



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Canyon Country District Office  
Moab, Utah



## **Moab Master Leasing Plan Newsletter #1**

### **Introduction and Background**

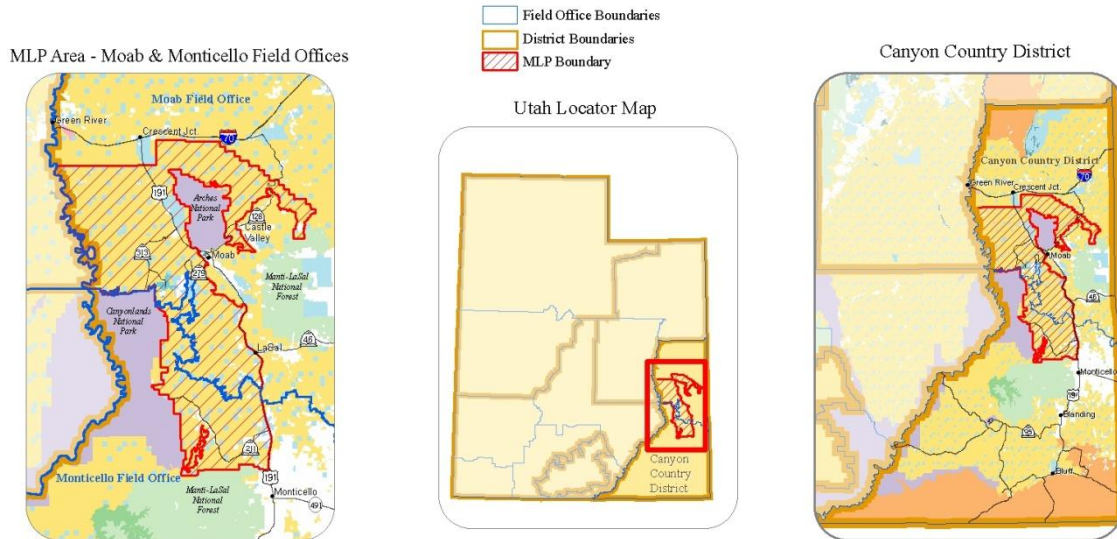
In accordance with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Washington Office Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-117, the BLM Canyon Country District Office is initiating a planning effort to prepare the Moab Master Leasing Plan (MLP), possible amendments to the Moab and Monticello Resource Management Plans (RMPs), and a single environmental impact statement (EIS). The scope of the MLP is limited to new oil, gas, and potash leasing within the planning area.

The MLP process will provide additional planning and analysis prior to new leasing of oil and gas and potash within the planning area. The MLP will enable the Moab and Monticello Field Offices to 1) evaluate in-field considerations such as optimal parcel configurations and potential development scenarios; 2) identify and address potential resource conflicts and environmental impacts from development; 3) develop mitigation strategies; and 4) consider a range of new constraints, including prohibiting surface occupancy or closing areas to leasing. The outcome of the MLP process may result in new mineral leasing stipulations and development constraints accomplished through amendments to the land use plans (Moab and Monticello RMPs). The EIS will analyze likely development scenarios and land use plan alternatives with varying mitigation levels for mineral leasing.

### **Planning Area Description**

The planning area includes about 946,469 acres in east-central Utah in Grand County (526,784 acres) and San Juan County (419,685 acres). The total area includes about 783,000 acres of public lands. The planning area is located south of Interstate 70, surrounds the town of Moab, and wraps around Arches National Park. The western boundary is the Green River and the northeastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park. To the south of Moab, the planning area includes the Indian Creek/Lockhart Basin area between Canyonlands National Park and Highway 191.

## LOCATION OF MASTER LEASING PLAN AREA



The planning area has high potential for the development of oil, gas, and potash. Interest in oil, gas, and potash exploration and development is high in the planning area. The BLM has received recent expressions of interest to lease over 120,000 acres for oil and gas. Additionally, the BLM has received 170 potash permit applications covering over 350,000 acres.

The planning area also has some of the most iconic scenery on the Colorado Plateau. The planning area is immediately adjacent to two National Parks. About 2 million visitors a year enjoy a wide variety of recreational experiences within the planning area. In addition, the planning area contains lands identified by the BLM as having outstanding visual resources, high value recreation areas, lands with wilderness characteristics, and high quality air resources.

### Planning Issues

Planning issues are topics of interest or concern about the potential effects resulting from leasing and development of oil, gas, and potash resources within the planning area. The following preliminary issues have been identified by the BLM through an interdisciplinary process:

- Air quality and global climate change
- Cultural resources, including traditional cultural properties of importance to Native American tribes, and historic trails
- Paleontological resources of scientific importance
- Wildlife and fisheries habitat, including special status species, and migration corridors
- Visual resources including visual resource inventories and management classes
- Fragile soils and steep slopes
- Water resources including aquifers

- Vegetation, including rare plants and riparian resources, and the ability to achieve interim and final reclamation standards (Gold Book, Chapter 6)
- Recreation use including Special Recreation Management Areas and Recreation Focus Areas
- Socioeconomics
- Special Designations which include ACECs and suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Lands identified by BLM as having wilderness characteristics
- National Parks and State lands adjacent to and within the planning area

Federal, state, and local agencies, the public, and other stakeholders have the opportunity to identify additional issues to be addressed in the MLP process. You may wish to consider the preliminary issues identified when submitting comments but you do not need to limit your comments to these issues.

### **Planning Criteria**

Planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Preliminary planning criteria include:

- The MLP will focus on mineral leasing decisions only.
- The MLP will recognize valid existing rights.
- Lands addressed in the plan amendments will include public lands (including split estate lands) managed by the BLM.
- The BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where possible, to jointly determine how mineral leasing will be managed.
- As described by law and policy, the BLM will strive to ensure that its management decisions are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions.
- Development scenarios will be prepared for oil and gas and potash based on historical, existing, and projected levels.
- Management decisions will consider a range of alternatives that focus on development scenarios and varying mitigation levels based on the relative values of resources.
- The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives will be addressed.
- The BLM will use current information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate decisions for mineral leasing.
- The BLM will coordinate with Native American Tribal Governments to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within the planning area.

### **The Master Leasing Plan Process**

The MLP process starts with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* and continues with scoping. Public participation in the scoping process results in identifying issues to be addressed by developing a range of alternatives with varying mitigation levels for mineral leasing. The BLM will evaluate the potential environmental consequences associated with the likely development scenarios for each alternative in the Draft MLP/EIS. A Draft MLP/EIS is made available to the public for a 90 day comment period. Public meetings

are held during this comment period. After gathering, analyzing, and incorporating public comments on the Draft into the document, the BLM will then issue the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Following the 30 day protest period and the 60 day Governor’s Consistency Review, the BLM will resolve any protest and sign a Record of Decision (ROD) and issue the Approved MLP and Plan Amendments to the Moab and Monticello RMPs.

**Moab MLP/EIS Process and Public Participation Components**

Schedule	Process Milestones	Public Participation Components
March 2012	Notice of Intent	Notice of Intent published in the <i>Federal Register</i>
<b>We are here</b>	Public Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLM invites the participation of cooperating agencies</li> <li>• Public scoping comments solicited through the NOI, newsletters, newspaper articles, and public meetings</li> <li>• Public scoping comments must be received by May 4, 2012 to be considered in the Draft MLP/EIS</li> </ul>
Summer 2012	Scoping Report	Available on the BLM website
Fall/Winter 2012	Alternative Development	
Summer 2012	Draft MLP/EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft MLP/EIS released for 90-day public comment period</li> <li>• Request public comments</li> <li>• Conduct public meetings</li> </ul>
Summer 2013	Proposed MLP/Final EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed MLP/Final EIS released for a 30 day public protest period and 60 day Governor’s consistency review</li> </ul>

**Public Scoping**

The BLM planning process officially started with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on March 5, 2012. The NOI announced the Canyon Country District Office’s intent to prepare a MLP, potential amendments to the Moab and Monticello RMPs, and an associated EIS. The NOI also initiated the scoping period, which will continue until May 7, 2012. The objective of the scoping period is to involve the public in the planning process. The BLM encourages members of the public who have an interest in the planning area to submit their comments on issues or concerns, planning criteria, or other relevant information during the scoping period through one of the following methods:

- **Mailed or Delivered to:**  
 Canyon Country District Office  
 Attn: Brent Northrup  
 Project Manager  
 82 East Dogwood  
 Moab, UT 84532

- **Emailed to:** [BLM\\_UT\\_Comments\\_2@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_UT_Comments_2@blm.gov)

Additional information can be accessed on the BLM project website at: <http://www.blm.gov/21jd>. Please email your name and mailing address to add your name to the project mailing list.

We also encourage you to attend one of the upcoming public scoping meetings to ask questions and provide input. The public scoping meeting will be held in Moab, Monticello, and Salt Lake City. Several information stations will be located within the meeting venue that will present information on key issues and the planning process. Attendees can learn about the MLP process, ask questions, and provide written comments.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Address</b>
March 27, 2012 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.	Monticello	Monticello High School 1400 Independence Way Monticello, Utah
March 28, 2012 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.	Moab	Grand Center 182 North 500 West Moab, Utah
April 3, 2012 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City Main Library 210 East 400 South Salt Lake City, Utah