

June 10, 2016

Southwest Resource Advisory Council
Tres Rios Field Office, Bureau of Land Management
blm_co_trfo_oilandgas@blm.gov

Re: Federal Oil and Gas Leasing and a Potential Master Leasing Plan in Western La Plata and Eastern Montezuma Counties, Colorado

Dear Southwest RAC Members,

On behalf of the local business communities of Colorado's La Plata and Montezuma counties, we write to support the proposed Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tres Rios Field Office Master Leasing Plan (MLP).

The land within and adjacent to the proposed Tres Rios MLP boundary includes areas highly valued to residents and visitors alike. The Tres Rios MLP planning area abuts the popular Mesa Verde National Park and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. Other areas contain: some of the finest mountain biking in the region, an extensive network of hiking trails, essential habitat and migration corridors for numerous wildlife species, important cultural sites, lands with wilderness characteristics, and important agricultural lands. These resources are vital to the local and regional economy.

As local businesses, we have a strong interest in protecting and enhancing recreation assets that support our economy. Necessary for the preservation of the area's iconic recreation experiences are site-specific protections for water and air quality, along with carefully planning of access roads and industrial activity and infrastructure to prevent conflicts with recreational users. The broader Tres Rios Resource Management Plan does not adequately address these concerns because it does not include enough specificity and zoning to prevent conflicts. Thus, important management decisions about oil and gas are left to the BLM's discretion on a lease-by-lease basis instead of through a comprehensive landscape-level plan. A Tres Rios MLP would provide these specific protections for the recreation assets that are central to the region's quality of life.

The proposed Tres Rios MLP will also allow future and existing oil and gas leases to be planned in a responsible, effective way. This plan can develop targeted stipulations for new leases and best management practices for drilling permits. Given the numerous resources within this landscape, there is high potential for conflict with leasing and drilling. Through the MLP process the BLM can, with stakeholder input, develop a detailed vision for management of this area, incorporating a thoughtful, balanced approach to managing oil and gas leasing and development.

We ask the Southwest Resource Advisory Council Members to consider these concerns and support the Tres Rios Master Leasing Plan. With an MLP we can create a comprehensive smart-from-the-start plan that will be more efficient for all stakeholders. As residents and business owners who will be greatly affected by this decision, we lend our full support to the MLP process and urge you to as well.

Sincerely,

Rob BonDurant
Osprey Packs Inc.
Cortez, CO

Kathy Hands
Marcos Brewing Company
Mancos, CO

Jeff Mobley & Michelle Harrison
Colorado Love Outdoors
Cortez, CO

Pete Eschallier
Kokopelli Bike & Board
Cortez, CO

Mac & Dee Wyman
Mac Wyman MD
Cortez, CO

Najib Johnson
Johnson Physical Therapy
Cortez, CO

Rick Hessom
Once Upon a Sandwich
Cortez, CO

Ryan Montgomery
Durango Cyclery
Durango, CO

John Glover
Mountain Bike Specialists
Durango, CO

Peter Schertz
Maria's Bookshop
Durango, CO

Tony Miely
4 Corners Riversports
Durango, CO

Cathy Wakeman
Animas Trading Co.
Durango, CO

Dean Brookie
Brookie Architecture & Planning
Durango, CO

Bill Carver & Mike Hurst
Carver Brewing
Durango, CO

Greg Matell-Hecathorn
Mantell-Hecathorn Builders
Durango, CO

Kirk Komick
Rochester Hotel and Leland House
Durango, CO

Anna Peterson
Verde Brand Communications
Durango, CO

Sheryl McGourty
Yoga Durango
Durango, CO

Ben Rockis
Backcountry Experience
Durango, CO

John Watson
Evergreen Education Group
Durango, CO

Rachel Landis
Environmental Center at Fort Lewis College
Durango, CO

Sydney Cooley
Sydney Cooley Acupuncture
Durango, CO

Jeremy Dakan
Pine Needle Mountaineering
Durango, CO

Heath Corley
Comcast Spotlight-SW Colorado &
Durango, CO

Bill Stewart
Real Food Sales
Durango, CO