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**BLM August 14 Oil & Gas Lease Sale Information Available**

DENVER – The Bureau of Land Management Colorado today announced that it will offer to lease for oil and gas development 46 parcels totaling approximately 73,552 acres at its quarterly oil and gas lease sale on August 14, 2008.

The sale will include 55,186 acres in 31 parcels in the Roan Plateau Planning Area. All include strict stipulations to protect the area’s streams, wildlife habitat and landscape views. Leases on top of the Plateau will require a single federal unit and phased, ridge-by-ridge development, in which only one operator conducts operations on behalf of all lessees. This allows BLM to exert tight control over oil and gas development, while consolidating infrastructure like roads, power lines and pipelines. Leasing in this area, also known as the Naval Oil Shale Reserves, is at the direction of Congress.

The remaining 15 parcels cover 18,366 acres on Forest Service lands in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests. The parcels overlie existing Federal coal leases, including the West Elk Mine. The Forest Service and BLM worked collaboratively on stipulations that will provide for mine safety and other protective measures, including the capture and use of methane gas that will be vented from the wells, which is necessary for the safe operation of the coal mine.

BLM acts as the leasing agent for mineral rights on all federal lands. The decision to make Forest Service lands available for lease is made by the Forest Service, with the BLM managing the sale of the leases.

The lease sale will offer parcels in two counties: Garfield with 55,186 acres, and Gunnison with 18,366 acres.

 “Of the total acreage managed by the BLM, less than one percent experiences surface disturbance from oil and gas activity,” said Acting BLM Colorado Deputy State Director for Energy, Lands and Minerals Duane Spencer. “The Bureau analyzes the potential environmental effects from exploration and development before offering any leases for sale. Leases are only offered in areas where a land use plan, developed with input from the public, has authorized leasing to take place.”

The federal government has paid $2.39 billion in mineral royalties, bonus payments and rental fees to Colorado since 1922. In 2007, the state received $123 million in federal mineral payments.

Statewide, BLM accounts for about 13 percent of new oil and gas leasing activity. In 2007, the state of Colorado processed 6,386 applications for drilling permits, with 827 on federal lands or federal mineral holdings. The remaining wells are on state-owned or private lands.

The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 and the 1987 Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act authorize leasing of federal oil and gas resources. The 1987 law, which amended the Mineral Leasing Act, requires each BLM state office to conduct oil and gas lease sales on at least a quarterly basis where there is interest to do so.

All leases come with stipulations (general requirements) on oil and gas activities to protect the environment; leases can also include specific restrictions, such as limits on seasons when drilling can occur and restrictions on surface occupancy by oil and gas operators. BLM Colorado holds oil and gas lease sales on the second Thursday of February, May, August, and November. Lease sale information can be obtained online at http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM\_Programs/oilandgas/leasing.html, at each of the Bureau’s field offices, and the Public Room at the Colorado State Office in Lakewood.

National BLM policy requires that all protests filed on nominated parcels must include the specific serial number of the parcel being protested and must be received by the BLM either by mail, hand delivery, or fax by 4:00 p.m., July 30, 2008. If a protest is filed by fax, it must be sent to 303-239-3799.

The BLM manages over 8.3 million surface acres of public lands in Colorado, plus more than 27 million subsurface acres for mineral development in the state. These lands are managed for a multitude of uses including recreation, mining, wildlife habitat and livestock grazing.

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