

hunting & fishing *imperiled*

Energy development threatens 10 of the most important fish and wildlife habitats on America's public lands.

During the past decade, an unprecedented energy boom has transformed huge tracts of the West's cherished public lands. Much of this development has happened in irreplaceable wildlife habitat – special places where families have hunted and fished for generations. Unfortunately, because some development is poorly planned, America's outdoor legacy is at risk.

Between 2000 and 2008, the number of permits to develop oil and gas tripled, and an estimated 126,000 new wells are planned for the next 20 years. Another 26 million acres – an area larger than Ohio – are already leased for development.

Sportsmen appreciate how important energy is to our country. But oil and gas drilling that pays little regard to fish, wildlife and water resources is unacceptable.

Fortunately, many of the worst impacts of energy development can be avoided with careful planning. That's why

hunters and anglers created the Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development coalition – and why we're highlighting 10 irreplaceable fish and wildlife habitats at risk from irresponsible drilling.

This overview explains what makes these habitats special and how they are at risk. The full report recommends ways to develop energy without losing recreational opportunities or the \$7 billion that hunting and fishing contribute to the Western economy annually. The report also features testimonials from outfitters, guides and small-business owners who depend on these public lands and who want future generations to enjoy them too.

To read the full report please visit:
www.Sportsmen4ResponsibleEnergy.org

10 habitats in the crosshairs



JOHN GALE

Roan Plateau, Colorado

A favorite destination for hunting and fishing in Colorado, the Roan Plateau offers some of the state's best elk and mule deer hunting and purest strains of imperiled Colorado River cutthroat trout. The Roan's dramatic terrain, which includes steep cliffs, deep valleys and cascading waterfalls, also provides year-round habitat for black bears, mountain lions and many other species. Despite a pending lawsuit as well as protests from 14,000 citizens, conservation groups and many of Colorado's elected leaders, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proceeding with its plan to allow drilling in this sportsmen's paradise.



STEVE TORBIT

North Park, Colorado

North Park is one of the most biologically rich areas in Colorado. It's home to one of the state's most important sage grouse habitats, highly sought-after bull elk, iconic populations of pronghorn antelope and a mule deer herd renowned for its long seasonal migrations. Boasting some of the region's highest-quality coldwater fisheries, this area includes the North Platte River, recognized as a Gold Medal trout fishery by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and as a Blue Ribbon trout stream by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Nonetheless, the BLM has leased 125,000 acres of North Park for oil and gas drilling.



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Middle Yellowstone River Valley, Montana

Few places in the West feature more dramatic scenery and abundant fish and wildlife populations than the Middle Yellowstone River Valley in south-central Montana. But now long-standing family traditions of visiting this picturesque area for fishing and hunting are threatened by poorly conceived oil and gas development throughout the valley. The BLM foresees more than 800 new wells for the area during the next 20 years and some could be drilled in the heart of the valley – in important winter habitat for big-game herds, near sensitive sage grouse breeding grounds, or along state-designated Blue Ribbon trout streams.



TED WOOD

Powder River Basin, Montana

The Powder River Basin is a sweeping landscape of rugged buttes, grassy plains and wide, flat streambeds. The basin provides premier hunting for elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and wild turkeys – as well as exceptional warmwater fishing in the Tongue River. All of that is threatened, however, by the BLM's plan for coalbed methane drilling in the area. The plan offers few real protections for fish and wildlife. Methane drilling impacts include roads, pads, pipelines, power lines, transmission stations, noisy compressors and highly saline discharges into the waterways. Such development will threaten habitat and disrupt migration routes, particularly the links that prized sage grouse use to reach populations in Wyoming and Colorado.



PHOTO OF WYOMING DRILL PADS BY BRUCE GORDON/ECOFLIGHT

Otero Mesa, New Mexico

The stunning Otero Mesa in rural south-central New Mexico is among the most biologically rich and diverse deserts in the world. The largest public expanse of undisturbed Chihuahuan Desert grassland left in the state, the mesa hosts the biggest native herd of pronghorn antelope in New Mexico as well as a healthy mule deer population. Below the surface sits the shallow Salt Basin, one of the state's largest untapped aquifers and last uncontaminated sources of groundwater. If the BLM proceeds with plans to allow drilling on 95 percent of Otero Mesa's 1.2 million acres, the impact would be disastrous for wildlife habitat and the groundwater located below this rare desert landscape.



JOHN GALE

San Juan Mountains, New Mexico/Colorado

The incredible San Juans, their snow-topped peaks jutting above pine-and-fir dotted slopes, provide a perfect habitat for some of the largest elk in Colorado and New Mexico. Although plans were blocked for 10 wells in the lush, high-mountain wetlands of the western San Juans, pressure to drill is building elsewhere throughout the range. To the south, in western Rio Arriba County, N.M., more than 11,000 wells already dot the landscape. Leases are under consideration for the eastern side of the county as well, threatening native cutthroat trout streams and the headwaters of Rio Chama.



STEVE TORBIT

Uinta National Forest, Utah

With its spectacular vistas of alpine peaks and aspen-rimmed mountain meadows, the Uinta National Forest is a mecca for big-game hunting and fishing in Utah. Even though five Blue Ribbon fisheries are either in the Uinta or directly fed by the forestland's crystal-clear runoff, roughly 165,000 acres of this wild country have been leased for energy development since 2004 under a plan that does not adequately consider the needs of fish and wildlife. The Forest Service is studying what future energy development will look like in this wildlife-rich area. Should its plans proceed without meaningful regard for wildlife, these prized coldwater fisheries, crucial elk and deer winter range and popular big-game hunting grounds might never be the same.



JOHN GALE

Book Cliffs, Utah

Stretching for 200 miles, the Book Cliffs offer some of the West's greatest mule deer and elk hunting. Containing significant natural gas deposits and the nation's oil shale reserve, this spectacular area is under tremendous development pressure. Much of the region has been leased for energy development in a disjointed fashion, and the BLM estimates that 7,800 new natural gas wells will be operating there within 15 years. Without thorough planning, more development could create an unsightly maze of roads, pipelines and wells that would disrupt the habitat and migratory routes of elk, deer, bison and bighorn sheep and compromise native trout-restoration efforts.



JOEL WEBSTER



CATHY PURVES

Greater Little Mountain Area, Wyoming

Known for its mule deer, trophy elk and Colorado River cutthroat trout, the Greater Little Mountain area has emerged as a battleground in the oil and gas boom in southwestern Wyoming. Despite repeated citizen protests, nearly 170,000 acres of the popular recreation area have been put on the BLM auction block. In opposing the Greater Little Mountain leases, Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal warned that energy development in the popular hunting and wildlife-viewing area would bring new roads that would reduce vital cover for elk, hurt water quality and imperil sensitive species such as sage grouse.



CATHY PURVES

Horse Creek-Ryegrass Rim, Wyoming

In a small valley of the Green River headwaters, Wyoming's storied hunting and fishing traditions come alive. The Horse Creek drainage is home to native Colorado River cutthroat trout as well as moose, elk, mule deer, sage grouse and pronghorn antelope. Above it, Ryegrass Rim provides critical winter range for mule deer. Although 2009 legislation protected much of the Wyoming Range, oil and gas companies kept their sights set on an improperly leased 44,000-acre parcel left unprotected. After protests from sportsmen, the BLM said it would not proceed with the leases on 24,000 of those acres. With the remaining 20,000 acres still in peril, sportsmen are working to protect undeveloped portions of this northeastern gateway to the Wyoming Range.



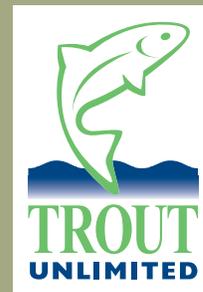
DRILL PADS IN FORMER MULE DEER RANGE IN WYOMING.
PHOTO BY CAMERON DAVIDSON

SPORTSMEN FOR Responsible Energy Development

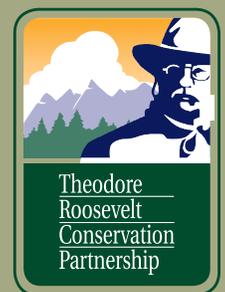
Sportsmen for Responsible Energy Development is a coalition of more than 500 businesses, organizations and individuals dedicated to conserving irreplaceable habitats so future generations can hunt and fish on public lands. The coalition is led by the National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. www.Sportsmen4ResponsibleEnergy.org



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