

BLM Eastern Colorado Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

FACT SHEET

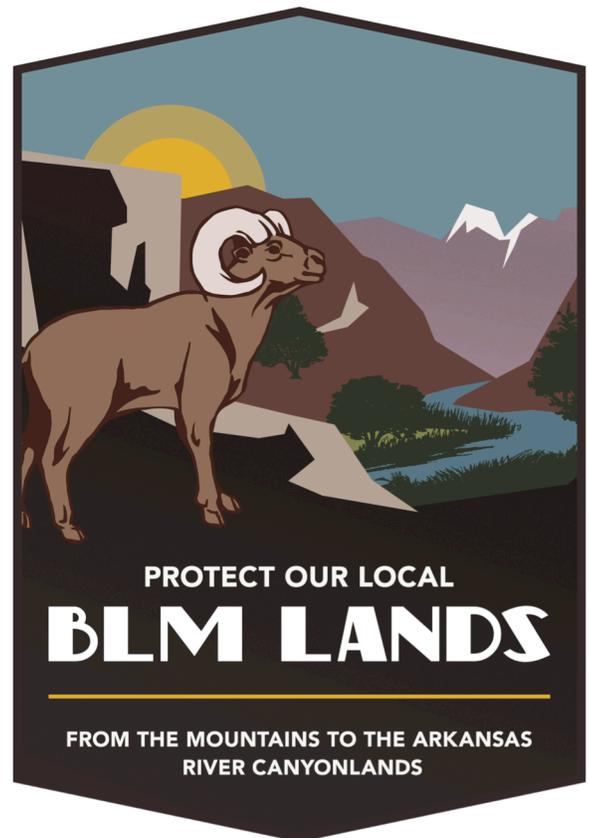
90-Day Comment Period Ends September 20, 2019

Overview

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO) manages 658,200 BLM-administered surface acres and 3,311,900 BLM-administered mineral estate acres in central and eastern Colorado. Management planning is currently underway under the Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan (ECRMP) Revision. A Resource Management Plan (RMP), similar to a county master plan, is a land use plan that describes broad multiple-use guidance for managing lands and federal mineral estate administered by the BLM for the foreseeable future.

Timeline

- BLM RGFO began the Eastern Colorado Resource Management Plan (ECRMP) Revision in 2015 with the Scoping Period.
 - Accompanied by a 60-day public comment period
 - Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs) received the 2nd most comments (198) of 31 planning categories, only behind concerns for fracking and fluid minerals.
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) received 67 comments, 7th most of 31 planning categories, including 17 ACECs proposed by the public.
- BLM RGFO released Preliminary Alternatives in 2017
 - Accompanied by a 60-day public comment period.
 - Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs) received the 2nd most substantive comments (80) of 188 planning issue categories, only behind recreation.
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) received 26 substantive comments, 7th most of 188 planning issue categories.
- **BLM RGFO released the Draft ECRMP on June 21, 2019**
 - Accompanied by a **90-day public comment period, currently open until Sept 20, 2019.**



ECRMP Draft Overview and Comparisons

- BLM Identified Alternative D as their "Preferred Alternative."
 - **However this is not preferred by Coloradans as BLM's Alternative D systematically ignores local input, and zeros-out conservation while prioritizing development!**
- **BLM's Preferred Alternative proposes to manage only 1,300 acres as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)**
 - Including 0 acres at priority areas: Echo Canyon, Badger Creek (North & South), North of Coaldale, Bear Mountain, Eightmile Mountain, Red Canyon, Cooper Mountain, and Cucharas Canyon.
 - BLM had identified over 190,000 acres in the planning area as having LWCs.
 - This is despite the substantial substantive comments supporting LWCs in the previous two public comment periods noted above.

- The “Balanced” Alternative D in the 2017 Preliminary Alternatives proposed to manage 24,100 acres as LWC.
 - Including 9,300 acres at Badger Creek North and 7,500 acres at North of Coaldale
- BLM RGFO’s initial draft in 2018 that was shared with the RAC, and before it was corrupted by this administration, proposed to manage 63,800 acres as LWC in Alternative D
 - Including additions of 29,600 acres at Echo Canyon and 8,200 acres at Bear Mountain.
- **BLM’s Preferred Alternative proposes to manage only 46,000 acres as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)**
 - Including eliminating the 12,081 acre Beaver Creek ACEC, eliminating the Ruby Mountain/Railroad Gulch ACEC, not proposing the 41,600 acres South Pikes Peak ACEC, and reducing the Grape Creek, Arkansas Canyonlands, and Phantom Canyon ACECs!
 - BLM RGFO currently manages 79,108 acres as ACEC, which would be the same in BLM’s “No Action” Alternative A.
 - BLM RGFO recognized over 27,000 additional acres to have ACEC values in their planning area.
 - The “Balanced” Alternative D in the 2017 Preliminary Alternatives proposed to manage 106,800 acres as ACEC.
 - This is despite the substantial substantive comments supporting ACECs in the previous two public comment periods noted above.
 - BLM RGFO’s initial draft in 2018 that was shared with the RAC, and before it was corrupted by this administration, proposed to manage 101,400 acres as ACEC in Alternative D!
- **BLM’s Preferred Alternative proposes to manage 0 acres as Backcountry Conservation Areas (BCAs)**
 - The “Balanced” Alternative D in the 2017 Preliminary Alternatives proposed to manage 122,500 acres as BCA.
 - BLM RGFO’s initial draft in 2018 that was shared with the RAC, and before it was corrupted by this administration, proposed to manage 113,200 acres as BCA in Alternative D!
- **BLM RGFO’s Preferred Alternative would leave 98% of the planning area open to Oil & Gas Development**
 - This is despite 85% of BLM surface ownership in the planning area as having no or low potential for development.
 - None of the public lands with important values listed above even have high potential for Oil & Gas Development, according to BLM’s data.
 - Closing low potential lands to leasing has essentially no negative impact on energy production, while it has tremendous positive impacts on other resources.
 - Yet BLM is senselessly leaving these areas open to development – maximizing risk while minimizing gain for our shared public resources.
 - While the vast majority of new wells will be private rather than federal, BLM is failing to do its part to ensure that any federal development in this highly developed region is not exacerbating impacts to communities, public health, climate change or our environment.

CALL TO ACTION: SUBMIT A PUBLIC COMMENT TO THE BLM ROYAL GORGE FIELD OFFICE!

- Comment period is open until September 20, 2019.
- Comments are to be submitted by mail to 3028 E. Main St., Cañon City, CO or via BLM's e-planning.blm.gov website at <https://go.usa.gov/xQcZT>.
 - Follow BLM’s instructions on this page for how to comment online at their e-planning website.
- **Comment Writing Tips:** Write in your own words (do not copy/paste), show relevance (how are you or your community affected?), use examples (site facts or experience), and be specific! (recommend how specific areas (ex. Echo Canyon, Badger Creek, etc.) should be managed in BLM’s Preferred Alternative (as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, for its wildlife, closed to Oil & Gas & other developments, etc.)

This fact sheet was prepared by Wild Connections. See wildconnections.org for more info.
 Wild Connections' mission is to identify, protect, and restore wildlands, native species, and biological diversity in the Arkansas and South Platte watersheds.