

The Anvil Points Bulletin

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Roan Plateau—“Public Land Oasis” amidst fields of wells and drilling

Citizens call for even-handed plan that protects Plateau top and cliffs, limits drilling to the base

WEST GLENWOOD SPRINGS— In resolutions from every municipal government in Garfield County to editorial after editorial and letters to newspapers all across the state, over 12,000 citizen comments, and public testimony before various elected bodies, citizens have consistently demanded an even-handed approach to managing the public lands of the Roan Plateau.



“The Plateau dominates the Rifle view shed and the landform helps people identify with our City in a positive fashion. ...The wildlife habitat and fisheries attract visitors to our area, which is vital to our economy.”

City of Rifle letter to BLM

Last winter, this consensus asked the Bureau of Land Management to adopt a plan that would allow drilling on 33,000 acres of public lands in the planning area, while protecting about 40,000 acres for other uses including grazing, non-motorized and motorized recreation, hunting and outfitting, wildlife and wilderness. With little explanation, BLM removed that alternative from consideration.

Finally, after half dozen or more delays, indications are that the draft plan will be released sometime in early 2004. Citizens will have 90 days to review the draft plan and submit comments to BLM. Public hearings and open houses are also planned.

SEE Mid-Game Rule Change... Page A4

Roan Plateau hunting worth \$3.8 million

Division of Wildlife calculations put value to county at \$76 million over next 20 years

DENVER-Colorado Division of Wildlife input used in comments from the Department of Natural Resources to the Bureau of Land Management, estimates hunting on the Plateau contributes \$3.8 million annually to local economies. The CDOW comments went on to recommend strong protections for four key areas on the Plateau and along the cliffs.

Hunting and other types of recreation have become a critical revenue stream for western Colorado's communities. No longer stuck in the boom-bust days of old, Garfield County towns have become increasingly diverse economically.

Now, promoting a healthy economy depends on protecting the region's natural capital more so than on developing it. Hunting, recreation and other public land amenities and resources do not only bring visitors. New businesses, retirees and independent entrepreneurs also locate based in part on quality-of-life factors. *SEE Hunting on the Roan Plateau... Page A4*

Visit www.SaveRoanPlateau.org to get involved!

Speak Out!

**Citizen Views on Roan Plateau
from around the Western Slope**

Excerpted from Grand Junction Daily Sentinel Editorial-

Roan tests GOP tenet

Even before he took office, President George W. Bush joined other leading Republicans in saying the federal government needed to be more sensitive to the wishes of local communities when it made decisions that affect large swaths of federal land.

...The Bush administration has a highly visible opportunity to demonstrate its sensitivity to community concerns in Western Colorado, as the Bureau of Land Management finalizes the much-delayed draft management plan for the 125,000-acre Roan Plateau northwest of Rifle.

Local governments throughout Garfield County have recommended that the BLM prohibit oil-and-gas drilling [along the top] ... but allow drilling over much of the lower-elevation region of the plateau.

...Many fear that a push by the Bush administration to boost natural-gas production...means that local concerns will be ignored if they get in the way...

...The Bush administration would be just as guilty of that sort of selective listening if it allowed pressure from the oil-and-gas industry nationwide to dictate management of the Roan Plateau while ignoring the clear wishes of local communities to protect that area.



Letter to the Editor-

Excerpted from The Aspen Daily News, 11/12/03

Gas drilling to transform West Slope

...In the Nov. 3 Aspen Daily News, [a Williams spokesman] calls those challenging the agenda of the energy industry "obstructionists."

...The constituency opposed to the wholesale leasing and drilling of Garfield County ... includes longtime ranchers, hunters, outfitters and fishermen. The spectrum ranges from the hard-core Republican "hook and bullet" types to traditional wilderness advocates... [The spokesman's] choice of words shows how completely out of touch ... the gas industry [is] with the growing sentiment...

When longtime ranchers see their land transformed overnight into industrial parks, and businesses dependent on big-game hunters see plans to sink dozens of gas wells up on the delicate Roan Plateau, they rightfully question the agenda of companies such as Williams Production.

Obstructionists? Hardly. Very simply people who care about the place where they live and who are daring enough to speak out. Mark Harvey, Pitkin County

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Profits Soar, While Consumers Pay More

Drilling hits near record rates in Garfield County as prices rise; Industry reports “A gusher of solid earnings”

HOUSTON, TX-Quarterly reportings for the nine months ending in September 2003 have oil and gas industry leaders here smiling as they pocket near record profits. The two companies with the largest operations in Garfield County—Canadian energy giant EnCana and Oklahoma-based Williams Companies—exemplify this trend.

According to CNN-Money Market & Stocks Snapshot, Williams revenues soared ten billion dollars in 2003 as consumers learned of 70% or more spikes in their natural gas bills. EnCana similarly posted fat profits, according to an October 28 report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

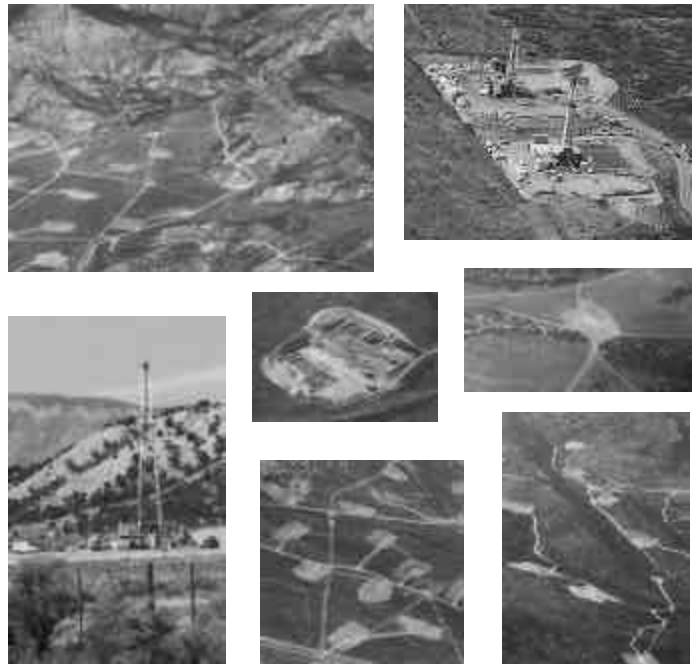
Industry profits, consumers get the bill

As the level of drilling skyrockets along with profits, American consumers—as the ultimate owners of the public lands and public minerals—have yet to see a dividend from this moneymaking frenzy. Instead consumers got notice this summer of a massive spike in their natural gas rates.

Williams is undoubtedly pleased. Facing bankruptcy a few years ago, Williams was able to secure massive loans by using its western Colorado public lands leases as collateral, according to an August 1, 2002 company news release. Now those leases are clearly paying off.

Although they rarely mention their “gushing” profits, industry spokespeople are quick to point to higher prices as reason to drill more and to exempt their industry from basic environmental and public safety rules like the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water and Clean Air acts.

When asked about using new technologies to minimize impacts to the environment, such as drilling directionally to tap new reserves from an existing well pad, these same companies resist and complain of increased costs.



Natural gas drilling and development in Garfield County

America needs energy. But public resources—including the minerals below and the public lands on the surface, and clean air and water— need to be managed to benefit the public interest.

Massive drilling is clearly in the interest of those who stand to profit, but it remains less certain how much that will benefit the interest of Garfield County and the American public. In any case, the public lands should never be jeopardized for the short-term gains of corporations, to secure private debt, or for profiteering.

TODAY'S QUOTE:

[That] could mean 10,000 wells [for Garfield County] over the coming decades... more than exist in Saudi Arabia and Iran combined.

Ken Wonstolen
CO. Oil & Gas Association
Aspen Daily News, 11/2/03

FROM PAGE A1-

Hunting on Roan Plateau

Only twenty years past the devastating oil shale collapse of the 1980's, local governments understand the importance of diverse economic activity to their communities. The City of Rifle in a letter to BLM called the Roan Plateau a part of the town's identity, critical to its economy, and urged strong protections.

Undeveloped landscapes and wilderness, access to public lands for recreation, fantastic views and open spaces have become the new economic engines driving a prosperous Garfield County. An even-handed plan that protects the undeveloped lands of the Roan Plateau would best serve this prosperity.

FROM PAGE A1-

Mid-game rule change

The soon-to-be released draft plan will outline four possible management directions for the Plateau and identify one as the BLM's preferred plan.

However, it remains to be seen how with the removal of the popularly supported alternative, BLM will meet its stated goals. In addition to pledging to craft a "community-supported" plan in its Notice of Intent, BLM also promised to consider lands it identified as having wilderness character for wilderness study areas.

The missing alternative would have done just that for about 22,000 acres of public lands. But in another mid-game rule change by the Bush administration, BLM has announced, in spite of its commitment, it will not consider lands for such protection.

BLM continues to say it will put sound stewardship above Washington D.C. politics. Meanwhile, much of the public remains skeptical.

PUBLIC NOTICE

BLM and Garfield County will be holding public meetings and open houses on the Roan Plateau plan sometime this winter

Call BLM at 947-2800
Garfield County at 945 - 5004
for dates and locations

AT A GLANCE

From The Wilderness Society web site at:
www.wilderness.org/Library/Documents/county_econ_profile.cfm

Garfield County Profile-Total Personal Income Total personal income (TPI) consists of income from current work and the non-labor income associated with past work.

By 1998, self-employment accounted for 29% of Garfield County's TPI, a jump of nearly 300% from 1970 to 1997.

Non-labor income, such as retirement income, now makes up one third of Garfield County's Total Personal Income, reaching 32% in 1997.

From 1970 to 1997, Garfield County added over 18,000 new jobs, a 306% increase. One third of these have been created in the catchall Service sector, which includes tourism-related jobs, health care and high tech.

Resource Extraction industries—including oil and gas related jobs—accounted for only 1% of Garfield County's TPI by 1997, a steep decrease from 12% in 1970.

BORED? FRUSTRATED?

Call 243-0002 to Volunteer.

**Too Much
Doubletalk?**



Get the facts

SaveRoanPlateau.org

