



WESTERN RESOURCE
ADVOCATES

For Immediate Release:
Contact: Peter Roessmann
Ph.: (303) 444-1188, x 221
September 17, 2009

Western Resource Advocates Protects 13,000 Acres in Colorado: *BLM Pulls Oil and Gas Parcels from Lease Sale*

SOUTH PARK, CO -- Western Resource Advocates (WRA) gained a reprieve for nearly 13,000 acres of public lands in Colorado slated to be auctioned off for energy development. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced that it has withdrawn nine proposed oil and gas lease parcels from the agency's September 2009 auction after WRA successfully argued that future drilling and road construction could have unacceptable impacts to wildlife habitat.

Eight of the nine protected parcels are in the South Park National Heritage Area and consist of essential habitat for wintering big game and the mountain plover. The ninth parcel is designated for federal protection because it contains important habitat for threatened and endangered plant species in Rio Blanco County. WRA noted that BLM failed to consider whether oil and gas development could push these rare plants closer to extinction.

"We're glad that BLM affirmed its duty to 'look before it leaps,' so that local residents and wildlife experts will be able to weigh in on whether energy development is appropriate for these lands that Congress and the President deemed worthy of protective legislation," said WRA attorney Rob Harris. "An objective evaluation should eliminate some of these lands from future leasing proposals and ensure that other lands in National Heritage Areas receive adequate protection as well."

South Park's designation as a National Heritage Area is intended to protect its cultural, historical, and natural resources from incompatible development. Agriculture and tourism are the core economic drivers in the highly scenic and rugged landscape of the South Park area.

WRA brought this protest on behalf of Center for Native Ecosystems, Colorado Environmental Coalition, and the San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council.

###

COLORADO • 2260 Baseline Road, Suite 200 • Boulder, CO 80302 • 303.444.1188 • Fax: 303.786.8054 • Email: info@westernresources.org
NEVADA • 204 N. Minnesota Street, Suite A • Carson City, NV 89703 • 775.841.2400 • Fax: 866.223.8365 • Email: info@westernresources.org
NEW MEXICO • 227 E. Palace Avenue, Suite M • Santa Fe, NM 87501 • 505.820.1590 • Fax: 505.820.1589 • Email: info@westernresources.org
UTAH • 150 South 600 East, Suite 2AB • Salt Lake City, UT 84102 • 801.487.9911 • Email: utah@westernresources.org

www.westernresourceadvocates.org

Western Resource Advocates is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting the West's land, air and water. Visit us online at www.westernresourceadvocates.org.