

# Alternatives

## Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no existing land use plans would be amended. The designated 2,017,714 acres available for application for commercial oil shale leasing and 430,686 acres available for commercial tar sands leasing under the 2008 land use plan amendment decisions would remain available for future leasing consideration. These public lands comprise the most geologically prospective oil shale and tar sands areas administered by the BLM.

## Alternative 2(a) – Conservation Focus

Under this alternative, 10 land use plans in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming would be amended to designate less than 830,000 acres available for future commercial oil shale leasing and less than 229,000 acres as available for future commercial tar sands leasing (acreages opened under Alternative C of the 2008 plan amendment). This alternative would exclude:

1. All areas that the BLM has identified or may identify as a result of inventories conducted during this planning process, as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics;
2. The whole of the Adobe Town “Very Rare or Uncommon” area, as designated by the Wyoming Environment Quality Council on April 10, 2008;
3. Core or priority sage-grouse habitat, as defined by such guidance as the BLM or the DOI may issue;
4. All ACECs located within the areas analyzed in the 2008 OSTs; and
5. All areas identified as excluded from commercial oil shale and tar sands leasing in Alternative C of the September 2008 OSTs PEIS (acreages noted above).

## Alternative 2(b) – Conservation Focus with RD&D First Requirement (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative 2(b), lands open for future leasing consideration would be the same as those in Alternative 2(a), but only for RD&D leases. The BLM would issue a commercial lease only when a lessee satisfies the conditions of its RD&D lease and the regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 3926 for conversion to a commercial lease. The preference right acreage, if any, would be included in the converted lease. The environmental impacts of Alternative 2(b) would be analytically indistinguishable from those of Alternative 2(a). Only the method of obtaining a lease would be different.

## Alternative 3 – Research Lands Focus (RD&D with PRLA only)

Under this alternative, 10 land use plans would be amended such that public lands for commercial leasing would be available only where there were existing RD&D leases at the time the ROD for the 2012 Final OSTs PEIS is signed. The six current RD&D leases contain terms and conditions that could allow commercial development of the original leases and the associated PRLA totaling 30,720 acres. Another three potential RD&D leases covering 1,920 acres (two in Colorado and one in Utah) are currently undergoing NEPA analysis, bringing the total acreage to 32,640 acres as available for potential oil shale leasing under this alternative.

This alternative would also analyze foregoing the leasing of tar sands for the commercial development of fluid mineral resources, entirely, except for one commercial tar sands lease currently under consideration covering approximately 2,100 acres in Asphalt Ridge.

## Alternative 4(a) – Moderate Development

Under this alternative, the BLM would amend 10 land use plans in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to designate acreage less than 2,017,714 acres as available for future consideration for leasing for commercial oil shale leasing and would amend four land use plans in Utah to designate less than 430,686 acres as available for application for commercial tar sands leasing. It would exclude from commercial oil shale or tar sands leasing:

1. The whole of the Adobe Town “Very Rare or Uncommon” area, as designated by the Wyoming Environment Quality Council on April 10, 2008.
2. All ACECs located within the areas analyzed in the 2008 OSTs PEIS.

## Alternative 4(b) – Moderate Development with RD&D First Requirement

Under Alternative 4(b), the lands open for future leasing consideration would be the same as those in Alternative 4(a) but only for RD&D leases. The BLM would issue a commercial lease only when a lessee satisfies the conditions of its RD&D lease and the regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 3926 for conversion to a commercial lease. The preference right acreage, if any, would be included in the converted lease. The environmental impacts of Alternative 4(b) would be analytically indistinguishable from those of Alternative 4(a). Only the method of obtaining a lease would be different.

<http://ostseis.anl.gov>



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