

SAVE ROAN PLATEAU: A Long History of Public Support

The current plan for the Roan Plateau—proposed by the Bureau of Land Management—does exactly what communities have urged against: it opens these public lands for oil and gas drilling.

- In November 2000 the Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register, formally starting the Roan Plateau planning process. The Notice pledged to craft a “community supported plan.”¹
- In October 2002, BLM released a set of six preliminary management alternatives for consideration, with preliminary alternative F being the most environmentally protective.

Headlines from around the Western Slope

Conservation ranks as high priority for lofty plateau

Glenwood Springs Post-Independent, August 2, 2002

Public says don't drill on Roan

Glenwood Springs Post-Independent, January 14, 2005

Opponents pack house to decry drilling Roan Plateau's top

Aspen Daily News, February 3, 2005

“What we keep hearing, more or less, is to keep the plateau as it is” *Glenwood BLM official, 2002*

- The City of Rifle sent a letter to BLM calling preliminary alternative F the “most preferable,” and urging that the final plan “...state clearly that unique environmental features exist on the Plateau... [which] warrant maximum protection.”
- Garfield County's other towns all passed resolutions supporting Alt. F.
- Almost 12,000 comments were submitted—over 11,000 of those in support of Alt. F.²
- Newspapers across the state editorialized in support of Alternative F.
- In April 2003, with little explanation, BLM dropped Alt. F from further consideration. Given its broad support, citizens and governments were dismayed.³
- In early 2005 during the comment period, local governments across the region passed their second set of resolutions opposed to drilling on the Plateau and in support the Community Alternative.⁴
- A February 2, 2005 hearing before the Garfield County commission attracted hundreds of residents who turned out to oppose drilling and to support strong protections for Roan Plateau.⁵

Area Governments Lead Effort to Save Roan

Towns: It's still no to Roan drilling

Grand Junction Sentinel, January 12, 2005

Garfield towns oppose plateau drilling

Denver Post, January 28, 2005

Silt reaffirms no-drilling stance for Roan Plateau

Grand Junction Sentinel Tuesday, August 29, 2006

Mayors ask BLM to reconsider plan

Summit Daily News, November 11, 2006

Mayors of four towns plead with Salazar to stop potential leasing

Grand Junction Sentinel, May 12, 2007

¹ *Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS...for the Roan Plateau Area, U.S. Federal Register*, November 2000

² “Enviros complain about BLM's procedure on Roan Comments,” *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, February 14, 2003

³ City of Rifle April 29, 2003 letter to BLM; *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* editorial May 8, 2003 “BLM gets an F on Roan planning;” “Forum addresses gas development, Roan Plateau,” *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, June 20, 2003

⁴ “Towns: Its still no to Roan drilling,” *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, January 12, 2005; “Public says don't drill on Roan,” *Glenwood Springs Post-Independent*, January 14, 2005; “Garfield towns oppose plateau drilling,” *Denver Post*, January 28, 2005. The Community Alternative is a compromise plan proposed by citizens that would allow for the production of large volumes of gas, while keeping drilling off the area's sensitive lands, including the top and cliffs.

⁵ “Gas drilling opponents want Roan spared,” *Aspen Times*, February 3, 2005; “Opponents pack house to decry drilling Roan Plateau's top,” *Aspen Daily News*, February 3, 2005; “Most speakers at hearing oppose Roan Plateau drilling,” *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, February 3, 2005

- By the time the comment period closed on the draft plan in April 2005, almost 75,000 comments had been received with more than 98% of those in support the Community Alternative or opposed drilling on Roan Plateau.
- Over 65 organizations, businesses, and at least 8 local or county governments endorsed or submitted comments supporting the Community Alternative.⁶
- After the public comment period, cooperating agencies—which include the Cities of Rifle and Glenwood Springs—met with BLM to consider the draft plan.
- In its September 2005 comments as a cooperating agency, the City of Rifle stated that it was “... in opposition to any oil/gas or other mineral development on top of the Roan Plateau.”
- The City of Glenwood Springs wrote, “Very simply, the City Council opposes any drilling, now or in the future, on top of the Roan Plateau.”⁷
- In the summer of 2006, local governments passed their third set of resolutions opposing drilling on Roan Plateau and supporting the City of Rifle’s cooperating agency comments on the draft plan.⁸
- An October 19, 2006 letter from the City of Glenwood Springs to BLM—endorsed in November by the mayors of four other municipalities and two county commissions—asked BLM for additional time to consider the new plan, emphasizing the need for BLM to provide a community-supported plan.⁹
- By the time the 30-day protest period on the final EIS closed, BLM had received 40 protests, including protests from over 13 hunting, fishing, and conservation groups.¹⁰
- Although BLM issued its Record of Decision to lease all the lands in the planning area for oil and gas, local communities, area government, and a growing number of Colorado’s elected leaders, including Governor Bill Ritter, U.S. senator Ken Salazar, U.S. representatives John Salazar and Mark Udall, and state senator Kathleen Curry have all urged that the BLM delay oil and gas leasing Roan Plateau.

Local Communities Oppose Drilling Plateau

Plan for Roan leases met with lukewarm reception

Grand Junction Sentinel, July 30, 2005

BLM sinks local input to drill Roan Plateau

High Country News, September 1, 2003

Gas-drilling talk splits pro-Bush factions in West

Grand Junction Sentinel, November 6, 2003

Energy companies face off with residents, environmentalists in resource-rich Garfield County

Rocky Mountain News, May 18 2002

Editorial boards agree: Protect the Roan

Roan drilling plan is moving too quickly

The Denver Post, June 11, 2007

Roan leasing delay entirely appropriate

Grand Junction Sentinel, May 20, 2007

There’s reason enough to protect Roan Plateau

Grand Junction Sentinel, July 17, 2005

More reasons to question drilling on Roan Plateau,

Grand Junction Sentinel, November 8, 2004

Protect Roan Plateau from oceans of drilling

Grand Junction Sentinel, June 29, 2003

Preserve Roan’s pristine top

The Denver Post, February 4, 2003

Protect Roan Plateau

Glenwood Springs Post Independent, September 12, 2002

⁶ Volume II: Roan Plateau Planning Area Final Resource Management Plan Amendment & EIS, BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office, August 2006

⁷ Letter to BLM from the City of Rifle, September 7, 2005; Letter to BLM from the City of Glenwood Springs, February 1, 2005

⁸ “Silt reaffirms no-drilling stance for Roan Plateau,” *Grand Junction Sentinel*, August 29, 2006; The Town of Silt resolution (38-06, passed August 28, 2006) can be viewed at www.saveroanplateau.org/documents/Reso%2038-061.pdf

⁹ Letter to Sally Wisely, Colorado BLM from Bruce Christensen, mayor on behalf of the City of Glenwood Springs, October 19, 2006

¹⁰ *Save Roan Plateau News Release: Wildlife, recreation, and conservation groups file protests on Roan Plateau plan*, October 16, 2006 at www.saveroanplateau.org/documents/PRroanprotestsfiled.pdf