

# **BLM Draft Resource Management Plan for Uncompahgre Region Oil and Gas North Fork Valley Fact Sheet**

## **What's At Stake?**

- Activities on public lands that have the potential to poison food sheds and threaten to wipe out food security for people on the Western Slope and the Front Range.
- The destruction of clean air, abundant fresh water and food sheds (including Colorado's largest concentration of organic farms).
- Significant harm to human health and a local economy based on agriculture and organic farms, recreation, hunting, and tourism.
- Loss of unique biodiversity in the State of Colorado.
- **The future of the North Fork Valley.** The final RMP will guide oil and gas development for the next 20-30 years.

## **What is the Planning Area?**

The Planning Area consists of Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties in southwestern Colorado. The planning area does not include the Gunnison Gorge or Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas, which are managed under separate RMPs.

## **What does the Draft RMP/EIS mean for the North Fork Valley?**

- The BLM preferred alternative is a roadmap to industrializing the North Fork Valley with oil and gas operations.
- Over 100,000 acres will be open to oil and gas leasing.
- The 30,000-acres that we fought to defer from leasing twice in 2012 are now BACK on the table, giving industry a green light to develop the heart of the Valley.
- If the BLM preferred alternative is approved, it will be more difficult to challenge oil and gas leasing and prevent development.

## **How does the North Fork Alternative Plan (NFAP) factor into BLM's decision-making?**

- The BLM must consider all reasonable alternatives.
- The NFAP provides the strongest protections of the alternatives considered by the BLM in the draft RMP; the NFAP is significantly better than the BLM's preferred alternative.
- The BLM considered the NFAP but did not include any of its recommendations in its preferred alternative.

## **What reasonable alternatives were not considered by BLM?**

- The BLM did not consider a no-leasing alternative. A no-leasing alternative is not only reasonable, but given what we now know about the impacts of oil and gas to human health, our environment, and climate change, it represents the best way to protect the North Fork Valley and ensure our community can continue to thrive in the future.



BLM's preferred alternative would open 94.5% of total oil and gas mineral acreage to leasing, which is .1% less than its current 30-year old RMP. BLM divides oil and gas leasing by potential for development. In its preferred alternative, BLM allocates 53% of the federal mineral estate to higher development potential<sup>1</sup> and the remaining 47% to lower development potential.<sup>2</sup> BLM has based its oil and gas drilling assumptions on a 2004 report, which assumes that 1271 wells will be drilled in the planning area. The RMP does not impose a cap on drilling. BLM's assumption on the number of foreseeable wells could be significantly understated given, new research, hydraulic fracturing and multi-stage drilling technologies, which were not considered at the time of the report.

<b>Oil and Gas Mineral Leasing (acres)</b>	<b>Alt A</b>	<b>Alt B</b>	<b>Alt B.I (NFAP)</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D (Preferred)</b>
<b>Total Oil and Gas leasing potential: 916,020 acres</b>					
<i>Open to Leasing: Higher Development Potential</i>	459,650	375,900	344,020	459,650	455,370
<i>Open to Leasing: Lower Development Potential</i>	407,270	353,420	287,570	412,150	410,600
<i>Closed to Leasing: Higher Development Potential</i>	23,140	106,890	138,770	23,140	27,420
<i>Closed to Leasing: Lower Development Potential</i>	21,080	79,810	145,660	21,080	22,630
<b>North Fork Area Total Oil and Gas leasing potential: 139,540 acres</b>					
<i>Open to Leasing: Higher Development Potential</i>			15,710		
<i>Open to Leasing: Lower Development Potential</i>			19,080		
<i>Closed to Leasing: Higher Development Potential</i>			36,010		
<i>Closed to Leasing: Lower Development Potential</i>			68,740		

Source: *Uncompahgre Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*, May 2016, pages 4-2, 4-255, 4-266, 4-272, 4-277, 4-280, 4-284; *Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario For Oil and Gas For The Uncompahgre Field Office, Colorado, Final Report*, February 16, 2012, page 61.

<sup>1</sup> Higher development potential refers to areas identified as having very high, high, or moderate conventional oil and gas development potential.

<sup>2</sup> Lower development potential refers to areas identified as having low, very low, or negligible conventional oil and gas development potential.