

News Release



USDA Forest Service
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DECISION RELEASED FOR HIGHTOWER PROJECT

Delta, CO., (April 8, 2008) – The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest released the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Hightower Master Development Plan within Mesa County, Colorado. This decision identifies the conditions and requirements to protect natural resources associated with the surface use of national forest lands. The Hightower Project will drill up to 32 natural gas exploration/production wells on five drilling locations. Included in the decision is the use of forest roads, plans to bury gas and water gathering pipelines and pipeline installation locations, selection of replacement aspen stands, development of well head production facilities and the construction of compression and water storage facilities should gas in producible quantities be found.

“My decision for this project is the most environmentally sensitive,” stated Charlie Richmond, GMUG Forest Supervisor. “It minimizes the number of drilling locations and provides for the potential of multiple wells at each location; it requires burial of the pipeline and produced-water lines to reduce the amount of truck traffic and snowplowing required on forest system roads to enhance public safety and recreation use; and it requires the use of drilling rigs that have low-emissions to support air quality, in addition to other requirements and mitigations.”

Richmond went on to cite that these were issues of concern to forest users who commented on the project and they were important concerns that drove the selection of this alternative.

The Hightower Project Environmental Assessment, Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact documents are available on the Forest's website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/policy/> or by request.

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