



**Your Comments Needed to Protect Fortification  
Elk Herd & Fragile Landscape At Risk  
Tell BLM not to Waive Protective Lease Stipulations**

The Buffalo Bureau of Land Management recently released the Camp John SMA 1.2 Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA authorizes the development of 25 coalbed methane wells and proposes waiving protective “no surface occupancy” stipulations for elk habitat and calving areas. The EA also authorizes development on steep slopes and in areas with Limited Reclamation Potential. The Camp John EA can be found here: <http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/bfo/CampJohnUnit.html>

**BACKGROUND:**

The Fortification Creek Area has been recognized by BLM and the public for its unique values since the mid-1970s. Fortification is valued for its unique and highly acclaimed elk herd, steep terrain, deep washes and slopes of highly erosive arid soils -- characteristics easily damaged by development and not reclaimable.

Fortification was the last remaining sanctuary of primarily undeveloped lands in the Powder River Basin until a 2011 BLM decision allowed the development of hundreds of CBM wells to proceed in this fragile area. That BLM decision is currently under appeal by citizen groups. In the meantime, the BLM continues to permit CBM gas development risking the future viability of the rare and isolated Fortification Creek elk herd whose existence is already imperiled due to the surrounding oil and gas production.

**TAKE ACTION:**

Please write to BLM at the address or email below BY JULY 15, 2013 to protect the last remaining wild and fragile landscape in the Powder River Basin.

**Tell BLM to:**

- Maintain the existing protective lease stipulations that require “No Surface Occupancy” for oil and gas development. These lease stipulations were established to ensure the elk habitat will be protected and they must not be waived.
- Maintain the prohibition of development on steep slopes and in areas with limited reclamation potential. These areas were intended to be off limits to development due to their fragile and erosive nature and the inability to be effectively reclaimed and BLM should not permit oil and gas development in these areas.
- Not permit new CBM wells until plugging and reclamation of old wells is complete. Over 10,000 CBM wells are shut in or idle and another 1,200 or more are orphaned. Tell BLM there is no need for new CBM wells to be drilled – especially in the fragile Fortification area.

Comments on the EA can be sent to:

Jim Verplancke, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM Buffalo Field Office, 1425 Fort St., Buffalo, WY, 82834 or emailed to: [BLM\\_WY\\_Fort\\_Crk\\_WYMail@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_WY_Fort_Crk_WYMail@blm.gov). Comments must be received or post-marked by July 15, 2013.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT FORTIFICATION**