

- Updates on the Federal, State, and educational components of the NCGMP
- Strategic Goals

**DATES:** March 24–25, 2005 commencing at 9 a.m. on March 24 and adjourning by 5 p.m. on March 25.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Laurel Bybell, U.S. Geological Survey, 908 National Center, Reston, Virginia 20192 (703) 648–5281.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Meetings of the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program Advisory Committee are open to the Public.

**P. Patrick Leahy,**

*Associate Director for Geology, U.S. Geological Survey.*

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**BILLING CODE 4310–17–M**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[WY–090–1220–MA]

**Notice of Seasonal Closure of Public Lands to Motorized Vehicle Use**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of seasonal closure of certain public lands located in Lincoln County, Wyoming, to all types of motor vehicle use.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) subpart 8364, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces its intentions to close certain BLM-administered public lands to all types of motor vehicle use during the period of January 1 through April 30, annually. This seasonal closure is needed to protect public lands and resources and to minimize stress to wintering elk, moose, pronghorn antelope and mule deer.

This seasonal closure affects public lands located within the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA), Slate Creek, Rock Creek, and Bridger Creek winter ranges. Except for travel on highways or county roads, motorized vehicle travel within these areas will be allowed only by written authorization from the Kemmerer Field Manager. Personnel of the BLM, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture-APHIS & Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and law enforcement personnel are exempt from this closure only when performing official duties. Operators of existing oil and gas facilities may perform maintenance and pumping, as approved, and livestock operators may perform permitted activities.

**DATES:** This seasonal closure will be effective annually from January 1 through April 30.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Wally Mierzejewski, Outdoor Recreation Planner, or Dale Wondercheck, Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management, 312 Highway 189 North, Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101. Mr. Mierzejewski or Mr. Wondercheck may also be contacted by telephone at 307–828–4500.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (RMP) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) states that big game winter ranges may be closed to minimize stress to wintering animals. Prior to effecting seasonal closures the BLM must consult annually with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. If conditions warrant, the BLM Kemmerer Field Manager may implement a seasonal closure on certain BLM-administered lands and travel ways including existing roads and two-track trails, to all types of motorized vehicle travel (i.e., snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, any vehicle including trucks, sport utility vehicles and cars, motorcycles etc.). Crucial big game winter range as identified in the Kemmerer RMP may be closed annually from January 1 through April 30. Use of these areas by non-motorized means is still allowed.

The BLM Kemmerer Field Office is responsible for management of crucial winter range habitat located on public lands within Lincoln County. The Raymond Mountain WSA, Slate Creek, Rock Creek, and Bridger Creek areas are crucial wintering ranges for elk, moose, antelope, and mule deer. Reasons for the closure include the effects of persistent drought and/or severe winter conditions which threaten the health of these wintering wildlife species. Low forage production associated with persistent drought conditions causes animals to go into winter in poor condition. Losses of wintering habitat from development activity can reduce the area available to the wintering animals. These impacts to wintering wildlife are compounded by significant human activity, such as day and night wildlife observation, still and video photography, snowmobiling, and antler gathering. Because of the increased stress the presence of motorized vehicles inflicts on wintering big game during difficult winter periods, the number of animals that could die and the rate of aborting of fetuses on the winter range can increase. This decreases production of young during the following summer. Therefore, closing crucial winter range to

motorized vehicles reduces impacts to wintering big game.

The following BLM-administered lands are included in this closure:

- The Raymond Mountain WSA, located approximately 15 miles north of Cokeville and contains 32,956 acres.
- The Slate Creek area including all BLM-administered lands south of Fontenelle Creek, west and north of Route 189, and east of the crest of Slate Creek Ridge, and contains 111,100 acres.
- The Rock Creek area including all BLM-administered lands south of County Road 204 (Pine Creek Road), west of the crest of Dempsey Ridge, west of Fossil Butte National Monument, north and east of Highway 30, and contains 105,750 acres.
- The Bridger Creek area including all BLM-administered lands south of Highway 30, west of Fossil Ridge, west of Bear River Divide, north of the Uinta—Lincoln County line, east of the Utah—Wyoming border, and southeast of Highway 89, and contains 98,400 acres.

Maps of these areas will be posted with this notice at key locations that provide access into the closure areas, as well as at the Kemmerer Field Office, 312 Highway 189 North, Kemmerer, Wyoming 83101–9710.

Seasonal closure orders may be implemented as provided in 43 CFR, subparts 8341.2 and 8364.1. Violations of this closure are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1000, and/or imprisonment not to exceed 12 months.

Dated: December 21, 2004.

**Robert A. Bennett,**  
*State Director.*

[FR Doc. 05–2638 Filed 2–10–05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310–22–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[WY–100–04–1310–DB]

**Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Jonah Infill Drilling Project, Sublette County, WY**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Jonah Infill Drilling Project and notice of public involvement meeting for the purposes of providing comment on the DEIS.

**SUMMARY:** Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and associated regulations, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in cooperation with the State of Wyoming, announces the availability of a DEIS that evaluates, analyzes, and discloses to the public direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of a proposal to continue to develop a natural gas field by increasing the density of well locations by drilling additional wells. This practice is known as "infill" drilling.

The Jonah Infill Drilling Project (JIDP) area is located approximately 32 miles southeast of Pinedale and 28 miles northwest of Farson, Sublette County, Wyoming. The JIDP area is approximately 30,200 acres in Townships 29 and 30 North, Range 114 West, 6th Principal Meridian. The DEIS analyzes a proposal made by EnCana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc., (EnCana) and BP America Production Company (BP), referred to collectively as "the Companies," to increase development of Federal natural gas resources in an area known as the Jonah Field. The Companies' proposal includes drilling up to 3,100 natural gas wells from existing and new well pads, at a minimum well pad density of 64 well pads per aliquot section (1 wellpad/10 acres), and at a rate of 250 wells per year. The infill drilling is expected to be concentrated in a 21,000 acre portion of the Jonah Field. The proposed life of project (LOP) is 70 to 80 years with the majority of drilling and development activities to occur within the first 8 to 12 years following approval. The proposal also includes constructing or upgrading associated ancillary transportation and transmission facilities within the 30,200 acres project area. The total project area is comprised of: Approximately 28,280 acres of Federal surface and mineral estate administered by the BLM; 1,280 acres of State of Wyoming surface and minerals; and 640 acres of private surface ownership with Federal mineral (split estate).

Under the provisions of NEPA, the State of Wyoming assisted in the preparation of the DEIS as a cooperating agency.

**DATES:** The DEIS will be available for review for 60 calendar days following the date that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes its Notice of Availability (NOA) in the **Federal Register**. The BLM can best use your comments and resource information within the 60 day review period provided above.

The BLM will announce public meetings and other opportunities to submit comments on this project at least 15 days prior to the event.

Announcements will be made through local news media and the Pinedale Field Office's Web site; <http://www.wy.blm.gov/pfo/info.htm>. These meetings will provide the public with the opportunity to submit oral or written comments on the DEIS to the BLM.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the DEIS has been sent to affected Federal, State and local government agencies and to interested parties.

An electronic copy of the DEIS may be viewed or downloaded from the BLM Web site at <http://www.wy.blm.gov/pfo>. Copies of the DEIS are available for public inspection at the following BLM office locations:

- Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

- Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office, 432 East Mill Street, Pinedale, Wyoming.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Contact Ms. Carol Kruse, Project Manager, BLM Pinedale Field Office, 432 East Mill Street, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941. Ms. Kruse may also be reached at (307) 367-5352.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In response to a proposal submitted by the Companies, the BLM published in the March 13, 2003, **Federal Register** a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and notice of the potential for amendment of the Pinedale Resource Management Plan (RMP).

As described in the NOI, the Companies' original proposal to drill 450 wells in addition to 47 existing wells at the same number of well locations was approved by the BLM in the Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record for the Modified Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project, March 2000 (Modified Jonah Field II EA). In September 2002, the Companies submitted a proposal to drill and develop an additional 1,250 wells from 850 well pad locations within the same area analyzed in the Modified Jonah Field II EA. This proposal was based on a well pad spacing of one well pad per 20 to 10 acres. (32 to 64 wells per aliquot section). In November 2003, the Companies submitted a revision to their proposal; this revised proposal is described and analyzed as the "Proposed Action" alternative. The Companies revised their proposal from

drilling and development of an additional 1,250 wells to drilling and development of an additional 3,100 wells. Well location spacing would be dictated by the geologic conditions, such as geologic formations and the location of gas resources. Well pad spacing would vary from one well pad per 5 acres to one well pad per 20 acres.

The DEIS describes in detail and analyzes the impacts of eight alternatives, in addition to the No Action Alternative and the Companies' Proposed Action. The following is a summary of the alternatives:

1. *No Action Alternative*—No additional development would be authorized beyond what is currently authorized as recorded in the March 2000 decision made for Modified Jonah II Project.

2. *Proposed Action*—Up to 3,100 new wells would be drilled and developed. Well pad location spacing would depend on geologic conditions. Drilling rate would be up to 250 wells per year. Operator-committed mitigation measures would be applied.

3. *Alternative A*—This alternative proposes to maximize economic recovery of gas resources. Up to 3,100 new wells would be drilled and developed. Well pad location would depend on geologic conditions. Drilling and well development rates would vary between 75 and 250 wells per year. No "operator-committed" mitigation measures would apply, but some BLM-standard mitigation measures would be applied.

4. *Alternative B*—This alternative proposes activities that would minimize surface disturbance within the project area. No new well pads would be constructed and existing well pads would be expanded to accommodate additional directionally drilled wells as appropriate. Drilling and well development rates would vary between 75 and 250 wells per year. The Companies would agree to some "operator committed" mitigation and some mitigation measures would be required in addition to standard mitigation measures.

5. *Alternative C*—This alternative proposes activities that would allow a moderate level of surface disturbance. Up to 1,250 new wells would be drilled and developed. Drilling and development rates would vary between 75 and 250 wells per year. The Companies would agree to some "operator committed" mitigation and some mitigation measures would be required in addition to standard mitigation measures.

6. *Alternative D*—This alternative proposes activities that would allow an

intermediate level of surface disturbance. Up to 2,200 new well pads would be drilled and developed. Drilling and development rates would vary between 75 and 250 wells per year. The Companies would agree to some "operator committed" mitigation and some mitigation measures would be required in addition to standard mitigation measures.

7. *Alternative E*—This alternative proposes to restrict well pad spacing to 16 well pads per aliquot section or 1 well pad per 40 acres. Up to 3,100 new wells and up to 266 new well pads would be drilled and developed. Drilling and well development rates would vary between 75 and 250 wells per year. The Companies would agree to some "operator committed" mitigation and some mitigation measures would be required in addition to standard mitigation measures.

8. *Alternative F*—This alternative proposes to restrict well pad spacing to 32 well pads per aliquot section, or 1 well pad per 20 acres. Up to 3,100 new wells and up to 1,208 well pads would be drilled and developed. Drilling and well development rates would vary between 75 and 250 wells per year. The Companies would agree to some "operator committed" mitigation and some mitigation measures would be required in addition to standard mitigation measures.

9. *Alternative G*—This alternative proposes to restrict well pad spacing to 64 well pads per aliquot section, or 1 well pad per 10 acres. The Companies would agree to some "operator committed" mitigation and some mitigation measures would be required in addition to standard mitigation measures.

10. *Agency Preferred Alternative*—This alternative would allow up to 3,100 new wells from a variable number of well pads to be drilled and developed. Three drilling density zones in the project area would govern surface well pad location. The drilling rate is 250 well per year. In addition to "operator committed" mitigation on-site, the Companies would agree to conduct off-site mitigation and an accelerated reclamation schedule.

*Features common to all action alternatives:* Exploration of unexplored formations; inclusion of the north half of Section 23, T. 28 N., R. 109 W. as a similar action for analysis purposes; development of ancillary facilities, including but not limited to a new warehouse, expansion of existing compressor stations, and new/expanded water disposal facilities; some degree of upgrade of the Burma Road; and an average Life of Field (LOF) of 70 to 80

years beginning with project authorization through reclamation.

*Disposition of Potential for Amendment of the Pinedale RMP:* Based on a review of information and comments received in response to the NOI and during the preparation of the DEIS, the Pinedale Field Manager has determined that this proposal is in conformance with the Pinedale RMP (1988). Postponing this DEIS until the Pinedale RMP revisions, that are currently underway, are completed, would not be in the public interest nor a timely agency response to the Companies' proposal made in 2001. Therefore, no amendment to the Pinedale RMP will be made as a result of analyses conducted for this DEIS.

#### How To Submit Comments

The BLM welcomes your comments on the JIDP DEIS. The BLM asks that those submitting comments make them as specific as possible with reference to chapters, page numbers, and paragraphs in the DEIS document. Comments that contain only opinions or preferences will not receive a formal response; however, they will be considered, and included, as part of the BLM decision-making process. The most useful comments will contain new technical or scientific information, identify data gaps in the impact analysis, or provide technical or scientific rationale for opinions or preferences.

Written comments may be mailed directly or delivered to the BLM at: Jonah Infill Drilling Project DEIS, Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office, 432 East Mill Street, P.O. Box 768, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941.

You may send comments electronically to [WYMail\\_Jonah\\_Infill@blm.gov](mailto:WYMail_Jonah_Infill@blm.gov). Please put "Attention: Carol Kruse" in the subject line. Comments submitted by facsimile will not be accepted or considered.

To receive full consideration by the BLM all DEIS comment submittals must include the commenter's name and street address.

Comments, including the names and street addresses of each respondent, will be available for public review at the BLM office listed above during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except for Federal holidays. Your comments may be published as part of the EIS process. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address, or both, from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the

beginning of your written comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. We will not consider anonymous comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

**Robert A. Bennett,**

*State Director.*

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**BILLING CODE 4310-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[WY-100-05-1310-DB]

#### Notice of Meeting of the Pinedale Anticline Working Group's Transportation Task Group

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (1972), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Pinedale Anticline Working Group (PAWG) Transportation Task Group (subcommittee) will meet in Pinedale, Wyoming, for a business meeting. Task Group meetings are open to the public.

**DATES:** A PAWG Transportation Task Group meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2005, from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting of the PAWG Transportation Task Group will be held in the Board Room of the Pinedale Library at 155 S. Tyler Ave., Pinedale, WY.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bill Wadsworth, BLM/Transportation TG Liaison, Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office, 432 E. Mills St., PO Box 738, Pinedale, WY, 82941; 307-367-5341.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Pinedale Anticline Working Group (PAWG) was authorized and established with release of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project on July 27, 2000. The PAWG advises the BLM on the development and implementation of monitoring plans and adaptive management decisions as development of the Pinedale Anticline Natural Gas Field (PAPA) proceeds for the life of the field.

After the ROD was issued, Interior determined that a Federal Advisory Committees Act (FACA) charter was required for this group. The charter was