



TOWN OF CARBONDALE

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November 27, 2012

Re: WNRF Oil and Gas Leasing Draft EIS

White River National Forest Oil and Gas dEIS
PO Box 1919
Sacramento, CA 95812
Via email: WRNFoilandgascomments@fscomments.org

Dear Land Manager,

Please accept these comments on the proposed revision of the White River National Forest (WRNF) Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS) submitted on behalf of the Town of Carbondale.

The Town appreciates the WRNF's recognition of the many impacts caused by oil and gas development and the opportunity to comment. One major concern is that this forest will no longer be able to support its many current uses and that the development will potentially damage Carbondale. Under intense development, oil and gas development will dominate our landscape. As stated in the dEIS, the WRNF is one of the most-visited National Forests in the nation largely due to the variety of recreational opportunities and sweeping vistas. The many visitors play a crucial role in Carbondale's economy. High-density oil and gas development is incompatible with:

- Quality recreational use, including hunting.
- Grazing use by local ranchers.
- Sustaining the natural values that attract recreational visitors.
- The regional economy.
- The values of Carbondale.
- The high regard all of Colorado and much of the American public has for these lands.

- Stream and riparian health.
- Wildlife habitat.
- The importance of managing wisely today to keep our options open for when the impacts of climate change begin stressing the resources on this forest and the surrounding lands.

Given the extent of leasing and the threat of development of already existing leases the Town believes no more leases should be issued. The no new leasing alternative, Alternative B, is sensible from economic, social, and environmental perspectives. Currently, there are 143 leases on the WRNF comprising approximately 130,000 acres. That is a huge amount of acreage dedicated to one use. Furthermore of the 143 leases, only 53, occupying approximately 38,522 acres, are held by production. Lessees still have 90 leases and more than 90,000 leased acres to develop. Currently there are many drilling opportunities on the WRNF that will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. Development often means traffic, industrialization, air pollution, water pollution, and locked gates on public lands. Oil and gas development has regularly been characterized by booms and busts. During the boom, industry lures an influx of non-local workers to the area. Housing prices rise as do crime rates and demands on local infrastructure. When the prices fall or resources run out, industry jobs disappear, leaving deflated and depressed communities behind. In contrast, the WRNF is currently helping support the sustainable and consistent recreation and tourism based economies.

Oil and gas development will increase traffic and damage roads in the analysis area and in Carbondale on Highway 133 and will be in conflict with our tourism and recreation based economy. The dEIS fails to provide an accurate depiction of the impacts to transportation infrastructure and consequently vastly underestimates the cost to local communities of oil and gas development.

To estimate the impact to traffic, the dEIS looked at four road segments. The four segments are:

- State highway 13 between Meeker and State highway 325 will have 3,050 more average daily trips.
- Highway 82 between I-70 and Carbondale will have 25,900 additional average daily trips.
- I-70 between De Beque and Wolcott with an additional 17,025 average daily trips.
- Highway 33 between I-70 and Collbran gaining 2,400 average daily trips.

While these numbers indicated that traffic is not expected to exceed 5% of current levels, the local impacts may be greater. For instance almost all of the traffic on the section of Highway 82 will also travel Highway 133 or the Fourmile road- both of which are much smaller roads where an additional 25,900 trips per day represent a much larger impact on the Town of Carbondale or our neighboring City of Glenwood Springs.

We encourage the Forest Service to select Alternative B. No further land should be made available for leasing on the WRNF.

Sincerely,



Stacey Bernot

Mayor

CC: Carbondale Board of Trustees