

From: Herm Hoops [mailto:hoops@ubtanet.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2009 8:55 PM
To: Smith, Mike; Adrift - Dustin Adams; Adrift - Jon Donaldson; Adventure Bound; ARTA - Steve Welch; COBS - Nicole Parentice; Dennis Smoldt - AZRA; Don & Denise Oblak - Canyon Voyages; Genereux, Marty
Cc: AO - David Brown; CROA - Julia Schneider
Subject: Riot at Oil & Gas Meeting in Vernal

Whew!!! I just returned from the public meeting about the Interior leases adjacent to Utah national Parks & Monuments, Desolation Canyon, the White River and Nine Mile Canyon. I am either one of the bravest six people in America... or one of the six dumbest. I believe the votes cast will show the latter (just ask my only known supporter - Kerry from Holiday). Perhaps the only dumber people, or perhaps they are immune to it were the Asst. secretary of interior, and directors of BLM and the National park Service!

Western park was packed with standing room only. The third person to speak, a short gray haired lady was booed and heckled for most of her presentation. I decided that if I was going to address the Secretary I needed to do it early. I was the fifth person to stand before the alter of sacrifice. The crowd was attentive (quiet) until I mentioned the words "scenic viewshed (see the attached text in bold of what I really did say). They then erupted in a very loud chorus of boos, yelling and all around mush that one would expect from the rear ends of grass fattened cattle. I turned, picked out the biggest and loudest and gave him my stare for a few moments. the crowd silenced and I went on. Of course the let me have it when I was finished (Thank heaven I sat down front so I wasn't fully exposed for long).

Speaker after speaker went on and on about patriotism, the Obama Administration's destruction of the oil and gas industry, America in general and specifically the economy. They expresses that the Federal Government should stay out on THEIR lands. People who had cancer or other maladies got up and went on about how they should survive. Our local radio owner/announcer/jackass got up and whipped the crowd into a drill baby drill chant. All in all it was akin to a combination of Dogpatch and the WWF (World Wrasslin Federation).

One other person supported a halt to the 77 leases and she was also loudly drowned out, until the Asst. Secretary asked for people to stop.

OK you nuts. Now I went and did this for you. I had better find that you, your guides, private boaters and everyone concerned with the rafting

business writes a well written letter as to why those leases, and other threats to our passion, business, recreation and children's future. If you don't, I may show up on one of your trips.... and act like the stooges at this meeting!

Je me soviens

Write to:

David Hayes, Assistant Secretary of Interior
Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

COMMENTS TO DEPUTY SECRETARY OF INTERIOR - DAVID HAYES
UTAH GUIDES & OUTFITTERS
May 26, 2009 AT Western Park, Vernal, UT

My name is Herm Hoops and I live in Jensen, Utah. I am representing the Utah Guides and Outfitters, an organization of over 40 river and land based commercial outfitting operations.

For the past 50 years, except a few recently and in the late 1970's outfitting and recreation have vied with agriculture as the number one contributor to the economy of the Uintah Basin. River Running and outdoor recreation are also significant contributors to the economy of Utah. During that time the oil, gas and energy extraction industry ran a distant third in contribution to the Economy of the Uintah Basin. While the oil and gas industry provides a large economic generator for a short time, the outdoor recreation and tourist industry will provide an economic base for generations upon generations.

It seems that recently our BLM bureaucrats, county commissioners and elected representatives have overlooked the impacts of energy extraction on commercial and private river running and outdoor recreation. They have opposed such non-threatening designations as Wild and Scenic Rivers and common sense measures like protecting environmental quality and scenic view sheds.

The recent downturn in the economy, combined with the effects of the recent "energy boom" has had a significant negative impact upon our industry. While we can do little about the economic situation, we can comment upon the effects of the extractive mining industry and its affects upon outdoor recreation.

The Utah Guides and Outfitters (UGO) is not against mining or oil and gas extraction per se. We are opposed to those activities when they have a negative affect upon our industry and the environment and thus we oppose leasing the 77 parcels in question.

The 77 parcels in question affect the scenic view shed of several National Parks and Monuments, Desolation Canyon, the White River and Nine Mile Canyon. Most of our customers come here from far away. The outfitting industry contributes significant amounts of money to advertise this area. The river running and tourism industry relies on a natural landscape. If our customers are negatively affected by their experience they will not go on future river trips, and their word-of-mouth will affect other potential clients. Besides paying outfitters, tourists also spend money on items like food, fuel, lodging, rentals, entrance fees and souvenirs. They come here spend their money and leave, requiring little additional infrastructure from our community.

In the short run there is a lot more economic impact from the extraction industries, but if the landscape is taken care of, tourism can bring steady and sustained jobs to the area for generations. If we simply take care of what we have we can have a healthy tourism industry and its related economy for hundreds of years.

On a recent river trip down Desolation Canyon, one could see the lights of a rig upstream from Sand Wash for miles and one could hear the drilling, vehicle traffic and clanging of pipes at Sand Wash - 20 miles downstream. After years of negotiating to mitigate conflict between ranchers and recreationists at Sand Wash, the State of Utah, supported by the county commissioners have recently went out of their way to lease a parcel less than 2 miles upstream and through the Sand Wash Recreation Site. It is this sort of insensitivity and blatant disregard for common sense that we oppose.

Increased drilling creates environmental hazards that costs to taxpayers and the local community. On August 23, 2005 a drilling rig perched on the rim of Jack Creek and along boundary of Desolation Canyon WSA lost circulation and drilling fluids blew out through the canyon wall and ran down slope. BLM manager Stringer is no stranger to the attempted demise of rivers. Not long ago, while manager of the Moab BLM he actively supported an illegal mining operation on the banks of the Colorado River in Westwater Canyon. In late March 2009 a report of excessive foam was reported on the Green River near Orray, Ut. This foam was not the normal detritus foam commonly seen

along the river in small clumps during the spring. I contacted several agencies about the foam and it was followed over 60 miles downstream. Samples of the foam were taken, but BLM Manager Bill Stringer refused to release the results. He even forbade a BLM hydrologist to see the results. I discovered that initial tests indicated the foam contained chemicals (Montmorillonite and Ammonium Chloride among others) used in drilling mud used in oil production. At about the same time in an unrelated incident the State of Utah announced that a breach occurred in a containment dam near the Green River had nearly reached the river before it was discovered.

Excessive drilling activity contributes to degradation of air quality. Colorado has a stricter level of air quality standards than Utah and has already raised red flags over a proposed power generating plant and particulates generated by drilling activity in Utah. The dust raised by traffic has been related to degrading of thousand year old Petroglyphs in Nine Mile Canyon. The increased air pollution of the Uintah Basin, which is often subject to inversions, may require vehicle emission regulation being instituted.

National Park Service areas and the rivers are home to a number of endangered and threatened species, on which the Federal and State Governments spend millions to protect and maintain. These species are part of a healthy and stable ecosystem on which all life depends.

The recent energy boom has had other effects upon our industry. Preliminary reports indicate that multi-day river trips, the bread and butter of our industry, are down significantly. While some of this downturn is related to the economy, anecdotal information indicates that many customers do not want to compete with the oil and gas business on their vacations. Indeed for the past several years there were few to no motel rooms available for river trip participants and tourists in the Uintah Basin. The word has apparently already gotten out. In addition, employees of river companies (as well as teachers and other professions) cannot find affordable housing in the region. The highways, and remote lands are festooned with litter. The efforts required to clean up the mess left by uncaring employees could be better spent elsewhere.

With the current administrations emphasis on alternative renewable energy, combined with the diminishing supplies of oil this is the time to emphasize the production of alternative energies.

The economic downturn in the Uintah Basin has not been caused by review of

77 leases by the Secretary of Interior. It has been caused by the poor judgment and bad decisions made by people - including our representatives and county commissioners. Instead of encouraging thrift they encouraged gluttony. Instead of supporting economic diversity they favored economic monoculture. Instead of working cooperatively with other interests they flamed the fans of derision and radicalism.

In conclusion the Utah Guides and Outfitters notes that in Utah there are over 3 million acres of BLM land under lease but not in development. It seems like the 77 parcels in question are but a small portion of what is already available to drill and support the economy along with other industries in the Uintah Basin. To UGO the answer is not a gluttonous boom, but long steady growth that does not destroy our industry. All that glitters is not gold. We oppose the leasing of the parcels in question.