our business rests on two things; one, the production of premium Colorado wine from premium Colorado grapes--that depends on our unique soils, abundant and pure water and its timely delivery, and number two, the sale of that wine to customers, most of which travel here from somewhere else and they come for the unhurried pastoral setting, the restfulness, the recreational opportunities and many other things.

00:27:23

Each and every parcel under consideration either threatens us directly with loss of water, pollution of water and soil or interruption of the water delivery system, or indirectly with the loss of very reasons customers travel to visit our tasting rooms--the loss of that ambiance, the industrial exploration and development in agricultural

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community, loss of recreational opportunity, loss of the quiet restful experience. If the parcels are approved we will face these risks even if all of the industry standards are followed to the letter, which apparently is an uncommon occurrence.

00:27:53

As a vineyard and winery we reap no economic benefit from the oil and gas exploration and development and therefore we would expect the costs of that development to be borne by those who benefit economically. That would be the oil and gas companies and those receiving severance excise, sales, and other taxes. Those costs include the risk of soil and water damage, the loss of the other less tangible things I mentioned.

00:28:16

I often hear these--these risks as overstated or trivial. If the risks are trivial as many would have us believe then like business is everywhere else we should be insured against them. If the risks are trivial there should be insurance companies lining up to take your premiums. The fact that they aren't suggests that the risks are real and significant. Forcing those risks upon those of us who do not benefit economically strips us of our right of self determination and falsely portrays the entire exploration and development effort as being profitable. Do not place the burden of profitability on the backs of those of us who till the soil. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:28:47

Gail Schwartz: Thank you. I just recommended that Brent might add the parcel numbers on his comments, again being as specific as we can. Before Dave Hiney speaks

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to us, let's have Landon Deane, Michael Tarbell--is that correct, Larry Parker and Kim and Marley Hodgson. Please join us in--in the queue and David if you'll begin with your comments?

00:29:19

Dave Hiney: Thank you. My name is David Hiney. I drilled water wells for seven years and I worked in the oil and gas drilling in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. And I went to college to study the petroleum industry. I finally retired from a major oil and gas company. I generally support oil and gas development; however I am--I am strongly opposed to leasing any of these parcels. These areas should not be leased if for no other reason because they provide the only water sources for thousands of peoples from water wells and springs and I believe these water supplies could become contaminated with substances that would render them totally unusable possibly for many years.

00:30:00

A potential of such pollution is theoretically remote due to thousands of feet of separation and impermeable layers between groundwater, strata, and petroleum zones, but it's not impossible. And any risk to such valuable limited water is unacceptable regardless of how low that risk might be.

00:30:20

I supervised stimulation jobs which improved the ferocity and permeability of a reservoir so fluids can move more easily to the well bore. These jobs are similar to fracking but use--and they use some of the same equipment only less materials. Common fluids and amounts used are 10,000 gallons of hydrofluoric acid followed by 10,000

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gallons of hydrochloric acid and followed by maybe 8,000 gallons of diesel, several hundred to several thousand gallons of scale inhibitors, biocide, corrosion inhibitor, surfactants, emulsion and viscosity control agents and thousands of gallons of brine water to force everything into the target zones. These substances are expected to stay in the formation and do the work of dissolving the reservoir rock so it can produce more oil and gas.

00:31:06

However, once pumping into the reservoir you have absolutely no control over where those--of where those liquids go. High pressure pumping could crack the layers between the intended zone and freshwater zones or open a pad between the casing cement job and the bore hole. No one can say that those things are not possible.

00:31:26

Consider a simplistic hypothetical example of pumping only the two acids and the diesel--28,000 gallons into a reservoir, 10,000 feet below our groundwater zone, a small crack equivalent to a half inch hose along the 10,000 feet would fill with about 200 gallons, or a little less than that. This small crack could then allow the remaining 25,800 gallons into a lower pressure [inaudible] water aquifer. Is it likely? No; it's not likely, but is it possible--yes, it absolutely is possible.

00:31:59

Oil and gas should be developed only in remote areas where people don't live and depend on their lands for their only freshwater supplies. Please eliminate all these parcels from consideration in these lease sales. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

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Gail Schwartz: Okay; thank you. Landon, can you give me your comments? I see you brought some friends along.

00:32:30

Landon Deane: I did; thank you. I'm here today to ask the BLM to remove all 22 parcels from the proposed August gas lease sale. My name is Landon Deane and I'm here with my husband, Rick, and my daughter Beshia. For 25 years we've owned 900 acres on Bone Mesa called Eagle View Ranch located in what *Forbes Magazine* dubbed the Golden Triangle and one of the best places to live in the United States.

00:32:55

Our mission statement of the ranch is Gandhi's comment, *be the change you wish to see in the world*. We try to accomplish this by selling grass-fed beef and hay grown free of antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, and chemicals. We sell all over the United States to buyers interested in quality products not tainted with chemicals. The reason we have chosen to live and work where we do is due to its pristine agricultural environment. Over 25 years my husband and I have been thrilled to watch the North Fork Valley blossom into a place where a large concentration of organic farms exist. It has developed into an almost utopia where the water is clean, the air quality almost perfect, and not tainted with chemicals and pollution and the ambient noise is so low that a dog can be heard to bark from almost 10 miles away.

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All of this in a place that has three towns within a short distance from each other rich with culture, music, and community, the Valley is a foodie's paradise with abundant local food raised without chemicals and numerous excellent chefs willing to bring it all to the table. Complement this with outstanding local beer and wine and this may be the best place to live in the world.

00:34:00

From our ranch, we can look out at night and see minimal lights, although we're located right in the middle of the Valley. Most nights we can see the Milky Way so clearly it's difficult to see the regular stars. It's so quiet that it's hard to believe we live in a somewhat populated valley.

00:34:19

Parcel No. 6198 is next to--and on our property, surrounding it on many sides. As we have multiple springs that feed the ranch, ponds, and lakes, we're very worried that our air, ground, and spring water may be affected by pollution from drilling operations. This could potentially create irreversible environmental damage that could negatively affect our operations.

00:34:41

Again we're extremely concerned about the proposed land lease sales that could threaten our and the wildlife's way of life. The North Fork Valley has been touted as having the highest concentration of organic farms than anyplace else in the United States. It's not reasonable to allow another business such as what is proposed and is likely to destroy what is now a vibrant and sustainable agricultural area.

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Oil and gas development we believe would negatively affect all the reasons we love this Valley. I'd like my daughter to--.

00:35:12

Besha Deane: I am the next generation and I pray that you can see beyond the present moment and into the future. They say with great power comes great responsibility. I challenge you to see how this may change our lifestyle, livelihood, and community forever. This is too precious a valley and a resource of food and water to take a chance on. Food and water is essential to the survival of my children and all the children of the earth. Please remove all 22 parcels from this proposed sale. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:35:56

Gail Schwartz: Introduce yourself and who you represent.

00:36:00

Michael Tarbell: I'm Mike Tarbell. Before I get cut off later, let me say immediately I'm completely opposed to these leases and I'm requesting all 22 parcels be withdrawn.

00:36:13

The source for [inaudible] water lies squarely within Parcel No. 6195 and well I'm sure it's fun, I really don't need to be able to light my water on fire.

00:36:28

Gail Schwartz: Mike, a little closer to the mic.

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00:36:31

Michael Tarbell: Thank you. On December 8th of last year the EPA released a draft report on their investigation of groundwater contamination in the vicinity of the gas deal in Pavillion, Wyoming. I don't have time to go into the technical details; let me go straight to their conclusion.

00:36:49

The explanation investigating the data for the deep monitoring wells is that constituents associated with hydraulic fracking have been released into the wind river drinking water aquifer that [inaudible] above the current production zone.

00:37:06

Now this didn't come from Green Peace; this came from EPA scientists after drilling their own monitoring wells and conducting extensive analytical lab work, flatly concluding that fracking is contaminating civilian groundwater.

00:37:22

Is it not clear that the burden of proof is now on the energy company to show that they should be allowed to continue fracking at all, let alone on the parcel being considered here--that is pending some credible reputation of this report, and I have seen none--in the interest of public health is it not incumbent upon any government agency with regulatory power for this activity including the EPA, BLM, COGCC< Town Commissioners on down, to presume by default that this report is valid? And if they do not are they lying squarely in the chain of liability if injury or damage results?

00:38:07

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So unless you--you government officials have good reason to think that this report is not [inaudible] I urge you to carefully consider your position. Any cognizant-government body that is complicit in letting this activity continue let alone providing new opportunities for it is simply negligent and should be the target of litigation. Please do the right thing; put a stop to this idiocy before it goes any further. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:38:57

Larry Parker: Thank you. My name is Larry Parker. My wife and I live on Stucker Mesa outside of Paonia. We oppose the leasing of the 22 nominated parcels surrounding us, the established agricultural area, because of the well-documented negative effects of all activities associated with gas drilling. We want these parcels withdrawn permanently.

00:39:21

We came here five years ago; we looked around at the homegrown small town culture, the organic produce movement, the wine makers, and the other value-added businesses in this area. And we decided to invest everything we have in it. We bought 40 acres of agricultural land on Stucker Mesa. We restored the alfalfa pastures and the commercial greenhouse and put them into production. We have planted organic gardens, a wine grape vineyard, and a cherry orchard. We started a small licensed bonded winery.

00:39:59

The view from our property is inspiring. We can see the mountains, the river, and the entire Valley all the way to Hotchkiss High School here. We've been planning to add a tasting room to take advantage of this view. If the view is filled with gas drilling pads and the air is polluted by dust and diesel exhaust who will want to visit our tasting room?

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00:40:25

Our West Elks AVA as described by Brent Hellickson is a major factor in making this area a tourist destination. Does anyone think this would still be a tourist destination if the slopes around the Valley were pocked with gas drilling pads?

00:40:45

We're well aware of the threats from gas drilling including water pollution, air pollution, light pollution, noise, dust, and traffic. Our livelihood, property values, and quality of life are threatened. This ill-conceived plan puts everything we have done here in jeopardy.

00:41:10

Our Mesa is directly affected by Parcel No. 6191 which includes watershed laying on both sides of Roatcap Creek and is adjacent to land containing two springs that supply water to our domestic water company. Our irrigation water is delivered from the overland ditch to our local ditch company through Roatcap Creek. Stucker Mesa Road is the only vehicle access to Parcel No. 6191. It is a narrow gravel road unsuited to frequent heavy truck traffic.

00:41:43

The economic benefits from gas drilling would not be for local residents, but for the corporations and their employees. Our existing local economy could be irreparably damaged in exchange for an insignificant amount of fossil fuel and some short-term profit. To put it simply, we're here already; this is our Valley and we think gas drilling should be done elsewhere. Thank you. [*Applause*]

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00:42:17

Anna Kampe: Hello; my name is Anna Kampe and I'm representing the Valley Organic Growers' Association, a membership organization with 93 farms--

00:42:28

Gail Schwartz: Little closer to the mic.

00:42:27

Anna Kampe: --farms, ranch, and orchard business members. I'm here today to ask the BLM to remove all 22 parcels from the proposed August oil and gas lease sale. VOGA represents the largest concentration of organic farms in the State of Colorado. VOGA and its members are dedicated to producing the highest quality, healthiest food available while maintaining the health of the land that we rely on.

00:42:55

The proposed oil and gas leases threaten our soil, our water, our air, and our livelihood. Potential air and water contamination caused by oil and gas exploration are risks our businesses cannot afford to take. And even the perception of the North Fork Valley losing its pristine nature will severely damage our ability to market our food. Our clients seek out clean, healthy food, and they will find sources if--other sources if our Valley is seen as being potentially contaminated.

00:43:28

Oil and gas exploration will be seen as a potential contaminant by these consumers. Similarly, oil and gas exploration threatens the value of our land. Like most

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farmers and ranchers, our land is our income and our retirement. We need to maintain the security of the value of our land for our future and our children's future. As VOGA members plan and invest for the upcoming farming season we need to know that our markets will buy the crops we know we can produce. We, and our customers, need the assurances that our water will continue to be clean, our air will continue to be clear, and the food we produce to be pure and healthy. We need the assurances that these leases will not be sold and we and our businesses will not face these risks. *[Applause]*

00:44:25

Gail Schwartz: We'll welcome Marley Hodgson but I'd like for Crystal Pretorius--yeah you're next. I was just going to have the next five people come up; Phyllis Swackhamer, excuse me, James Schott, Ulli Lange, Gene Goffin, and just want to mention that we do have several rows that are empty up here so if folks in the back wanted to--feel welcome to join us up front.

00:45:00

Marley Hodgson: My name is Marley Hodgson. My family and I own and operate Smith Fork Ranch, a guest ranch outside of Crawford. I'm here today to ask the BLM to remove all 22 parcels from the proposed August oil and gas lease sale.

00:45:17

First of all, I recognize the need for energy development on the North American continent and its coastal waters. But places for energy resource development must be chosen carefully. The rush to extract the maximum natural resources from under the

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ground must not be allowed to sweep away the abundant natural and human resources that are in place and flourishing on the surface of the ground in our viable rural communities.

00:45:42

One of the highest priorities for the Governor and all the various elected and appointed officials is to preserve what is best about Colorado and nurture those viable communities that are making Colorado so special. The North Fork Valley is certainly one of those special communities where they're preserving and nurturing. Like the Napa Valley 50 years ago, the Willamette Valley of Oregon 40 years ago, the Texas hill country between Austin and Fredericksburg 25 years ago, the North Fork Valley today is just beginning to blossom.

00:46:19

These other places have been nurtured and allowed to grow over the years into treasured parts of our nation and the states they're located in. The North Fork Valley is remarkably similar to what those places were like years ago. The organic farms, ranches, and orchards, the vineyards, and wineries have begun to be acknowledged as the best in the State, the artisan craftsmen who have been drawn to this Valley by the bucolic setting and the budding high quality tourism industry that is beginning to emerge as people from Colorado's front range and beyond are attracted by the bounty of this beautiful place.

00:46:58

My family and I came to Crawford 12 years ago. We fell in love with the area, bought a run-down property that used to be the Old Bar--ex-Bar Ranch; spent two and a half years restoring the place. We renamed it Smith Fork Ranch and opened it as a high

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quality guest ranch. The abundant resources, the abundant natural resources we have, the clean fresh air, the beautiful Smith Fork of the Gunnison with its abundant rainbow and brown trout, the rich soil that supports an amazingly productive organic farmstead, the pristine beauty of the land with its abundant wildlife for viewing and hunting and fishing, the pure spring water that flows out of Saddle Mountain where BLM Parcel No. 6200 is located--are all part of the beautiful place we built for people to come and visit and enjoy from every corner of America and abroad.

00:47:49

For the past 10 years our family's guest ranch business has supported the local community through job creation and purchases from local tradesmen, farms, ranches, and wineries. Smith Fork Ranch pumps roughly \$1,000,000 into the local economy every single year.

00:48:08

Gail Schwartz: Thank you; thank you Marley.

00:48:12

Marley Hodgson: We couldn't survive if the fracking began in our area. [*Applause*]

[End Part 02-Start Brad Burritt]