



Memo from the Colorado Mountain Club Board of Directors
CMC State Board Authorizes Litigation Against BLM Roan Plateau Oil & Gas Leasing

Introduction

On July 19, 2008 the CMC State Board of Directors (Board) ratified a decision made by its Executive Committee in July 2008 authorizing the CMC to participate in a lawsuit brought against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) concerning their Record of Decision (ROD) for leasing units of the Roan Plateau in western Colorado for oil and gas development. The CMC joined nine other non-profit groups in the lawsuit, which has subsequently been joined by the State of Colorado.

The Board is the governing body of the CMC, a Colorado non-profit corporation with tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. As the governing board, under state law it is solely responsible for the management of the business and legal affairs of the CMC. The implementation responsibility of Board-adopted policy lies with the Executive Director, the Chief Executive Officer of the Club. The Board has four officers (all from Denver) and 15 other directors from at least seven different groups. Currently the Board of Directors consists of four Denver Group members, two Boulder Group members, two Fort Collins Group members, two Pikes Peak Group (Colorado Springs) members, one Gore Range Group member, one Aspen Group member, one Sneffels Group member, one Weld County Group member and one Colorado Wilderness Kids Group member. The Board is elected by the State Council, with 1/3 of the 15 non-officer positions elected each fall for three-year term. The State Council has a representative from each of the 15 groups, representatives from five state committees, and Board members



Roan Plateau's East Fork Falls

(directors and/or officers) whose terms expired in the past calendar year.

Procedural History

Since 2001, the Club has been proactively engaged in the campaign to protect the Roan Plateau. BLM Resource Management Plan efforts began in 2000. A draft management plan was released in 2004, followed by final management plan and EIS in 2006. A challenge to the final management plan and EIS was filed by Western Resource Advocates, representing non-profit environmental groups in 2007. The CMC has been an active participant in the planning process from the beginning. The BLM finalized its Record of Decision (ROD) in March 2008. Despite 75,000 comments asking for the BLM to protect the Roan, including requests from Governor Ritter, the Division of Wildlife, all local governments in Garfield County, sportsmen and several Colorado Congressional representatives, the BLM announced that it would lease all available parcels on the top of Roan Plateau on August 14, 2008. The BLM is proposing to add more than 1,250 wells to the Planning Area.

Resources at Stake

The natural values of the Roan Plateau include outstanding quiet backcountry hiking, camping, angling, and hunting. East Fork Falls is a waterfall recognized as a national park-quality attraction. The area is considered essential habitat for some of the most genetically pure populations of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and provides extensive habitat for Colorado's greatest herds of elk and mule deer. BLM's own studies reveal that this will result in dramatic losses to wildlife habitat and cutthroat trout populations, as well as a 97% decline in recreational use. Stunning scenery such as sheer cliffs, deep gorges, aspen forests, rolling meadows, and rare hanging gardens dominate the area. Again, the BLM admits that these backcountry and wilderness values would be compromised by its management proposal to lease the area for oil and gas development.

Current Levels of Oil & Gas Activity

The Roan is already surrounded by high-density oil and gas development. In Garfield County, more than 2,300 new drilling permits were approved in 2007, or more than 25% of all permits approved in the state. 95% of BLM lands in the Piceance Basin have been leased – of which the Roan is 1% - and more than 25,000 new wells are projected for the region in coming years. Moreover, many of the private lands in the area are owned or under the control of the industry. In deciding to draw the line



with the federal land on the Roan Plateau, the Club is confident the mineral boom will continue across northwest Colorado well into the future. A principal objective of the lawsuit is that the leasing occur in phases, and not all at once as the BLM has decided to do.

Supporters of the Litigation

The CMC is not alone on this. Beyond the ten local, state and national organizations who signed on to the lawsuit, on Wednesday, July 30th, the state of Colorado joined in formally protesting the upcoming leasing of the Roan Plateau. The State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) filed a protest reiterating Governor Bill Ritter’s desire to see the plateau leased in phases rather than all at once — an idea the BLM has rejected. The Colorado Division of Wildlife, which is part of the DNR, also submitted a separate protest. In solidarity, U.S. Representatives John Salazar and Mark Udall and U.S. Senator Ken Salazar also have formally protested the leasing of the Roan.

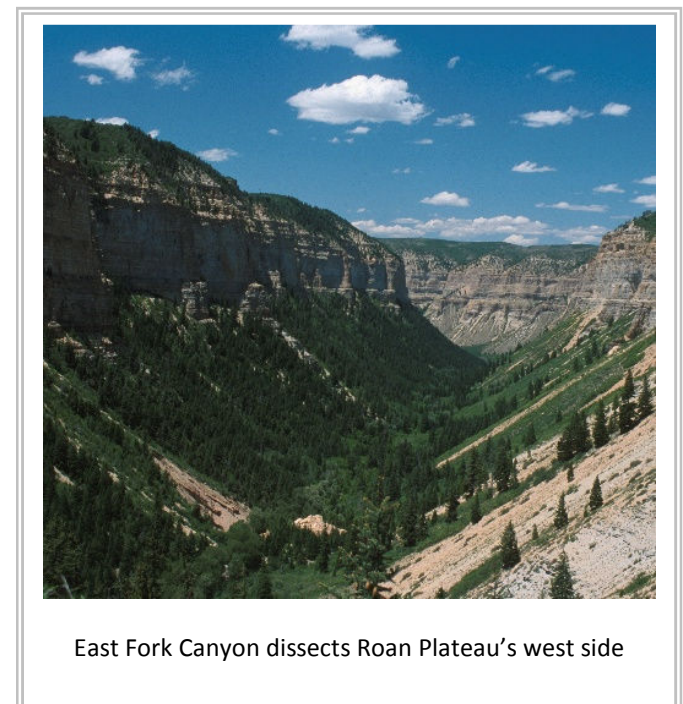


Fall aspens on the top of Roan Plateau

Dissent

The Board understands that not every decision made by the Board, the Executive Committee and our Executive Director (CEO), Katie Blackett, will align with the thinking and choices of every member. However, the objective is to make decisions that reflect the desires of the majority of our members, that conform to our mission, our strategic plan, our procedures and bylaws, and ultimately to keep the backcountry open for our use and enjoyment.

The success of CMC - now almost 100 years old - lies in our ability to respect diverse opinions, negotiate solutions, and in the end celebrate the majestic outdoors together. Our slogan, “much more than a hiking club”, wears well as we push forward to sustain Colorado’s environment - envied by so many around the world.



East Fork Canyon dissects Roan Plateau’s west side

Conclusion

The CMC has been a balanced voice for protection of the Roan Plateau from day one. This effort directed by our Conservation Department is in partial fulfillment of its mission to:

Unite the energy, interest, and knowledge of the students, explorers, and lovers of the mountains of Colorado;

Collect and disseminate information regarding the Rocky Mountains on behalf of science, literature, art, and recreation;

Stimulate public interest in our mountain area;

Encourage the preservation of forests, flowers, fauna, and natural scenery; and

Render readily accessible the alpine attractions of this region.

For all we get out of our federal public lands in terms of recreational value, spiritual connection, and health benefit, the CMC will continue to be an advocate for those special public lands under threat.