

NEWS RELEASE
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service makes a Finding of No Significant Impact for a
Proposal to Exchange Parcels and Water Rights in Rio Blanco County, Colorado**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has determined that a proposed land exchange between the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Shell Frontier Oil and Gas, Inc. will not have a significant impact on the human environment and will not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The Service previously released a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) entitled "Piceance Property Exchange involving Lands and Water Rights owned by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Shell Frontier Oil and Gas, Inc." to allow public comment on the proposal. The DEA detailed the exchange and analyzed potential impacts and effects on affected resources. It was released for a 30-day public commenting period which expired on April 1, 2007. No comments were received by the Service.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) will exchange lands at the Piceance State Wildlife Area with Shell Frontier Oil and Gas, Inc. for two parcels of land (Shell Parcels) which adjoin the Oak Ridge State Wildlife Area (SWA) in Rio Blanco County. Acquisition of the Shell Parcels will allow the CDOW to address in-holding issues and to more effectively manage for big game habitat and public access to hunting at Oak Ridge SWA. The exchange will also allow the CDOW to divest itself of properties and water rights at the Piceance SWA that no longer provide the habitat and recreation benefits that they provided when the properties were acquired.

Both the Piceance SWA and Oak Ridge SWA were acquired by the Colorado Division of Wildlife with federal funding through the Pittman-Robertson Federal Assistance in Wildlife Restoration Act (PR), which is administered by the Service. Federal regulations require the State to receive the approval of the Service's Regional Director prior to the disposal or exchange of lands acquired through PR funding. Service approval of the land exchange constitutes a federal action which required preparation of the environmental assessment pursuant to the NEPA.

A copy of the "Finding of No Significant Impact" and the final Environmental Assessment are available online at <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/federalassistance>. Those without internet access may request copies by calling the Services' Division of Federal Assistance at 303-236-5420 or writing to: Chief, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486, Denver, CO 80225.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates

69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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