

Jonah Interagency Office



Pinedale Anticline Project Office

2009 – A Success For JIO And PAPO

Welcome to the first combined newsletter of the Jonah Interagency Office (JIO) and the Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) created the JIO in the Jonah Project Record of Decision to manage on-site monitoring and off-site mitigation activities primarily focusing on pronghorn and Greater sage-grouse. PAPO was created by the BLM's Pinedale Anticline Project Record of Decision to manage on-site monitoring and off-site mitigation focusing on mule deer, pronghorn and Greater sage-grouse. The JIO marked its third anniversary in 2009 while the PAPO organized its office and performed its first acts in 2009 – making it a very important year in the life of these two offices.

JIO wrapped up 2009 by completing several key conservation projects. The JIO was the major funding partner in acquiring several important conservation easements including the Cottonwood II Ranch, Cross Lazy Two Ranch, McNeel Ranch, CRC Ranch I, and the Diamond H Ranch. With the total expenditure of \$4,955,980, funding and closing these conservation easements permanently protected 10,703 acres of private land from future subdivision development. These projects also initiated conservation management plans on 24,406 acres of private and public lands, leveraging JIO's dollars even further. These 2009 completed projects represent a permanent legacy of land and resource conservation in Sublette County, Wyo. The JIO also funded several other important mitigation projects such as the wood stove change-out program (for air quality enhancement), wildlife friendly fencing modification (protecting vital wildlife migration routes), and the Jonah archaeology exhibit at Museum of the Mountain Man (exhibiting Jonah Field cultural resources).

Executive leadership of the JIO and PAPO determined it would be prudent to use the same staff members for both offices along with a few additional positions. This bold strategy allowed a quick jump-start for PAPO and its intensive monitoring duties. The Wildlife Monitoring Review Team was formed, and it quickly moved to continue pre-PAPO wildlife monitoring efforts by creating and advertising several monitoring solicitations. The PAPO Mitigation Management Board subsequently awarded seven contracts for monitoring required in the BLM, Pinedale Anticline Record of Decision Wildlife Matrix. In accordance with the

Wildlife Matrix requirements, these 2009 monitoring efforts were a success. In addition, with \$5 million already earmarked by JIO, the PAPO Board approved and earmarked \$6 million for 2010 toward the overall funding of the Sommers/Grindstone Conservation Project (a significant conservation easement protecting the agricultural and conservation values on 19,000 acres of private land).

For current project updates, visit
<http://www.wy.blm.gov/jio-papo/>



Antelope on the MJ Ranch

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What is the Jonah Interagency Mitigation and Reclamation Office?

The Jonah Natural Gas Field is located in the Upper Green River Basin of west central Wyoming south of Pinedale. Jonah's 30,000 acres of rolling sagebrush are 94 percent federally owned. The area has one of the richest concentrations of natural gas in the United States, currently estimated at more than 14 trillion cubic feet.

The Jonah Interagency Mitigation and Reclamation Office (JIO) was created by the Jonah Project Record of Decision (ROD) to provide overall management of on-site monitoring and off-site mitigation activities. To perform these functions, the JIO manages a \$24.5 million monitoring and mitigation fund committed by EnCana Oil & Gas (USA), Inc. and BP America Production Company. Although the Jonah Infill Drilling Project (JIDP) results in significant impacts within the project area, the ROD represents an innovative approach to encouraging industry to minimize the footprint of development, maximize recovery of natural gas and speed up the reclamation process. The JIO provides a crucial mechanism to further mitigate project impacts by funding and implementing both on- and off-site monitoring and mitigation projects.

What Can I Do?

What Can You Do To Lessen Your Contribution to Ozone Formation?

Sponsored by Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the Jonah Interagency Office

Drive Smarter - Driving smarter keeps pollution at a minimum.

- Limit your car's idling time to a couple of minutes...or eliminate idling completely.
- Keep your tires properly inflated.
- Keep your vehicle well tuned.
- Replace your vehicle's air filter on a regular basis.
- Check fluids regularly.
- Obey the speed limit.
- Use cruise control on the highway.

Drive Less - Driving less doesn't mean you have to stay home. Try any of these ways to get to where you want to go:

- Carpool. This is a great way to get to know your neighbors if you already don't!
- Telecommute. Do your business by phone or over the Internet (in the comfort of your own home)!
- Walk to lunch OR pack a lunch and eat in.
- Combine your errands into one trip.
- Park in a central place and walk as much as you can.

What is the Pinedale Anticline Project Office?

The Pinedale Anticline Natural Gas Field is located in the Upper Green River Basin of west-central Wyoming, south of Pinedale. The Anticline's 198,000 acres of rolling sagebrush are 80 percent federally owned. The area has one of the richest concentrations of natural gas in the United States, currently estimated at more than 25 trillion cubic feet.

The Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO) was created by the Anticline Project Record of Decision (ROD) to provide overall management of on-site monitoring and off-site mitigation activities. The PAPO obtains, collects, stores, and distributes monitoring information to support the adaptive management process and analyzes mitigation projects primarily focusing on mule deer, pronghorn and Greater sage-grouse. The PAPO is staffed with employees of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. The BLM Pinedale supports the PAPO with a mitigation team for project implementation. This staff consists of a wildlife biologist, rangeland management specialist, archaeologist, and reclamation/weed specialist.

Contact us for more information at:

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Operation Wildlife Escape Ramp Update

Many different wildlife species including birds, bats, and small mammals depend on livestock troughs and tanks for water. However, many of these animals die while trying to drink or bathe in these structures, especially when water levels are low and escape ramps are absent or inadequate. This project will benefit many sensitive species including greater sage-grouse. Escape ramps are designed to touch the side and bottom of the tank so a struggling animal swimming along the perimeter of the tank will blindly find the ramp at all water levels.

During the summer and fall of 2009, approximately 80 ramps were installed in stock water tanks. The Wyoming Conservation Corps spent a day installing ramps in July, outfitting five water tanks with 22 ramps in the Jonah and Boulder areas. The Green River Valley Land Trust sponsored a volunteer day in September, where volunteers installed 17 ramps in six water tanks on the Mesa. In October, BLM staff and the Pinedale Future Farmers of America (FFA) sophomores spent half day in the field discussing the merits of the project and installing eight ramps in three tanks. Several other volunteers have installed 31 ramps in eight tanks around the field office.

Pinedale FFA will continue to construct the ramps over the winter and spring of 2010. We will have more than 400 ramps to install in 2010. If you would like to volunteer for the project, please contact Cara Farr (367-5339) or Theresa Gulbrandson (367-5359) at the Pinedale BLM Office.



Ramp photo showing small sparrow-like birds using one of the ramps installed 9/9/2009 during the Green River Valley Land Trust Volunteer Day.



BLM seasonal employees installing bird ramps on 9/9/2009.

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Invasive Weed Management

In July 2008, Deej Brown, the JIO/PAPO BLM Reclamation Specialist/Weed Management Coordinator began a project to control *Bromus tectorum* aka cheatgrass in the Jonah field. This invasive grass species will germinate twice in one season. Cheatgrass will germinate early and have some new growth ready to use any available nutrients and moisture up to three weeks prior to the native grasses germinating. Thus, they are able to out-compete the native vegetation, and then the cheatgrass dies dropping seeds for the fall germination. The seeds from the spring plants then germinate in the fall, and over winter under the snow layer for the repeat of early growth and germination in the spring.

It has become the standard practice of oil and gas operators to hand pull this invasive grass as it is found. Several operators have incorporated full crews that only monitor for cheatgrass and remove it as they find it. Once it is pulled it is bagged and dropped off at the Sublette County Weed & Pest District for incineration.

An infestation of cheatgrass within a pipeline right-of-way was reported to the JIO and BLM as required in the weed management plans that the operators submitted in 2008. This pipeline location was in stage 2 of reclamation. This portion of the pipeline was too heavily infested for physical (hand pulling) treatment. The operator in coordination with Brown designed a treatment plan. The plan was to:

- Record vegetative cover of the cheatgrass. This revealed that the average cover of cheatgrass was 64.6% in this half mile section of the pipeline as a whole
- Mow and bag the area. This would decrease the seed population produced by the mature plants
- Burn the clippings
- Set up three individual treatment areas for comparison to determine the best control methods
- Treat with a chemical application.

Plot 1 was treated in October 2008, with 2qts/acre of Glyphosate (Round-up®), Plot 2 was treated in June 2009, with 10 oz/acre of Journey® a formulated mix of Glyphosate and Imazapic, and plot 3 was treated in October 2008, with 2 oz/acre of Imazapic (Plateau®). Glyphosate is a non-selective chemical and kills any actively growing vegetation. Imazapic is a pre-emergent that will inhibit seeds during germination.

The treatments in 2008 were conducted after the native vegetation was dormant to minimize the impact to them. In addition, the rate of Imazapic applied will not harm the native shrubs and grasses present on the pipeline, however it could damage some forb species. The 2009 treatment required some germination be taking place, kill the growing plants to eliminate the seed source (spring seed source), and inhibit the fall re-growth of the cheatgrass population.

In July 2009, the preliminary results show that the average cover is now 36 percent, with both the Journey® treatment that spring and the 2008 Imazapic treatments having greater than a 50 percent control on the cheatgrass. Brown is coordinating with several operators on cheatgrass control in the Jonah and on the Anticline. For more information, contact Brown at 307.367.5391 at the Pinedale BLM Office or email at deej_brown@blm.gov



Downy Brome treatment site.

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JIO Wildlife Mitigation Project Update

The following is a list of projects for which the Jonah Interagency Office has committed or provided some level of funding. Those marked with an * have been completed and the remainder are in various stages of completion. Conservation easements and associated conservation plan projects involve a 20 year commitment to address various projects and management changes developed as a result of the project. JIO and other partners will work with property owners and ranch managers over the next 20 years on the specific plans. Each plan is different but the overall goals are to improve management, if needed, and identify specific projects for those wildlife species impacted in the Jonah Field.

1. Squaretop Water Wells*
2. Jonah Raptor Nest Platforms
3. Arambel Reservoir and Treatment Plots
4. Cottonwood Ranch Conservation Easements and Ranch Plans (3 Phases)
5. MJ Ranch Conservation Easement and Ranch Plan
6. Elk Mountain Rx Burn*
7. Boundary/Sublette Allotment
8. Dynamic Signs*
9. Ryegrass Mowing*
10. CRC Easement and Ranch Plan
11. Diamond H Easement and Ranch Plan*
12. Water Trough Bird Ramps
13. Rock Creek Subdivision Fence Modifications*
14. Cross Lazy Two Easement and Ranch Plan*
15. GRVLT Wildlife-Friendly Fencing Initiative*
16. JIO Focus Area Inventory
17. McNeel Ranch Conservation Easement and Plan*
18. Sommers/Grindstone Conservation Easement and Ranch Plan (not all funding is available as of this date).

More information on these projects can be found at the JIO-PAPO website, located at:

<http://www.wy.blm.gov/jio-papo/>



Photo by Mark Gocke



Photo by Mark Gocke



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Before and After...Square Top Wells



2006 Before



2007 During



2009 After with Pronghorns

This project includes improving three watering facilities in the Square Top Allotment and creating a "wildlife only area" for each location. An overflow on each well creates a pond or green-up zone and is fenced for wildlife only access. The watering facilities provide essential drinking water to wildlife and livestock and improve livestock grazing distribution across the allotment.

This project was initiated in 2006 and later implemented by the Square Top Grazing Association. The top left picture shows the site at the time of funding approval in 2006. The bottom left picture shows the site just after the well was drilled with the overflow in place, and a wildlife-friendly perimeter fence of approximately 12 acres. The top and bottom pictures on the right were taken in September 2009 from a trail camera on location. In a matter of two years there is a significant change in the vegetation. In fact, riparian species are now growing in the dry desert. It is interesting to note that no seeding occurred. All the vegetation is a natural response to moisture.

Although these photos are taken from different angles, you can see the dramatic change a little water can make. The Lander Trail Well is exhibiting similar results. These locations are now excellent sources of brood rearing habitat for sage-grouse. The trail camera snaps pictures of numerous forms of wildlife using these wet areas on a very frequent basis. The JIO is pleased with the results of this mitigation project and anticipates more projects to have similar results.



2009 After with Sage-grouse

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JIO Recommends EnCana Receive Roll-Over Credit

As required by the Jonah Infill Drilling Project Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 14, 2006, the Jonah Interagency Mitigation and Reclamation Office (JIO) is tasked to provide annual reclamation recommendations to the BLM regarding locations reclaimed to meet the established criteria. Once an area meets this criteria, the operator may receive credit for acres reclaimed, resulting in roll-over release. Every field season, a group of individuals from BLM, state agencies, and Industry inspect locations that show potential for roll-over release.

Data - both quantitative and qualitative - is collected using specific monitoring methods, as outlined in the Jonah Reclamation Criteria and the Jonah Monitoring Plan. EnCana Oil & Gas requested evaluation of a number of locations for roll-over in 2009. After a thorough inspection, all parties agreed that four new locations met the criteria. The JIO recommend sites SHB 51-28, SHB 52-28, SHB 42-34V, and SHB 31-34 be approved for roll-over release. Total acres to be approved are 1.30 acres, 1.55 acres, 1.56 acres, and 2.31 acres respectively. This is a 2009 combined total of 6.72 acres to be released for roll-over credit.



SHB 51-28



SHB52-28



Deej Brown and David Ellis conducting line-point intercept



SHB 42-34V

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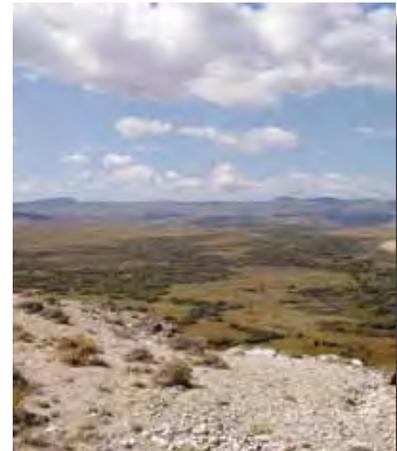


The Jonah Interagency Office would like to recognize the following contractors for their commitment to improving Sublette County's Air Quality:



Photo by Cara Farr

- Anticline Disposal**
- FCC**
- Ken Small Industries (KSI)**
- M&N Equipment**
- Noble Construction**
- Randy R. Pitt Construction**
- Terry R. Pitt Construction**
- Teletractors**
- TEPPCO**
- WYDOT**



The companies voluntarily agreed to work with the Department of Environmental Quality/Air Quality Division to install diesel oxidation catalysts on their non-road equipment in order to improve the air that you breathe in Sublette County!

The Jonah Interagency Office would like to recognize the following contractors for their commitment to improving Sublette County's Air Quality:



- A&T Welding**
- Basic Energy Services**
- RS Bennett Construction**
- Green River Rock**
- Koch Construction**
- Ken Small Industries (KSI)**
- Terry R. Pitt Construction**
- Randy R. Pitt Construction**
- Reed's Construction**
- Waller's Trucking**



The companies voluntarily agreed to work with the Department of Environmental Quality/Air Quality Division to upgrade old engines, replace old engines, and/or install diesel oxidation catalysts or diesel particulate filters on their non-road equipment in order to improve the air that you breathe in Sublette County! This was made possible through an – Diesel Emissions Reduction Act.