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Part 03-Second Hour Audio
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[Begin Part 03-Second Hour Audio]

00:00:00

Crystal Pretorius: Good afternoon Senator Schwartz and all of our citizens. I'm Crystal Pretorius and I live on Lamborn Mesa. My family and I have are opposed to the lease of 22 parcels for the purpose of gas and oil drilling in the Paonia area for the following reasons:

00:00:17

First, proposed gas and oil drilling will affect our viability and quality of water. For instance, on our three acre lot located on Mine Ridge Road in Paonia, we receive water from the Turner, Lone Cabin, and Minnesota Creek catchment areas. The quality of our irrigation water is in jeopardy when drilling is being done on the proposed Parcel Nos. 6193, 6194, 6189, and 6190. The amount of water available for irrigation will also be affected. Up to 8,000,000 gallons of water may be used to frack a well and a well may be fracked up to 18 times, so do the math.

00:01:02

The North Fork area does not have water to spare. New water taps are not being released for this reason; new housing developments in Paonia were halted because of limited drinking water. Next, we tend a small organic garden to fulfill our family's needs are in the process of starting a [mushroom growing plant]. This has been put on hold because of the uncertainty of irrigation water. Water quality is of utmost importance to our organic enterprises.

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Furthermore, our livelihood is--is at stake. During spring and summer, we work on an organic farm, the [Dehorns] Farm on Lamborn Mesa Road. Organic produce from this farm is sold at the Aspen Market and restaurants. The amount of available water will affect the amount of produce grown and then also [inaudible]. Another reason for our opposition is the possibility of earthquakes in this area. Many of our natives and citizens work in the three local coal mines and their safety while underground cannot be compromised.

00:02:14

Last, the increase of heavy trucks on our country roads will put another financial burden on the Delta County and surrounding towns for maintaining already potholed roads. The peace and quiet of this area will be at stake too. The increase of heavy traffic will add to an increase of ground level ozone causing respiratory illnesses, burdening our community with more medical expenses.

00:02:40

Given all the stated reasons, we urge you to retract the proposed processes in the North Fork area. You were elected and appointed to look after the common good for all the people of this area. You are our community's voice in this onslaught of the pristine [inaudible] and land for the purposes of gas and oil drilling. Thank you for your time.

[Applause]

00:03:13

Phyllis Swackhamer: I'm here to request that the BLM withdraw all 22 parcels from the August 2012 lease sale. When my husband and I moved to Paonia 15 years ago we

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lived for the first five years at the foot of the area called Apple Valley. The entrance to Parcel No. 6190 which contains Jumbo Mountain and we call the Camelback, was about a two-block walk up the hill. Sometimes my husband and I walk daily on these hills when the mud allowed. We came to appreciate numerous old beautiful junipers and views of Mount Gunnison, Lamborn, Lands End, and the miniature wildflowers in the spring--all this without having to get in a car and burn gas to recreate and get healthier.

00:03:51

We have since bought a home about a third of mile from that entrance as the crow flies. We still enjoy hiking that area and occasionally climbing Jumbo. Our irrigation water flows adjacent to the parcel and is straddled by two other parcels upstream. That this recreational area bordering our town would be bulldozed with roads, traffic with gravel trucks, drilling rigs, fracking trucks, chemical and water trucks, perhaps even evaporation pits that the air would be tainted with volatile organic compounds is beyond my comprehension and I'm still mystified that millions--no, billions of gallons of water can and are being taken out of our watershed to be made toxic and either injected into the earth or hauled away and forever lost so that they will not continue on down the Colorado to other cities and towns. And I do not hear that this is a problem. Who is keeping track of the water here in the arid west?

00:04:42

Of course I do not want our community turned into an industrial gas or oil field, but this is about much more than my backyard. The larger picture is that this is happening in everyone's backyard. At the rate this boom is happening across our country when someone else's water is polluted whose water will they drink? When--whose water will

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they use when to grow their crops? And air, it does not stop at county or state boundaries.

We will all--we are all downwind from someone. Local groups and national parks monitoring air quality have seen an increase in ground ozone which is poisonous to plants, animals, and humans. Ground ozone is produced by the interaction of nitrous oxides, UV light, and a variety of VOCs--VOCs are a product of gas and oil drilling.

00:05:24

We do not have a national problem; we have a national crisis. And we need Secretary Salazar, BLM Director Abby and every BLM employee at the district, regional, and state level as well as our elected representatives from Colorado to bring the reality of possible fuel destruction to our Congress and this Administration so that we can after decades of stalling have a clean energy policy. And the BLM can get on with managing public lands for the public and not for the fossil fuel industries. *[Applause]*

00:06:10

Gail Schwartz: We want to thank Phyllis for her helping with the timing today; James, if you will please begin and introduce yourself?

00:06:16

James Schott: My name is James Schott and I'm here to speak as President of the Board of Supervisors of the Delta County Conservation District. The Delta County Conservation District was created under the Colorado Soil Conservation Act and is a legal subdivision of the State of Colorado as well as an active partner with other agencies such as the National Resource Conservation Service.

00:06:38

Conservation Districts exist to represent the agricultural interests of the landowners in the district and is governed by a Board of Supervisors elected by those landowners. The mission of the Delta Conservation District is to provide leadership and to promote programs that will encourage people to improve and sustain our natural resources and environment.

00:06:58

Chief among the District's objectives is to promote the proper use of agricultural land, protected from all forms of deterioration. The first key Conservation concern in this regard is water. Quote from our plan: *water is by far the most important part of good health for animal and plant life*. The availability of adequate healthy water is the keystone of all living plants and animals in this District.

00:07:23

The Conservation District has over the past few years located all the ditches in the North Fork Valley which is the area most impacted by the proposed leases. We have created a map that combines the ditches and the proposed lease sites together. We do not have the time here to detail the unique impact that each of these proposed leases could possibly have on each of the ditches. However, the following proposed sites, 6191, 6195, 6196, 6207, 6205, 6190, 6197, 6193, 6189, and 6200 all have potential impact on the following irrigation and water sources:

00:08:10

Fire Mine Canal, Paonia Reservoir, Stewart Ditch, Paonia Ditch, North Fork River, Lone Cabin Ditch, Turner Ditch, Saddle Mountain Ditch, and potential impacts

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include fracking with undisclosed chemicals, taking water for drilling purposes, road building, groundwater contamination, increased erosion from disturbed land, ditch damage from vibration, pipeline construction, increased vehicle traffic--all are potential factors that could degrade the water availability and quality and the nature of our agricultural community.

00:08:44

We encourage our elected officials and public servants to carefully assess the potential impact before placing these parcels up for lease. It seems prudent to at least complete an updated Environmental Impact Statement for such placing them--before placing them up for lease. Thank you.

00:09:01

And I'd like to take the rest of my time as a private citizen and the owner of a small farm on Lamborn Mesa to say that 6189, 6194, and 6193 directly affect my water.

[Applause]

00:09:29

Ulli Lange: My name is--excuse me; I have a cold. My name is Ulli Lange and my wife [Inaudible] and I came to the United States back home, Germany, Berlin in 1964. I'm a retired mining engineer. I spent all my professional life in and around coal mining which also brought my wife and me to Paonia. We have been connected to Paonia since 1992--20 years.

00:09:58

I'm here with a request that the Bureau of Land Management withdraws 22 parcels in Delta and Madison Counties from the August 2012 lease sale. The reasons for my requests are as follows:

00:10:16

The current resource management plan adopted in 1989 is out of date and insufficient. It does not provide a realistic and up-to-date overview of fossil fuel resources in the North Fork Valley. In addition to withdrawing these 22 parcels, BLM should also defer offering any other lands for lease until the Resource Management Plan has been revised.

00:10:50

I spoke with local geologists familiar with the geology of Western Colorado. Their opinion in studying the local geology--tells me that the presence of economically viable gas deposits in the North Fork Valley are highly questionable. South of the Grand Mesa the gas bearing [inaudible] is on the surface, no overlaying seals exist to trap any potential gas--over millions of years, any gas most likely drained into the atmosphere. I spoke with the President of one of the leading gas producers in the area. And he told me that his company is not bidding on any parcels in Delta County. I wonder why.

00:11:40

The rumor alone of possible future drilling, fracking, water contamination, etcetera has already a chilling effect on real estate markets and other businesses, by casting a cloud of uncertainty over the entire North Fork Valley. People are trying to sell their homes, a difficult time to do at reasonable prices. Potential buyers shy away due to the unsettled situation. The economy as a whole will suffer if this type of uncertainty

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continues. BLM must inform the public about its real intention and background of the lease sale if future gas production is to be expected.

00:12:31

Like I said, rumors can do lasting harm to entire communities; thank you.

[*Applause*]

00:12:46

Gail Schwartz: Okay; just before we go--we have-- [Inaudible]

00:12:59

Gene Goffin: Well if I had known that those lights were here I would have brought my sunglasses. [*Laughs*] I'm Gene Goffin and my wife Barb and I live on Fruitland Mesa. We're about a mile and a half to three miles from the parcels that have been nominated on the south rim of Smith Fork.

00:13:16

So my first question to BLM is there are more parcels owned by BLM along the south rim and they would make a good bike and trail system. They're almost contiguous; why isn't BLM looking into that to attract tourism to the area? Tourism lasts forever; oil and gas does not.

00:13:41

So second thing is I want to thank CHC and Gail Schwartz for putting on this meeting, something that BLM does not afford us. I'm reminded in 2006 when my wife and I were in Northern Canada and we landed in the little town, village of [Pattaya Tuck]

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on the Arctic Ocean. And when we got there we found there was an-oil and gas hearing. The Canadian government put it on. The oil and gas companies were--had to appear and speak to the government people and of course the village residents. They got more than three minutes each by the way.

00:14:25

The hearing went on for a week. **[Laughs]** Why isn't the BLM having this kind of hearing--not an open house but a real meeting with the citizens? **[Applause]**

00:14:41

Thirdly, I call for all the parcels to be withdrawn. There is no economic justification for this. Chesapeake Energy, a big developer in the east mainly just announced last week that it was cutting back on its drilling. There's a gas glut in this country. Gas prices are at a ten-year low; why are they doing this? There are enormous fields in North Dakota where there are far fewer people and a much stronger economy than in the North Fork. There is gas in New York and Pennsylvania, around Forth Worth, Texas and other places that are already being developed. We don't need more natural gas.

00:15:23

I believe this to be speculation. There are scores, hundreds, maybe thousands of leases that are being held and are not being developed all over the country. So what do we need more for? The only reason I can imagine is that these companies know they'll go for very low prices and they can hold them for 10 or 20 years in the hope that someday they can sell them. Thank you for your time. **[Applause]**

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Gail Schwartz: Thanks Gene.

00:16:07

Eugenie McGuire: My name is Eugenie [outlined as Oogie] McGuire and with my husband, Ken we run a small farm on Garvin Mesa completely surrounded by Parcel No. 6207. We also have a business in town; Weyr Associates. We are here today to ask the BLM to permanently move all 22 parcels in the North Fork Valley.

00:16:24

We the North Fork residents do not participate in any of the economic rewards of mineral extraction and therefore, we do not wish to accept any of the risks. These risks are--

00:16:33

Gail Schwartz: Get a little bit closer to the mic; a little closer to the mic.

00:16:35

Eugenie McGuire: These risks cannot be mitigated or offset and could destroy our entire farm. They will also continue for decades, long past the time any company would be responsible for the cleanup or fixing the problems caused by those drilling activities.

00:16:50

Our flock of Black Welsh Mountain Sheep is the largest in all of North America. We currently own over 10-percent of the entire North American population and over 30-percent of the breeding population. As documented in a recent USDA research paper,

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Black Welsh Mountain Sheep are not closely related to any other breed of domestic sheep in the US. As such, they represent a storehouse of unique genes that are important for preserving genetic diversity and promoting food resilience. Anything that threatens the reproductive ability or survival of our flock poses a huge threat to this breed in North America and will reduce the ability of the sheep industry to weather the storms of changing climate, consumer needs, and disease threats. Genetic diversity once lost can never be regained.

00:17:36

We're also a cooperating flock for the USDA for seven years as a research flock. Our multi-year project depends on accurate records of the [inaudible] and fertility of our flock based on historical data and unaffected by outside environmental impacts. If oil and gas drilling is allowed anywhere in our Valley resulting air, water, and particulate pollution as well as the increased exposure to endocrine destructing chemicals, ozone, and other contaminants will impact our ability to be a valid research crop for the United States Department of Agriculture.

00:18:11

If the waters of the Terror Ditch and Reservoir Company watershed are contaminated this represents a significant loss to shareholders. There are 200 shares of water in TDRC and there have been offers to buy shares at \$5,000 per share that were not accepted. That represents \$1,000,000 of capital that is potentially at risk. And this figure does not include the value of the land, hay, wine, meat and other products produced using that water, and we're a tiny water company.

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Currently in Colorado, a reclamation bond is required for all wells but these bonds are so low that companies can choose to walk away leaving a mess for the payers--taxpayers to clean up. There have been seismic problems including a 3.0 earthquake in October of 2011 at 15,000 feet far deeper than any mining activity and within the range where the drilling might occur. Parcel Nos. 6207 and 6189 have a mile of direct exposure to Fire Mountain Canal. And these are the reasons that we feel that all parcels should be removed from consideration permanently. [*Applause*]

00:19:29

Clay Sorenson: Hi; my name is Clay Sorenson and I'm a resident of the Valley. I was born--well I was born in Gunnison and I was raised here. I left for about 20 years; I came back. I've been back about six years. This is my son, Ky; Ky is with me today because I wanted him to be raised in the same beautiful place that I was raised in.

00:19:50

I am a 27-share owner of Stewart Ditch. I own 20 acres on the Stewart Mesa. I own a domestic water tap on Stewart Mesa Domestic Water--that we get our water from springs that are directly affected by the Parcel Nos. 6198, 6197, 6199, and 6203. We raise our own livestock for meat. We have our own garden for our vegetables and our food. That water is--it all comes from the North Fork River which is affected by the other parcels up and around the boundary reservoir.

00:20:27

As people have mentioned here earlier, natural gas is at historic lows. I'm a 20-year engineer in industry. I managed the energy budget for Coor's Brewing Company in

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Golden, Colorado. When I left that job in 2005 natural gas prices at the spot market were about \$12 a million BTU; today they're about \$2.76. The reason it's that low is because this industry has developed in an unfettered manner allowing the use of hydraulic fracturing in new ways with new materials in a relatively unrestricted manner. So the pendulum has swung completely in one direction allowing use of materials and technologies that we have no idea what it's doing underground.

00:21:14

We have no idea; we may be making a toxic mess under there that looks like an open pit strip mine but because nobody can see it we don't know what's happening. At this point with natural gas prices at a low, with an industry that's been developed--allowed to develop fairly unfettered I think it's time to step back, take a breath, stop the lease on these 22 parcels, look at every other parcel that we're leasing, and see what's happening to the environment. The technology is out ahead of where--of what we know is happening. So to that note, I would ask that you would put a moratorium on these 22 leases indefinitely and look at every other parcel that we lease. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:22:15

Ralph D'Alessandro: Good afternoon, Senator Schwartz, guests; I am Ralph D'Alessandro. I am the Delta Conservation District Representative to the Gunnison Basin Selenium Task Force. I am here today to talk specifically about 14 of the 22 parcels that are affected by the potential for selenium mobility.

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The Task Force has been formed and as required by the State of Colorado, the EPA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to the Clean Water Act to examine and follow the effects of selenium on endangered fish species in impaired river systems including the Gunnison and the Colorado River.

00:23:04

The selenium in this area is impacted by the [inaudible] shaled soil and geology. The Task Force which will send a formal letter to this effect and which will enumerate the specific parcels which I'm not going to speak about and which I've already said to you in my personal letter is concerned by the cumulative effect of multiple drill sites, roads that will be required to access these drill sites, and fracking, especially fracking. Selenium is soluble(ized) and transported through the soil by water. Fracking uses extreme quantities, vast quantities of water; a single-stage frack will use up to 500,000 gallons and every well uses multiple fracking stages up to 12 or 18 and normally in excess of 1,000,000 gallons of water will be used.

00:24:06

Non-irrigated soils on the average use--use 34 times the amount of soluble selenium in movement. None of these parcels are previously irrigated. Injection of water deep into mango shale will mobilize new sources of selenium not previously available. Additionally, studies have shown in selenium study areas that selenium in road dust will surface and pass into the watershed. Additionally, storm water run-off from these roads will pass into the watershed. Lastly, the unknown consequences of chemical agents used in selenium and the effect on selenium used in fracking need to be evaluated. The Task

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Force is concerned with this entire myriad--meaning fracking as well as the unknown impact on selenium. [*Applause*]

00:25:34

Lincoln Fox: Hello; my name is Lincoln Fox and I'm a sculptor. My wife and I moved here about 22 years ago because of the beauty of the Valley. I'm concerned about several things here; I'm concerned about our--our organic garden, I'm concerned about the traffic. When we turn into our drive there is a curve just east of us, our property line.

00:25:57

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

00:26:00

Lincoln Fox: There's a dip and then there's a light. As we start to turn into our drive, momentarily the oncoming traffic is blocked, so the people behind us tend to want to speed around us so that they cannot have to stop or slow down. If we gets lots and lots of truck traffic and we have to if we do this, I'm quite concerned this particular little area has already claimed the lives of several people and many accidents. And it can't get any better if we end up with this kind of traffic.

00:26:33

My real concern though is for our--our water. Our home and barn is located on 23 acres; it's on the side of the Valley there and our--there's two properties that's very close to our Valley. One of them is Parcel No. 6195 and one is Parcel No. 6196. In our

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immediate area we have six families on an underground tap spring, the [Halaby] Pipeline. This pipeline is on or immediately adjacent to the property of Parcel No. 6196. This is the only water that these six families have as far as potable domestic water. I--I guess I would ask if any of you would feel comfortable knowing that water and liquids tend to flow downhill--that you'd feel comfortable drinking this water or bathing in it?

00:27:30

I--I want to appreciate your situation here because you're in sort of a tight spot. You need to balance the bureaucratic demands against the--the public's demands. But we want to remind you that the whole reason for the bureaucratic system in the first place is for the public.

00:27:49

We appreciate the diligence--all the diligence into this matter and we want to [inaudible] but I want and I'm sure most of the people here won't be adverse at all of taking part in whatever legal action that's necessary to bring because it's so much easier for us to fight for what we already have than to move and try to find another pristine place. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:28:21

Gail Schwartz: Thank you. And before Sarah begins can we have Bill Bishop, Adam Gall, Boyd Boland, Sarah Bishop, and Matthew Harris; please join us in the queue.

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Sarah Sauder: Hello; my name is Sarah Sauder and I'm the Director of the NFRIA-WSERC Conservation Center. The Conservation Center believes that changes in land use, oil and gas extraction technologies and our understandings of the impacts to human health and environment from gas exploration means that decisions of this magnitude should be deferred until all the facts in and the new Resource Management Plan is delivered.

00:29:00

The stakes are too high to make decisions based on a 20-year old--23-year old plan that may not reflect our current land use.

00:29:07

Conservation Center will be submitting detailed comments to the BLM that echo many of the concerns heard today. We feel like citizens, the land owners, this community here can better articulate them than I can.

00:29:20

I'd like to take the remainder of my time to actually address the North Fork community. One, I want to say the concerns here raised today are not about coal. The Conservation Center and this community support our local coal mines and we understand the role that the North Fork already plays in our domestic energy economy. Two, to those who say that the concerns that have been raised today represent the standard NIMB, not in my backyard response, I say you're wrong. Many of the nominated parcels in our front yards and we have the right to be concerned and we have the right to be heard.

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Finally, I'd like to thank the BLM for presenting this community with an amazing opportunity. Emotions are high; yes, but we're paying attention, maybe like we've never paid attention before. So now is the time for us to come together, work with our decision makers, towns, counties, state and federal to do everything that we can to put every single protection in place, so to do things like create source water management plans for our drinking water supplies. BLM will listen to those plans. We can work with the BLM and the Forest Service to make sure no more does the Resource Management Planning Meeting or a Forest Service Travel Management Planning Meeting go unattended. We have been given opportunities; we need to be on high alert and we need to be paying attention.

00:30:45

That's--I think that's it for my comments. Thank you so much. *[Applause]*

00:31:01

Bill Bishop: So I'm supposed to say who I am?

00:31:01

Gail Schwartz: Yes; you are. *[Laughs]*

00:31:02

Bill Bishop: I'm Bill Bishop. I'm here representing Bill Bishop and Sarah Bishop and a bunch of our neighbors. We moved here or we bought our property here in 1987 and one of the reasons that we bought that property is it was surrounded on three sides by BLM

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and we said what a tremendous neighbor that would be. **[Laughs]** The last few weeks have proven that wrong.

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We're surrounded on three sides by BLM properties, Parcel Nos. 6191 and 6195. I've already written a letter to the [inaudible], to BLM objecting to those two parcels. I have two comments tonight of a financial nature. First I want to insist that all the BLM staff dealing with this issue read Andrew Gulliford's book *Boomtown Blues*. I left a copy of that with BLM in Montrose yesterday. Here's a picture of the book. And particularly I called their attention in chapter six. Chapter six deals with financial matters that rifled after the boom there and it's a horror story.

00:32:11

At a personal level I feel that if this drilling happens that Sarah and I will lose a large fraction of our retirement nest egg because that nest egg resides in the value of our property. If this drilling happens I computed today on the back of an envelope almost literally that the--our neighbors in the Valley will lose somewhere between \$70,000,000 and \$350,000,000 in property values. That's arithmetic on the back of an envelope. And the county loses its proportion of property taxes. As Andy asks in his book, who pays for these losses?

00:32:53

The second is that there's a myth about the local economy. Unlike the coal mines where the employees move to town and are part of the local economy for an extended period, the drilling crews are trained professionals who come to town, drill a hole and move onto some other place for the next hole. There will be a few jobs for local folks but

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not very many because mostly it's imported staff. And the money that they get from their salaries leaks out of our--it leaks out of our Valleys because it's sent home.

00:33:26

And there will be local costs for police, road maintenance--a lot, and many more things that won't be paid for by sales tax because--thank you--because there won't be many sales and they won't be paid for by property taxes because the values will drop. So again, as Andy asks, who pays for these costs?

00:33:47

The bottom line, this is really bad financial deal even if there were no environmental or cultural impacts. So I request here formally to BLM please withdraw all of the parcels. We can't afford them. [*Applause*]

00:34:23

Adam Gall: Hi there; my name is Adam Gall. I hunt and fish locally. I also guide fishing trips and hunting trips in the area. These provide a significant portion of my annual income and I'm here to ask the BLM to remove all 22 parcels that are up for the August 2012 oil and gas lease sale.

00:34:47

A few years ago Colorado Parks and Wildlife conducted a study. The found \$28,000,000 gets pumped into Delta County from hunting and fishing alone; \$53,000,000 gets pumped into Gunnison County from hunting and fishing alone. In 2010 over 5,000 people hunted elk in units 529 and 53 which are basically with two games units that envelope the Valley. These units have over the counter elk tags because of healthy elk

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herds. What an over the counter elk tag means is resident or non-resident if you have proof of hunter's safety you can go on the weekender sports or wherever, buy an elk tag, go out, hunt, harvest an elk, bring it home, put it in your freezer and feed your family for a year. There's not many places on the planet where you can do that but you can do that here.

00:35:41

The majority of the lease parcels in these same game units. Looking ahead, if these poorly thought out parcels are leased, road building and large increases in heavy traffic and machine traffic will inevitably follow. Numerous studies done all over the West wherever elk live show elk avoids or will entirely leave areas of motorized use. Roads decrease habitat; roads fragment habitat. The bottom line is reduced hunter success.

00:36:14

So putting all this together, healthy elk herds equal successful hunters, which equals consistent and long term revenue for North Fork Valley businesses whether it's weekender sports, Paonia homes, homestead market, Hotchkiss Meats, Stengles Rifle Range, a lot of places that really benefit.

00:36:35

The locations of these 22 parcels in this Valley stand to damage or permanently ruin reliable--reliable economic drivers that are already providing revenue in a healthy way and can continue to do so for generations to come. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:37:03

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Boyd Boland: I'm Boyd Bolan. I was born and raised here. I own a 50-acre farm at Midway that borders Parcel No. 6195. I request that the BLM withdraw all 22 parcels from the August lease sale for six reasons.

00:37:22

First, in Pavilion, Wyoming the Environmental Protection Agency found that fracking fluids had contaminated the drinking water. There is no reason to think that wouldn't happen to me. The drinking water source for the Sunshine Mesa Domestic Water Company which has fed my farm for 50 years finds its source on Parcel No. 6195.

00:37:45

Second, drilling puts at risk my irrigation water and soil resources. The Valley has a long and rich history of agriculture but if fracking fluids enter the irrigation water at the Fire Mountain Canal or other canals with its high salinity it puts at risk the fertility of our land.

00:38:10

Thirdly, drilling threatens erosion. You will all remember the Wake Fire of July 1994 which decimated the cedar forest on Parcel Nos. 6191, 6195, and 6196. The forest has not grown back and there has been little progress towards re-vegetation. Heavy truck traffic and other traffic on that fragile land would cause erosion which could destroy water sources and fertility of the land.

00:38:45

Fourth, it threatens our wildlife habitat. Parcel No. 6195 and the surrounding area has been described by the Bureau of Land Management as a crucial deer and elk winter range. This morning like every morning from October through March a herd of deer

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crossed my pasture in search of food and water; no mitigation will stop the migratory patterns of those animals from being changed if there is this development, not to mention, destruction of the habitat of the golden eagles and yellowtail hawks which circle above my farm.

00:39:27

Fifth, drilling puts at risk our recreational and visual resources. Senator Schwartz, I hope you were in the North Fork Valley last night. If you were, you might have looked into the sky and seen the trio of Jupiter, the waxing crescent moon, and Mars. The firmament is so clear and so bright here that some people think the North Fork Valley is the center of the universe. *[Laughs]* *[Applause]*

00:40:02

Cumulatively and sixth, this drilling threatens our treasured landscape and our tradition way of life. Sound stewardship dictates that the parcels be withdrawn.

[Applause]

00:40:25

Sarah Bishop: My name is Sarah bishop. I just commented to Robin Smith that I have learned so much today that I didn't know about my wonderful Valley. I'm really quite full. So my first request of BLM is that you remove all 22 parcels in consideration in the lease sale. This is too valuable a place to be thrown away on a few drops of oil or gas.

00:40:51

Besides, I'm a champion of business enterprises especially those that make our Valley such a wonderful place to live. You've heard about our agriculture. Now the

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cultural theme; yes, painters, musicians, sculptors, playwrights, etcetera, etcetera do actually earn some money from their art. And that's very important to them especially from visitors to this Valley.

00:41:18

Entrepreneurs, they choose to live here. There are small businesses that provide goods and services and then there are the coal mines. Those provide good jobs. There's-- it's a relatively clean energy from the point of actual extraction and they have a smaller footprint than our--any oil and gas would have; they don't have to put in quite so much infrastructure that's above the surface. And they follow very strict environmental guidelines and regulations and rules that do not apply to oil and gas.

00:41:55

I'm totally supportive of any new business that is compatible with what is already here. Oil and gas drilling is not compatible with our Valley's current business environment or its vision of its future. We have heard the concerns of those involved in agriculture and water, air, the confidence that the--that the community has in the--the purity of what we produce here.

00:42:23

There may be far fewer visitors to our Valley, definitely will be and artists depend on them--if our landscape appears unattractive. Entrepreneurs may find a better place to live if they can sell their homes. And as the population declines, small businesses will decline.

00:42:47

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There is a real concern for the coal mines from possible seismic activity connected with drilling. There are just too many unanswered questions to go cavalierly forward.

00:43:00

You have heard the myths about drilling bringing jobs into the area from my husband, Bill Bishop. A few businesses benefit to the detriment of others. Few if any local folks will land high paying jobs on the drilling rigs. So before going any further BLM must do the following:

00:43:17

Reassess the appropriateness of parcels up for oil and gas leases according to current [*Emphasis Added*] conditions and use. Much has changed since '89, particularly the Wake Fire, and look at what is going on elsewhere. Don't be blind to what's going on in other States. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:43:46

Gail Schwartz: So just before Matthew begins can we have Doug Bell, Susan Raymond, Melinda Bell, Janene Vandenberg, and John Vandenberg?

00:44:01

Matthew Harris: Hello; it feels good to be at the center of the universe, huh? [*Laughs*]
Thank you; let me say off the top that Nos. 6193, 6197, 6215, 6216, and 6206 are related to my remarks today but with that said I'm here today to ask BLM to remove all 22 parcels from the oil and gas lease sale.

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00:44:26

I've lived in Paonia for seven years and I've lived on the Western Slope for 13 and for 13 years I've been renewable energy practitioner and educator. These leases are a bad, bad idea and I don't say that as a renewable energy advocate. But oil and gas development in the North Fork Valley is bad design. And as Clay said a moment ago let's take a breath. We're working on a 22 year defacto plan.

00:44:56

The lands were pioneered by great men and women who established in the 1890s our legendary produce and fruits, now a major food resource for many Coloradoans and a major form of livelihood for these farmers. Oil and gas threatens these crops and those who--whose livelihoods depend on them. Air and water pollution will be threatened and our quality of life will cause regional tourism and local agricultural economy to become a collateral damage. The industrial activity including the swarm of gasoline and diesel trucks will stress our county roads and endanger our health and environment with potential accidents and spills. And the fact that companies are not required to disclose the hundreds of chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing, compromises our doctors and nurses' ability to treat workers who may become exposed or injured to these dangerous chemicals.

00:45:52

And if I can just speak for a moment for those who cannot be here, those without a voice, by that I mean the thousands of species of shrubs and wildflowers that color our foothills and mountain valleys, the blue flax and scarlet gilia and the rabbit brush, and the shooting stars, the path flower, the skunk cabbage, mountain lady slipper, monk's hood,

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lupine, aster, elephant head, columbine, fire weed and arnica, and let us not forget the abundant bird life and the--and the beaver country and the river valley with the ducks and the blue herons, the Canadian geese, the bald and golden eagles, the water wozzles, the hawks, the owls, Canadian jay, stellar jays, magpies, hummingbirds, blue birds, ravens, robins, and many more and of course our elk and mule deer, black bear, big horn sheep, mountain goat, mountain lion, bobcat, ermine, beaver, muskrat, and red fox, coyote, [Applause] martin--all threatened. Look around; let ours be the time where members who are awakening of renewable energy future, let ours be a time of remembrance of the firm resolve to achieve sustainability and let ours be the time of remembered for the quickening of the struggle for energy justice. [Applause]

00:47:16

Doug Bell: Good afternoon; I'm Doug Bell and I'm a Paonia resident. My wife and I appreciate this opportunity to have our voices heard. We are well aware that our country needs more energy independence. But if so, why are we exporting oil and gas?

[Applause] Is it the almighty dollar or is there a glut of oil and gas in this country? Could it be that we are not opposed to wise responsible gas development, but we do not agree with some of the places and the procedures that exploration companies and their supporters will be allowed to do this?

00:48:08

The process of extracting natural gas is constantly changing. What was the normal six months ago is not the normal now. As technology gets more sophisticated and more wells are drilled on each site some sites being as small as 10 acres, more--nowadays 10--

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12 wells are common. How many will there be six months from now or a year from now? With horizontal drilling--with horizontal drilling commonly used, more slick water is used to force the fracking fluids to two--two and a half miles of the drill holes. Thus, more water, more trucks, more diesel fuel, more generators, chemicals, and resources in general are in demand. But this is common knowledge.

00:49:07

You are also aware that the last Resource Management Plan was completed in 1989 over 20 years ago. Fracking at that time was in its infancy as was horizontal drilling. I can't understand why the 22 parcels of the North Fork that have been nominated for leasing need to be auctioned as soon as August 2012. Why not wait for a new Resource Management Plan along with an Environmental Impact Statement to be completed? The natural gas isn't going anywhere.

00:49:49

It seems that a little bit of time to have these studies done is excellent protection for the people and the environment. It can also help to determine where and how best efficiently to proceed, thus being beneficial to both sides of this debate.

00:50:09

The supporters of energy development say that the mountains of regulations protecting the environment and the people are more than enough to make the process safe. Okay; so, what's all the big stink about? Oh okay; thank you. [*Applause*]

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Susan Raymond: Hi; my name is Dr. Susan Raymond and what is supposed to be a democratic process, our end of the Valley is being sold down the river. Let me explain. We have watched in the last year the predator(izing) of our public lands, the sacrificing of our rural residential areas for industrial chicken farming and now corporate greed slithering into our end of the Valley under the pretense that our county desperately needs to get away from [inaudible] oil dependency.

00:51:07

As an owner of 60 acres with two springs and a well, a livestock producer, a farmer, a practicing veterinarian of 28 years in this Valley, a member of the Larue Creek Area Planning Commission, a Board Member of the Delta Conservation District, and a non-voting observing member of the Fire Mountain Canal I have never seen our end of the Valley threatened with so many issues in such a short time.

00:51:33

I'm not going to repeat the--the parcels that would affect Fire Mountain but I want to address the Fire Mountain Canal. Should the Fire Mountain Canal and the Paonia Reservoir become contaminated, if there were a spill or run-off from drilling pads, it will have an irreparable influence on the total north side of the Valley, not only on the farm ground but the springs and wells that the Fire Mountain Canal water recharges below it every year, should drilling and fracking cause sizing disturbances next to the Fire Mountain Canal or Reservoir the integrity of the dam and the Canal could be at risk. Lives could be at stake.

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A very recently VOR study was done identifying areas of the Fire Mountain Canal that pose the most imminent risk to life. This report shows the fragility of the Fire Mountain system. This is a 34-plus mile canal where three-quarters of it is built on a hillside. It will act as a collection drainage and cloud burst should drilling activity be situated above it.

00:52:37

Historically the west end of the Valley has had a tendency to have an attitude that the North Fork is expendable. At a Christmas party I attended this holiday season down in the Delta area, the consensus of the people at the party was let them build the industrial chicken coops at your end of the Valley so we can have the chicken manure to help our row crop farmers. Let them drill in the North Fork; we need the jobs. I bit my lip. I quietly proceeded to explain to those unknowing folks how the North Fork has become a Mecca for sustainable agriculture and how the North Fork feeds the resort towns such as Aspen, [Inaudible], [Inaudible].

00:53:15

In summation, do you see a County Commissioner here? I don't see a County Commissioner here?

00:53:22

Speaker: Why not?

00:53:25

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Susan Raymond: Yeah; we need to vote for local officials who stand up for us.

[Applause]

00:53:32

Speaker: Amen.

00:53:45

Melinda Bell: Hi; I'm Melinda Bell and I have lived here since 1990 so it's almost 22 years that I have been here, raised my daughter here. We have family ranches here at Midway and the parcels that affect the Midway area are Nos. 6197 and 6198 and we also have parcels here below Wolf Park and those parcels that affect me there are Nos. 6191, 6195, and 6196.

00:54:20

My father is on the--on the Advisory Board for Garfield County for Environmental Research on what the gas companies and--and different things that are happening over there. I appreciate that there has been a lot of really good talk based on science here today because what I've heard before this meeting is--is a lot of non-science issues. I think that the only way that you can deal with this problem is to really deal with the science part of it. My concerns are since I've lived on the Western Slope of Colorado since 1962 is I've seen a lot of boom and bust happen here on the Western Slope. It's great when it's happening; it's terrible when it's gone.

00:55:10

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The people who stay are the people who have to pick up the pieces after it's gone.
I don't want to be one of those people picking up the pieces.

00:55:19

I have written in my courses on most of the property that is in question. I want to know what our access as a public is going to be to the BLM if these things do go in. I want to know what is going to happen whenever our roads deteriorate and who is responsible for taking care of that. I also ride a Harley on the roads around here and this area that we have here, people from all over the world come and rent Harleys at Glenwood and Grand Junction just to ride on our roads because there is not a lot of truck traffic.

00:55:57

So what I would like to say is I would like to commend every one of you for doing your research and keep up the good work. [*Applause*]

00:56:18

Janene Vandenberg: My name is Janene Vandenberg and I live on Pitkin Mesa. The parcels closest to my home are Nos. 6207 and 6191. I'm here to ask the BLM to remove 22 parcels from the August lease sale. My husband, John and I moved to the area three years ago after 28 years of city life. We purchased the small acreage and home that John's father built on Pitkin Mesa. Here are the reasons that personally wanted to come to the area--for the clean air, for the clean water and it's the best tasting water I've ever tasted, for the chemical free fruits and vegetables that we could grow in our garden and/or purchase in the area, for the slower life style, for peace and quiet, so that I could

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concentrate on my artwork without much distraction, so that I could be a part of a creative and vibrant community, so that we could enjoy the views and watch the wildlife walk the worn path through our field, for improvement of my chronic illness and this is like a--a really huge concern for me, in light of what might happen, and finally for retirement.

00:57:52

In the three years I have lived here I have experienced most of these things, but these things I came for are threatened. For sure, there will be noise and lights, night and day at the drilling pads all over the Valley, there will be noisy and air-polluting truck traffic destroying our roads and threatening our safety; you know the other risks. Air pollution, poisoning of waterways, soils, vegetation, possible ill effects to the health of wildlife, livestock, ourselves, and our children; there is risk of disrupting our eco-system, the plummeting of property values and the loss of livelihood. Drilling will spoil our view.

00:58:46

If the BLM must continue to offer the 22 parcels for the lease to the oil and gas industry they must hear and rationally understand what is at stake. They must be and-- they must be--must do an updated Environmental Impact Statement. What is at stake for me is at stake for all of us. Thank you. [*Applause*]

00:59:18

John Vandenberg: Thanks; my name is John Vandenberg. You just met my wife. I live with her, so the--the same Parcel Nos. 6207, 6191 are directly above us. I just want to

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thank the BLM and thank all of you. We really appreciate you coming. It's been amazing that you all showed up. [*Applause*]

00:59:41

Great; the BLM as we heard from our lawyer friend at the start of this is responsible for looking at the public good. And this is going to be controversial. I want to say that--that I have a lot of concerns. One is jobs; you're about to be--I think we hear and see a lot of people agreeing with each other, wonderful speakers, but you are all about to be labeled as radical environmentalists in giant ads that fill every paper in our area.

01:00:14

Jobs will be at the top of the list; you're stopping jobs. You people are stopping jobs and I think the BLM should know that the North Fork Valley is a job creating Mecca, okay; it is a machine of job creation, right now as it sits, okay. The examples, CHCF asked us to be personal; I'll be personal. We moved here several years ago. We're lucky; we could pretty much live where we wanted. We chose here. Why? Clean, pristine, but my wife and I agree about one thing; we would not have moved here three years ago if it were today, okay. Just with the threat of us we would have gone somewhere else, okay.

01:01:05

When we built my new office, we moved--I own an international consulting company with staff around the United States. But when we built my new office, we hired local contractors, okay; we bought our--our materials in Paonia at the lumberyard and

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hardware stores, okay. Our profits stayed here. The profits from the gas and oil company go away, okay. That's a big concern--jobs, okay.

01:01:32

The next big concern is just pollution. All I can say is just imagine, those of you who know 2nd Street in Paonia, imagine hundreds of trucks going up 2nd Street, okay. Just imagine that. Right now it's--it's the--the road is almost shot, right; it's terrible, but just imagine that.

01:01:56

Finally, I would just like to say that again, personal, okay, our view--we have estimated, my wife and I that we can actually have line of sight eye view of eight parcels. Right now we have line of sight view of mountains and valleys that makes our property valuable; our property value would go away if we--all we had was an industrial view, so thank you. [*Applause*]

01:02:27

Gail Schwartz: Again, thanks to John for his--his work here with the timing as well. So as promised, we will take a 15-minute break and we're going to start promptly about 20 after because the--we want to close the testimony by 5:00. So in the queue will be Maxwell Aley, Bernadette Stech, Steve Gulick, Kevin Wagner, and Kay Hannah, so see you around in 15. Thanks.

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Gail Schwartz: Okay; we're ready to go and we've got waiting to be testify, Bernadette Stech, Steve Gulick, Kevin Wagner, Kay Hannah, so let's quickly--just to have everybody please sit down. If you want a conversation--we'll meet outside or something but give everyone the respect--and we'll keep moving.

01:03:29

[End Part 03-Second Hour Audio]