



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Grand Mesa,  
Uncompahgre and  
Gunnison  
National Forests

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File Code: 1650-1/1950-1/2820-2

Date: April 7, 2008

**Notice of Decision**  
**USDA-Forest Service, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National  
Forests**

**Hightower Master Development Plan  
Federal Oil and Gas Lease COC-68792  
Mesa County, CO**

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) has issued a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN/FONSI) for the *Hightower Master Development Plan Environmental Assessment* (Hightower MDP EA).

The Decision approves drilling locations, compressor/tank facility, road access and gathering line locations as described in Alternative 3 of the Hightower MDP EA. It also identifies the terms and conditions under which the operator may occupy, explore, and develop its federal oil and gas lease according to the Hightower MDP, while protecting natural resources and providing for public access and safety which came from Design Criteria of the project. These Design Criteria will be included in site-specific surface use plans of operations for gas wells should they be proposed; in subsequent special use permit(s) if needed for pipelines; or included in sundry notice approvals for other potential well site activities. Additionally, the Decision specifies where lease stipulation exceptions have been granted. The environmental effects the project are disclosed in the Hightower MDP EA.

This decision is subject to administrative review pursuant to Federal Regulations at 36 CFR 215.11. Appeals (including attachments) must be in writing and filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer (§ 215.8) within 45 days following the date of publication of this legal notice. The publication date of this legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal (§ 215.15 (a)). Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.13 (b), only those individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period may file an appeal.

The addresses for filing appeals are:

USDA, Forest Service, Region 2  
Attn: Appeal Deciding Officer  
740 Simms Street  
Golden, CO 80410

Fax: 303-275-5134 to the attention of Appeals;

Email: [appeals-rocky-mountain-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-rocky-mountain-regional-office@fs.fed.us);

It is an appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient activity-specific evidence and rationale,



focusing on the decision, to show why the Responsible Official's decision should be reversed. At a minimum, an appeal must include the following (§215.14): (1) Appellant's name and address (§ 215.2), with a telephone number, if available; (2) Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal); (3) When multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant (§ 215.2) and verification of the identity of the lead appellant upon request; (4) The name of the project or activity for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the date of the decision; (5) The regulation under which the appeal is being filed, when there is an option to appeal under either this part or part 251, subpart C (§ 215.11(d)); (6) Any specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks and rationale for those changes; (7) Any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement; (8) Why the appellant believes the Responsible Official's decision failed to consider the substantive comments; and (9) How the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy. Notices of Appeal that do not meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.14 will be dismissed.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.9(a), if no appeal is filed, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, the fifth day from the close of the appeal period.

Copies of this FEIS and decision may be downloaded from the internet at:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/policy/>

For further information or to obtain copies of the FEIS/ROD, please contact Niccole Mortenson, Engineering and Minerals NEPA Project Specialist, at 970-874-6616 or [nmortenson@fs.fed.us](mailto:nmortenson@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

*/s/ Charles S. Richmond*  
CHARLES S. RICHMOND  
Forest Supervisor