

A Better Plan for Roan Plateau

January 2005

Councils and the Community Working Together

When the BLM began the Roan Plateau planning process, it promised to craft a “community-supported” plan. In 2002 every municipality in Garfield County supported a common sense compromise, which would have protected the top and cliffs and allowed ample energy development to occur in approximately 2/3 of the Planning Area.

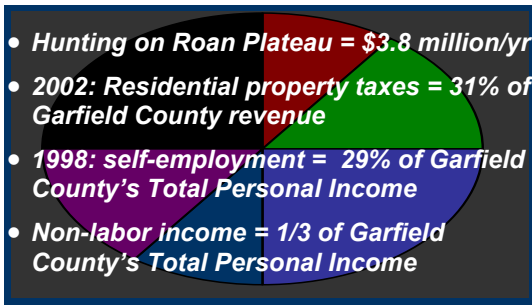
Although the BLM withdrew this popular option, we believe this sensible compromise offers the best means to find a middle-ground solution for the Roan Plateau that takes into account everyone’s needs.

With the town councils’ support and strong effort by local citizens, we can protect the Roan Plateau and still develop large amounts of natural gas from the Planning Area.



A Diverse Economy is a Healthy Economy

While oil and gas development is one of today's engines of growth, the boom it is generating will be followed by an economic contraction. When that occurs, Garfield County needs to have in place other sources of strong economic activity. We cannot afford to put all our economic eggs in one basket.



Energy development will continue to provide steady revenue for the county without drilling on the top or cliffs. However, it is essential that the council consider the long-term viability of its community and recognize other sources of revenue and income important to the community.

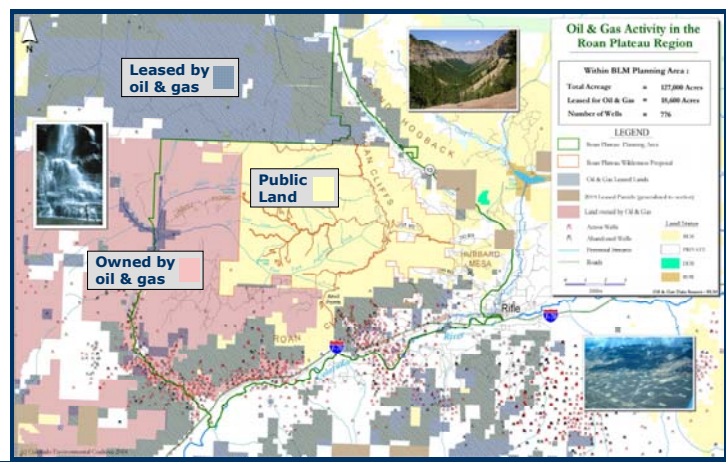
Recently a group of economists, including two Nobel Laureates, said the West’s natural environment contributed to prosperity by attracting workers, firms and investments.

An Island in a Sea of Gas Development

Garfield County is already doing its part to help meet the nation’s energy needs, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future; the question is, at what cost?

The Roan Plateau is surrounded by current and potential gas development activity on all sides.

- *Approx. half of the land in the planning area is owned or leased by energy corporations.*
- *94% of the estimated gas reserve in the Uinta/Piceance Basin, which includes the Roan Plateau, is available from public lands that are open to leasing.*



For more information, please contact the Campaign to Save Roan Plateau—Clare Bastable at 970-618-1341; Gregg Cassarini at 970-243-0002; Alan Rolston at 970-285-2250; or Steve Smith at 303-650-5818

1 Colorado DNR Management Proposal for the Roan Plateau. Department of Natural Resources Denver Office, 2003
 2 Status of the Oil & Gas Industry in Garfield County. Garfield County, 10/31/03
 3 Colorado County Profiles compiled by The Wilderness Society
 4 Colorado County Profiles compiled by The Wilderness Society
 5 EPCA Study: Scientific Inventory of Onshore Federal Lands' Oil and Gas Resources and...Table 3-9. U.S. Dept. of Interior et al., 1/03

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A Look at BLM's Draft Alternatives

- “[Deferred drilling] is not a protective measure per se because all of the lands would become available for oil and gas development at some point, probably during the 20-year period of analysis. (DEIS 4-3)”
- “[It] is reasonable to conclude that Alternative III could cause the BLM portion of the Planning Area to suffer an approximate decline of 33 percent in deer, 5 percent in elk... (DEIS 4-87)”
- “[The] introduction of industrial features in the landscape of the newly developed areas would be extensive and would bring about a transformation of the visual character that residents value so highly. (DEIS 4-173)”

None of the draft alternatives offer the level of protection that this council, and every other council in the county has asked for. This is true also for BLM’s “preferred alternative” (Alt. III) with its ‘deferred leasing’ provision. While it is a unique idea, the deferred leasing scenario equates to delayed destruction, but destruction nonetheless, on the top of Roan Plateau.

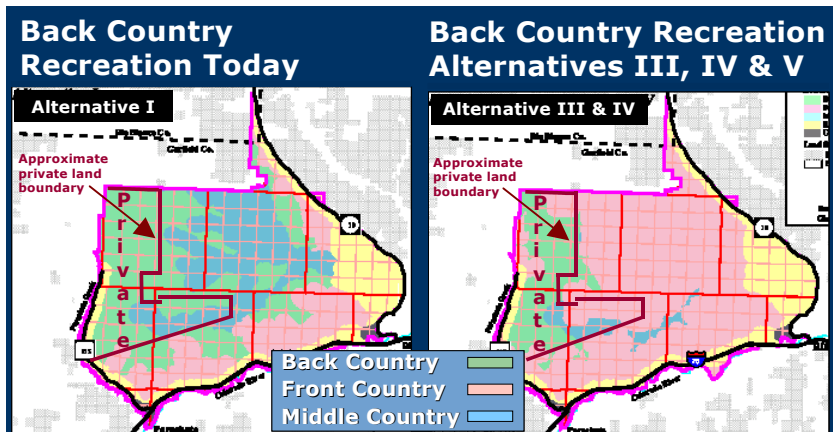
BLM’s projected drilling rates it uses in its draft plan are based on outdated estimates that have already been surpassed and the plan’s analysis is flawed by other questionable assumptions as well, such as the number of drilling rigs available and access onto the top of the Plateau. And if history, and other development in places with the same geology is any guide, once drilling is allowed on top, widespread, large-scale development would be inevitable.

Keeping the Plateau “as it is”

According to the Colorado Natural Heritage Program the Roan Plateau is one of the most biologically-diverse places in Western Colorado, only three other areas hold such a richness of species.

The BLM has identified four critical areas for protection as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), finding three of them to be eligible for wilderness designation. Twenty-four miles of creeks are eligible for Wild and Scenic designation.

This natural beauty and stunning landscape also provide world-class recreation opportunities for hunters, anglers, hikers, horseback riders, and other recreationists. Unfortunately, under three of the five draft alternatives, approximately 97% of the back country recreation opportunities on Roan Plateau will be eliminated.



A Better Plan for Roan Plateau

Although none of the current draft alternatives offer the right mix of management choices, the BLM has asked that local governments and citizens provide input on how elements of the alternatives could be reconfigured to provide the right level of protection for the Plateau, while still developing natural gas resources.



Crafting a better plan for Roan Plateau

- No drilling on top
 - Defer leasing on top unless and until technologies improve allowing for extraction from the base
- Strengthen stipulations
 - Expand protective stipulations
- Designate Special Recreation Mgt. Areas (SRMA)
 - Hubbard Mesa and 32,639 acre SRMA atop the plateau
- Best management practices
 - Industry required to use best practices

A Balanced Plan for Roan Plateau