

PSICC Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis EIS #33788

Public Comments

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I live bordering the Pike National Forest and Raspberry Mountain. My comments represent observations and experiences I've had during the 26 years I have lived here.

My comments apply to National Forest lands east and west of Mount Herman, Raspberry Mountain, Chautauqua Mountain and Sundance Mountain, collectively referred to as HRCS hereafter. These comments may, however, be applied to other lands in the Alternatives.

It is my overall recommendation, based on my observation and comments, that no oil or gas drilling be allowed in the HRCS area. Oil or gas drilling would change the entire area of its current use and purpose, endanger the health and safety of the human and wildlife population, and exact an economic impact detrimental to the residential areas adjacent to HRCS.

Recreation

Many people use the HRCS area for recreational activities. Both east and west of HRCS, I observe the following activities daily in abundance. It is one of the few places along the larger Front Range that people, not just from the adjoining neighborhoods, have immediate access to engage in recreational activities. The land east and between Raspberry Mountain and Mount Herman is one of the most beautiful and elegant views as one approaches it. East of HRCS represents recreational opportunities that require only minutes of travel time. West of HRCS represents a step further away from civilization where one can get away for true solace without getting too far away.

Oil and gas drilling in this area would do great harm by destroying the beauty and appeal of the area to recreate. The National Forest land along HRCS is absent from any industrial activity and that's why it is used by so many for these recreational activities:

- Hiking
- Climbing
- Horseback riding
- Mountain bike riding
- Parasailing
- Camping
- Backpacking
- Snowshoeing
- Cross country skiing
- Hunting

Air Quality

Air in the HRCS area behaves in a variety of ways that can affect air quality to the detriment of the human and wildlife population if an industrial site with emissions and evaporation ponds such as oil and gas drilling is nearby. HRCS and Front Range cause this variety. In recent years smoke from wildfires has made it easy to see the behavior of air in the region. It has also made it easy to know, experience, and foresee how emissions and evaporation from an industrial oil and gas site in the area would affect us.

- Strong winds – It is common to have strong winds of 25 to 60 mph. Eighty mph winds and greater occur several times a year. In this case the particulates from emissions and evaporation can be lifted over the mountains from the west side to the east side where the population is concentrated.
- Southeast breeze – Upslope is very common and is the reason for producing most of the rain and snow in the area. HRCS in conjunction with the Palmer Divide to the north, forms a unique northwest trap for producing a concentrated upslope. The wind or slight breeze from the southeast causes air and any particulates to rise, meeting colder air above and falling as rain and snow. The rain and snow contain the particulates that helped caused their creation. Any emissions and evaporation from an industrial site such as oil and gas drilling will fall and settle in the human and wildlife populated areas.
- Temperature inversions – Temperature inversions along the east side of HRCS are common. They trap a layer of air close to the ground. Any emissions or evaporation on the east side of HRCS will be in the trapped air and subject human and wildlife populations to breathing it. Often in the early morning, one can see a layer of air trapped and nestled against HRCS and down the Front Range. Not to be buried obscurely in this bullet is the fact that the ozone levels caused by the oil and gas site would increase in the area.
- Thunderstorms – Typically thunderstorms form on the west side of HRCS, pulling air from the west side up the local low pressure in the center of the developing system. Any emissions and evaporation from an oil and gas site would be included in this air. These storms almost always move over HRCS and release on the Palmer Lake/Monument populated area.

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Some of the Wildlife regularly seen in the HRCS area are listed below. In particular, it needs to be confirmed that an active nest of Peregrine Falcons is on Monument Rock. The Peregrine Falcons also glide in the updraft of Raspberry Mountain.

One can reasonably expect some of these animals to be displaced and/or visit the neighborhoods on the east side more often. Of particular concern of visits to the neighborhoods would be Black Bear, Mountain Lion, and Bobcat.

- Peregrine Falcon
- Black Bear
- Fox
- Wild Turkey
- Mountain Lion
- Bobcat
- Deer
- Coyote
- Variety of rodents, such as black squirrel and ground squirrel
- A great variety of birds, including but not limited to flickers (woodpecker), magpie, stellar jay, raven, chickadee, humming bird, owl

Water

Water in the HRCS area is a scarce resource. The west side of HRCS is a watershed for Forest View Acres Water District. Surface water from the watershed is not always available, and therefore water is acquired from aquifers. It is significant to note that HRCS is a charging zone for the aquifers. Any contamination of the watershed or the aquifer charging zone would have a crippling effect on our ability to obtain water. There is no Plan B. Forest View Acres Water District is a very small water district. This is all we have as we don't have the infrastructure or the financial resources to pull water from other areas in the state.

Impacts on Urban and Suburban Areas Adjacent to the Forest

Development and population adjacent to HRCS has greatly increased since 1992. Empty lots are now built-out in the Red Rock Ranch community. Forest View Estates (three filings) did not even exist in 1992. As one drove into Red Rock Ranch Drive in 1992, there were only fields. Not so today. Palmer Lake, too, has filled out with new homes and apartments. The area is unique in that it is fully a bedroom community of neighborhoods that abruptly stop at the border of the National Forest.

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Introducing oil and gas drilling east or west of HRCS is essentially placing an industrial site next to that bedroom community, one that intentionally has no hard industry. It would change the intended characteristics, environment, and value of the area and the homes that people bought and live in.

- Noise and Pollution

Again, HRCS is influential. Their influence on air movement is described in the Air Quality section. Noise, too, is influenced by HRCS, which are met abruptly by the plains. It's different than living in an area with a homogeneous landscape. The noise carries in unique ways. It echoes off, around, and over the mountains. Sounds from a car traveling near Mount Herman Road, ½ mile from Granite Circle, with a ridge between, can be heard. Pistol shooting can be heard on the east side of Raspberry Mountain from several miles away on the west side behind Mount Herman and Raspberry Mountain. We can hear normal level conversations of hikers on the trail behind our house through trees 200 feet away.

Placing an industrial site with emissions and evaporation of chemicals and with much louder noise from its operation (Mount Herman Road is the only access to HRCS) would be unhealthy to residents who need to sleep and need to breathe clean air. Most homes in this area do not have air conditioning. To cool off a house, the windows must be opened at night. Otherwise, sleep (or lying awake all night) is subject to a sweating experience. This experience has occurred during periods of smoke from recent wildfires, so we know what it is like. Not opening your windows for several days builds heat in the house's structure that, in and of itself, takes many days to dissipate.

- Real Estate Values

An oil or gas site in the HRCS area would negatively affect real estate values for reasons per all the comments made in this document. In recent years, during interviews with builders and landscapers, several inquired, without prompting, where the drilling site (formerly Dyad's APD) was. I have not met one person who thinks oil or gas drilling in this area presents no harm to the value of my home or to the health and safety of the people in our neighborhood. These persons are not "experts." To the contrary, they make up the local market. All that matters in a market is what ordinary people think and will do or not do. Ordinary people are potential buyers. Additionally, realtors are obligated to reveal to their clients anything they are aware of that might negatively impact a property's value. This common sense of what people think and what realtors must say, can be applied to the entire community along the east side of HRCS.

- Fire

Drought conditions since 1998 have kindled three of the most significant wildfires in Colorado's history - Hayman, Waldo Canyon, and Black Forest. These were all in the region near HRCS and two were in the Pike National Forest. With the loss of 858 homes in two years, it goes without saying that fire danger is of upmost concern to residents of the HRCS area. It's like we are the only place left to burn in the northern part of the Pikes Peak region. Building any industrial site in the National Forest, especially in an area that is still left vulnerable to fire, near such a population of people, is, with all due respect, irresponsible. Activities associated with an oil or gas drilling site produce heat, flaring is used, and accidents are more prone in such a work environment. Combined with high wind conditions, the risk increases. The National Forest can implement its own form of fire mitigation by not allowing such a site to be built.

- Seismic

Inactive geological faults lie along HRCS. We'd like to keep them that way. Drilling activities, including but not limited to fracking, that induce seismic activity would put our homes and persons in danger. A special concern is the boulders and rocks that are above homes in the upper Red Rock subdivision. Another concern is the loosening of rocks and soil, regardless of how deep, that increases the release of radon into homes.

Current Leased Land Under the 1992 Plan

Current leases by Dyad Petroleum shown on the Proposal maps for Alternative B and C should be viewed as null and void by the new surface plan, and the land be subject to the new surface plan. Dyad Petroleum has been allowed over 16 years to perform the obligations of its leases whereby it was limited by the leases to perform in 10 years. This has been done without paying for the leases for over 6 years, and there does not appear to be any intent other than to hold these leases for perhaps some future price of natural gas or for speculation. National Forest land should not be held like an asset by the leaseholder.