



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

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Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Moneta Divide Natural Gas and Oil Development Project and Proposed Casper Resource Management Plan Amendment, WY

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Final Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment for the proposed Moneta Divide Natural Gas and Oil Development Project within the BLM Lander, Casper and Rawlins field offices.

DATES: The BLM will issue a Record of Decision no earlier than 30 days from the date of the Notice of Availability published by the Environmental Protection Agency.

ADDRESSES: Requests for information regarding the Final EIS may be mailed to:

- Email: BLM_WY_LD_Moneta_Divide_EIS@blm.gov
- Mail: Holly Elliott, Moneta Divide EIS Project Manager

BLM Lander Field Office

1335 Main Street

Lander, WY 82520

Copies of the Final EIS are available on the project website at: <https://go.usa.gov/xnU9z>
or at the following locations:

- BLM Lander Field Office
1335 Main Street
Lander, Wyoming
- BLM Casper Field Office
2987 Prospect Drive
Casper, Wyoming
- BLM Rawlins Field Office
1300 North Third
Rawlins, Wyoming

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Holly Elliott, Moneta Divide EIS Project Manager, BLM Lander Field Office, 1335 Main Street, Lander, WY 82520, 307-347-5100, helliott@blm.gov Persons who use telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Moneta Divide project is principally located along U.S. Route 20/26 near the town of Lysite in Fremont and Natrona counties, Wyoming. A proposed product pipeline extends south from the oil and gas production area through Fremont and Sweetwater counties to Wamsutter, Wyoming. The project spans the BLM Wind River/Bighorn Basin, High Plains and High Desert districts.

The project area encompasses approximately 327,645 acres of public, state and private lands. Approximately 83 percent of the mineral estate in the project area is administered by the BLM.

Aethon Energy Operating, LLC and Burlington Resources Oil & Gas Company, LP are proposing to develop up to 4,250 wells and associated facilities over a 15-year period.

Under the Plan of Development, Aethon would drill up to 4,100 wells, of which approximately two-thirds would be drilled vertically from single-well pads and one-third would be drilled directionally from multi-well pads, consisting of four wells per pad.

Burlington would drill up to 150 wells from single-well pads. The proponents would utilize disposal wells, water treatment plants, evaporation ponds, surface discharge and other approaches to produced-water management. Water pipelines delivering treated produced water to Boysen Reservoir could also be built. Associated access roads, pipelines, compressor stations and other ancillary facilities would be co-located where possible to further minimize surface disturbance.

The BLM analyzed five alternatives:

Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative, includes existing standard stipulations and oil and gas well development authorized during the preparation of the EIS in accordance with the Interim Drilling Plan.

Alternative 2, the Proposed Action, is the proponents' Plan of Development.

Alternative 3 emphasizes resource production, analyzing development using only single-well pads and other measures that facilitate oil and gas development within the project area.

Alternative 4 addresses a range of resource issues identified during scoping and provides the proponents greater flexibility to treat and dispose of produced water. Specifically, Alternative 4 analyzes reduced surface disturbance through more directionally drilled wells placed on multi-well pads, wildlife and cultural resources protection measures, and a water management strategy that would involve greater surface discharge of produced water and more disposal wells.

All action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3 and 4) analyzed the same rate of development, although Alternative 4 would allow a slower pace of development, if needed, for managing produced water in accordance with federal and state requirements.

The Final EIS also evaluates amendments to the Casper RMP, which are analyzed under Alternatives 3 and 4. Under Alternative 3, the Casper RMP would be amended to establish a Designated Development Area in the portion of the Moneta Divide oil and gas well production area in the Casper Field Office to facilitate intensive mineral production. Under Alternative 4, the Casper RMP would be amended to increase the protections of the Cedar Ridge Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). The proposed amendments are not required in order to authorize the Moneta Divide project, which as proposed, is in conformance with the Casper RMP.

The Agency Preferred Alternative was identified in the Final EIS. The Preferred Alternative was developed to incorporate resource conservation considerations like those included in Alternative 4 (e.g., multi-well pads and less disturbance), as well as providing the Companies flexibility to use, treat, and dispose of water in response to changing technology and economic conditions like Alternative 4. However, the Preferred Alternative includes additional measures to prioritize water management in an effort to

minimize impacts to BLM protected resources resulting from surface water discharge. The maximum number of wells would be the same as Alternative 4 and the Preferred Alternative would also include an amendment to the Casper RMP to increase protection measures for the Cedar Ridge TCP, but the Preferred Alternative would differ from Alternative 4 by encouraging the Companies to utilize the pipeline option rather than surface discharge. In addition, the Companies would be required to submit a conservation plan prior to approval of additional surface discharge point locations.

All alternatives conform to the provisions of the Lander RMP Record of Decision (2014), Casper RMP Record of Decision (2007) and Rawlins RMP Record of Decision (2008), as amended.

Treatment and disposal of produced water would be in compliance with State of Wyoming permit(s) including all protections against degradation of public lands. All alternatives require that interim and final reclamation activities would be implemented to return the landscape to proper biological and ecological function in conformance with the Moneta Divide Reclamation Plan and the relevant RMPs.

The Draft EIS was published April 19, 2019, with the publication in the Federal Register of the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS and a possible land use plan amendment to the Casper RMP (84 FR 16532). Comments on the Draft EIS and Draft Land Use Plan Amendment received from the public and internal agency review were considered and incorporated as appropriate into the proposed plan amendment. Public comments resulted in the addition of clarifying text, but did not significantly change proposed land use plan decisions. A response to substantive comments is included in the Final EIS and Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment.

Instructions for filing a protest with the Director of the BLM regarding the Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment/Final EIS may be found in the “Dear Reader” Letter of the Final EIS and Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment and at 43 CFR 1610.5–2. All protests must be in writing and mailed to the appropriate address, as set forth in the ADDRESSES section above. Emailed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular mail or overnight delivery postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the email as an advanced copy, and it will receive full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct emails to: protest@blm.gov.

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time.

While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

AUTHORITY: 40 CFR 1506.6, 40 CFR 1506.10, 43 CFR 1610.2

Timothy J Wilson,
Acting BLM Wyoming State Director.

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