



WYOMING

Oil, Gas & Coal- Leasing & Wildlife

President Trump's "energy dominance" agenda has had a huge impact on Wyoming. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has passed a policy that nearly eliminates public comment periods, and requires the approval of deferred leases to go through the BLM National office. The effect is to "streamline" the oil and gas leasing process and has produced a devastating outcome for Wyoming's wildlife. According to a [Center for American Progress report](#)⁶⁹, 20 percent of leases offered in Wyoming between January 2017 and April 2019 were in critical areas for wildlife. Sage-grouse habitat makes up a significant portion of impacted habitat, as do important migration corridors that support Wyoming's hunting economy.

[Drilling infrastructure disturbs](#)⁷⁰ important habitat and even blocks migration patterns in some cases. For example, Jackson Hole's pronghorn antelope have the second longest mammal migration route in the western hemisphere and oil and gas drilling in the Jonah oil field has made this 200 mile journey more and more challenging. It is likely that fencing and other oil and gas infrastructure will completely block the animal's migration corridor in the near future, threatening the future of the species.

Of particular interest to Wyoming residents is the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan (RMP).

This area includes the Greater Little Mountain area in Southwest Wyoming which has so far been spared from leasing due to collaborative efforts to protect it in the new RMP. However, with the new BLM requirement that only the BLM national office can defer leases, there are [700,000 acres](#)⁷¹ that will be leased in the area in December, effectively ending all the collaborative efforts that have gone into keeping the area protected.

The rampant oil and gas development in Wyoming since 2017 is alarming. It is moving forward without input from the public to shape the process, cutting the public out of decisions impacting the lands they own. Already [this year](#)⁷², Wyoming's BLM has generated over \$100 million from oil and gas lease sales which is on top of the \$117 million generated in 2018.

Wyoming's wild and open spaces draw hunters, fishers, and recreationists from all over the world and the sale of every acre for oil and gas development is detrimental to the communities and people that rely on the outdoors. As Nada Culver of the National Audubon Society [said](#)⁷³ in regards to BLM's oil and gas leasing policy: "We're no longer requiring site visits, we're no longer requiring environmental analysis, we're no longer requiring consultation and time to talk to surface owners or state agencies or the public."