

## **TALKING POINTS FOR THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DSEIS) ON OIL AND GAS LEASING OF 44,720 ACRES IN THE WYOMING RANGE**

- *The Forest Service did the responsible thing in selecting the no action/no leasing preferred alternative. We applaud the agency for recognizing the tremendous wildlife and recreation values at stake and the diverse support for protecting the state's namesake mountains from new oil and gas leasing. We urge the agency to finalize the DSEIS and issue a decision this spring that ensures no new leasing.*
- *Wyoming has been and will continue to be one of the nation's major oil and gas producers, but there are a few places that are too sensitive and valuable for other traditional uses such as hunting, outfitting and recreation to risk losing. The 44,720 acres, many of which are in the greater Horse Creek area, the Wyoming Range's premier eastern access point, is one of those places.*
- *The Forest Service's no leasing preference is consistent with the sustained efforts of a broad coalition of labor, sportsmen, business, and conservation interests, and the bi-partisan leadership of Governor Freudenthal and Senator Barrasso who worked to protect the Wyoming Range. In fact, it was these leasing proposals in 2005-2006 that first generated broad public support for the Range, which ultimately led in 2009 to passage of the Wyoming Range Legacy Act.*
- *This decision is about balance. There are already thousands of oil and gas wells on adjacent BLM lands in Sublette County and more than 9,000 additional wells projected to be drilled in the region in the years to come. Canceling these leases in the Bridger-Teton National Forest will not measurably affect energy production in Wyoming, let alone Sublette County, but the decision is critical to ensure that some places remain free from industrial development in order to support other traditional uses.*

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- It is important to thank the Forest Service for selecting this preferred alternative. Besides submitting supportive comments on the Draft SEIS by the **March 22, 2010**, deadline at **comments-intermtn-bridger-teton@fs.fed.us**, please consider thanking the Forest Supervisor and Regional Forester directly through calls, letters to editor, or a personal email.
- This DSEIS addresses leases offered in several sales in 2005 and 2006, totaling 44,720 acres primarily in the Horse Creek area west of Merna on the Bridger Teton National Forest. All of these lease sales were challenged by a wide assortment of groups (including some by the Governor and Wyoming State AFL-CIO). The Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) agreed that these sales likely did not receive adequate analysis and so the Forest Service initiated this new, updated analysis in late 2007. The IBLA expressly noted that after undertaking such analysis, cancellation of the leases might be necessary.
- 23 of the leases covering approximately half of the 44,720 acres were sold but never issued and the government in August 2009 rejected the bids it received for these parcels. Another 12 leases covering the remaining acres were issued, but have been suspended pending completion of this updated analysis. The DSEIS addresses both categories of leases.
- Because this area was included in the Wyoming Range Legacy Act's lease withdrawal area, removal of these leases will mean that this part of the Range will also be fully protected from any new oil and gas leasing.
- More work and public engagement is needed on one last project, as the Forest Service continues a separate EIS process to consider authorizing 136 new wells in a roadless part of the Range near the Upper Hoback River.