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This fact sheet examines two questions looking at the projections of "recoverable" natural gas—the amount likely to be produced during the next 20 years—in the Roan Plateau Planning Area, and how much of this gas would come from drilling on top of the Plateau.

The numbers used come from data provided under each alternative described in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The draft is currently out for public comment until March 4, 2005.

The first question below provides a comparative analysis of how much of the Planning Area's "recovered" federal mineral reserve is projected to come from drilling at the base versus drilling at the top under each of the draft's alternatives.

The second analysis uses these numbers to further demonstrate that the plan does not document a need to drill on top of Roan Plateau.

Most of the resource to be developed over the twenty-year life of the plan would come from the base under any of the draft alternatives whether the BLM allows any—or none—of the drilling to occur on top of Roan Plateau.

In both cases the agency's own numbers reinforce the community-supported solution: Drilling on top of Roan Plateau is neither desirable nor necessary.

Q: How important is drilling on the top of Roan Plateau to developing the publicly-owned (federal) gas that would be extracted?

A: Relatively unimportant, providing between 1% and 15% of the federal gas projected to be developed under any of the plan's draft alternatives.¹

TABLE 1—ROAN PLATEAU GAS PRODUCTION, COMPARING THE ALTERNATIVES

Comparing gas development under each alternative (represented by the number of wells at the base and on the top) and comparing the amount of gas projected for extraction under each alternative show that drilling on top of the Plateau will remain relatively unimportant during the life of the plan. (Gas production is represented in billions of cubic feet, or "bcf").

| Alternative from draft plan | Alt I "No Action" | Alt II | Alt III "Preferred" | Alt IV | Alt V | Formula or Source |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Total "recovered" reserve | 983 bcf | 1041 bcf | 1523 bcf | 1523 bcf | 1819 bcf | DEIS 4-214 |
| Total wells | 855 | 905 | 1324 | 1324 | 1582 | DEIS 4-214 |
| Wells on top | 10 | 87 | 51 | 168 | 234 | DEIS 4-214 |
| Wells at base | 845 | 818 | 1273 | 1156 | 1348 | DEIS 4-214 |
| "Recovered" reserve from top | 11.50 bcf | 100.07 bcf | 58.67 bcf | 193.25 bcf | 269.06 bcf | (Total "recovered" reserve/total wells) * wells at top |
| "Recovered" reserve from base | 971.50 bcf | 940.93 bcf | 1464.33 bcf | 1329.75 bcf | 1549.94 bcf | (Total "recovered" reserve/total wells) * wells at base |
| Percent "recovered" from top | 1% | 10% | 4% | 13% | 15% | ("Recovered" reserve from top/total "recovered" reserve) * 100% |
| Percent "recovered" from base | 99% | 90% | 96% | 87% | 85% | ("Recovered" reserve from base/total "recovered" reserve) * 100% |

There is no compelling need to drill on top of Roan Plateau documented in this plan.

¹In formulating its projections, the BLM assumes all wells produce equally across the Planning Area. Although this is a questionable assumption, we have carried it forward for these calculations. All figures in table come from the draft plan with page number (or formula) cited. The "No Action" alternative (Alt. I) would provide for no additional leasing in the Planning Area. Alternative III is the agency-identified "preferred alternative." Both the "No Action" and the selection of a "preferred" alternative are required by law.

Q: How much more gas would be produced from new leasing in the Roan Plateau Planning Area under Alternative III or Alternative IV than from current leases (if no additional leasing were to occur)?²

A: Less than one-fourth of the plan's "recoverable" federal gas.

If the BLM did not lease another acre in the Planning Area—according to calculations from numbers in the draft—about 75% of the federal gas that would be developed under the draft's Alternative III or Alternative IV would still be available during the life of the plan.

TABLE 2— ROAN PLATEAU GAS PRODUCTION, COMPARING ALTERNATIVES I, III & IV

| DEIS & Alternatives from draft plan | Total Fed. Gas | Alt I | Alt II | Alt III/IV |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------|------------|
| Total "recovered" reserve | 2239 bcf | 983 bcf | 1041 bcf | 1523 bcf |

Numbers: DEIS 4-214 and Appendix H. *Formula (units are billions of cubic feet):* ((Total [federal] gas projected under Alternative III/IV minus Total [federal] gas projected under Alternative I)/total [federal] gas projected in Planning Area) * 100. *Calculation:* (1523 – 983)/2239 * 100% = 24%

No Need to Drill Roan Plateau

The BLM's draft plan demonstrates no need to open up the top of Roan Plateau to drilling.

The BLM should revise its plan and select a final version that truly honors the community-supported consensus that would develop gas from the base of the Plateau and protect the top and cliffs. Specifically, the BLM should not lease the public lands on top of the Plateau or along its cliffs unless and until the resource can be extracted without disturbing the surface of the top or cliffs.

With rapidly advancing technologies, this may well be an achievable task within the twenty-year life of the plan. For it to work, however, the BLM must put this sensible solution into its final plan.

Together we can craft a better plan for Roan Plateau.

OTHER NUMBERS

Although a large amount of the natural gas projected to be developed under this plan would be available under any of the alternatives, the four "action" alternatives allow drilling on the public lands on top of the Plateau, which would clearly have significant impacts to the Roan Plateau's other public uses and resource values.

This is a look at some of those values and the impacts that gas drilling could have on them.

\$3,800,000-Value of hunting on Roan Plateau to Garfield County's economy every year. *SOURCE*-Colorado Division of Wildlife, *Recommendation to preserve, protect, enhance and manage the wildlife values associated with the Bureau of Land Management's Roan Plateau Planning Area.* Dated 7/18/03. (Obtained through public document request by Pete Kolbenschlag).

>99%-Genetic purity of some strains of Roan Plateau's native trout. *SOURCE*-Colorado River Cutthroat Trout on the Roan Plateau. BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office monograph, 1/2003

Top 4-Rank of Roan Plateau among Colorado's most important areas for biological diversity. *SOURCE*-Biological Survey on the Roan Plateau. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, 1996

33%-Decline in the number of mule deer on the public lands of the Planning Area under Alternative III, the draft's "preferred alternative." *SOURCE*-DEIS p 4-87

>97%-Loss in the amount of public lands with "backcountry recreation" opportunities, under three of the plan's five alternatives, including the draft's "preferred alternative." These opportunities would be eliminated primarily due to oil and gas drilling on top of the Plateau (Alts. III, IV and V). *SOURCE*-DEIS Recreational Opportunity Spectrum Maps 39-42, Appendix A, and Table 4-36, page 4-195.

² The draft makes identical projections for total gas development under both Alts. III and IV, but the ratio of the amounts of gas from the base and the top varies. Developing the reserves from the lands already leased, but with no additional leasing is reflected in Alternative I, the "No Action" alternative.