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Shifting Baselines and New Meridians: Water, Resources, Landscapes, and the Transformation of the American West (Summer Conference, June 4-6)

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SLIDES: Energy Production and the West's Wild Places

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Energy Production and the West's Wild Places

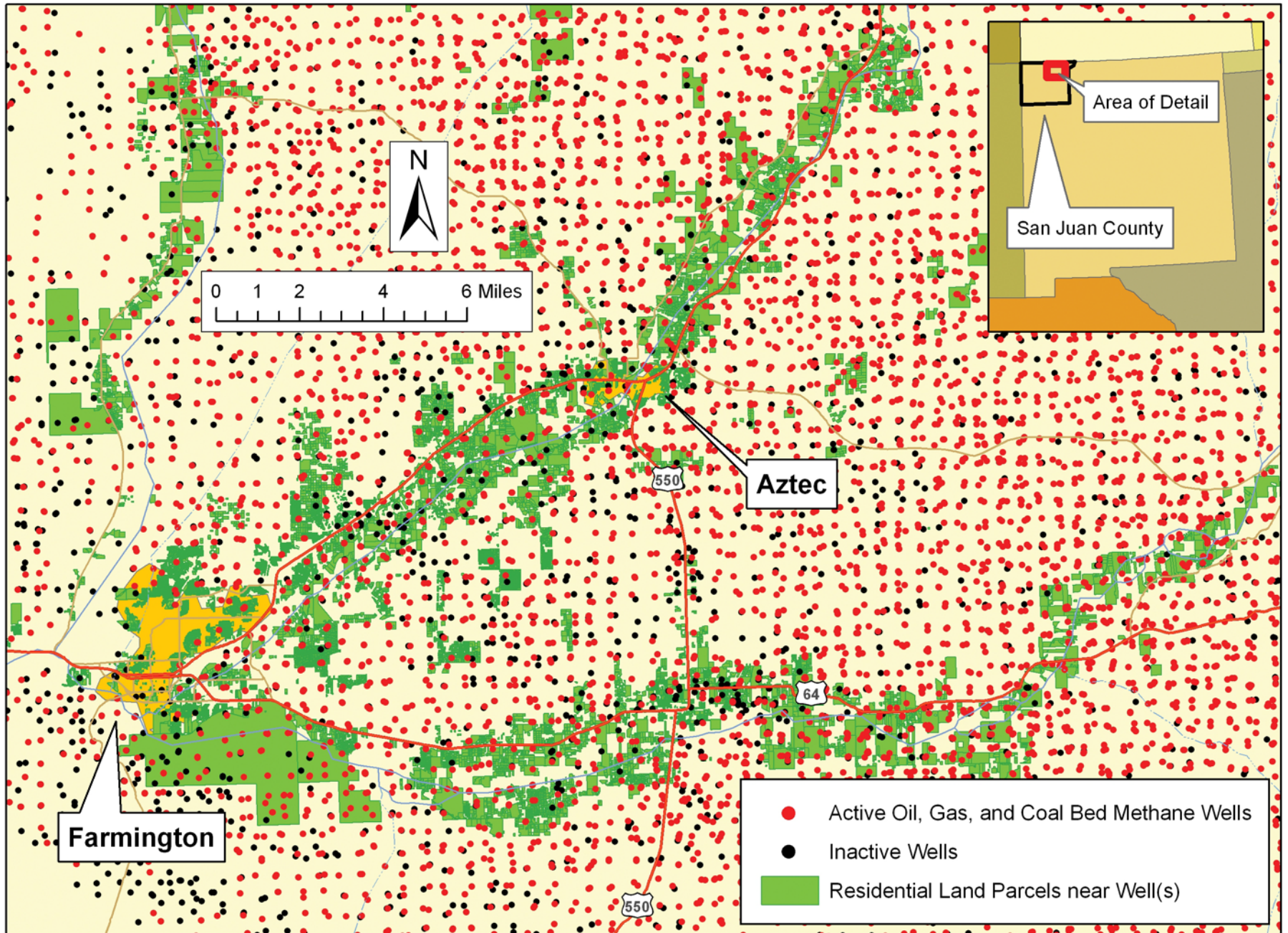


Energy issues on public land:

- Oil and gas exploration and production
- Oil shale and tar sands development
- Transmission lines

Oil & Gas Exploration and Production: The Rocky Mountain Boom

- Federal land in five states: about 80,000 wells; 30 million acres leased but not yet drilled; more than 130,000 new wells expected over the next 15-20 years.
- Colorado: Activity has tripled since 1990; over 35,000 active wells; at least 120,000 additional wells projected over the next 30 years.



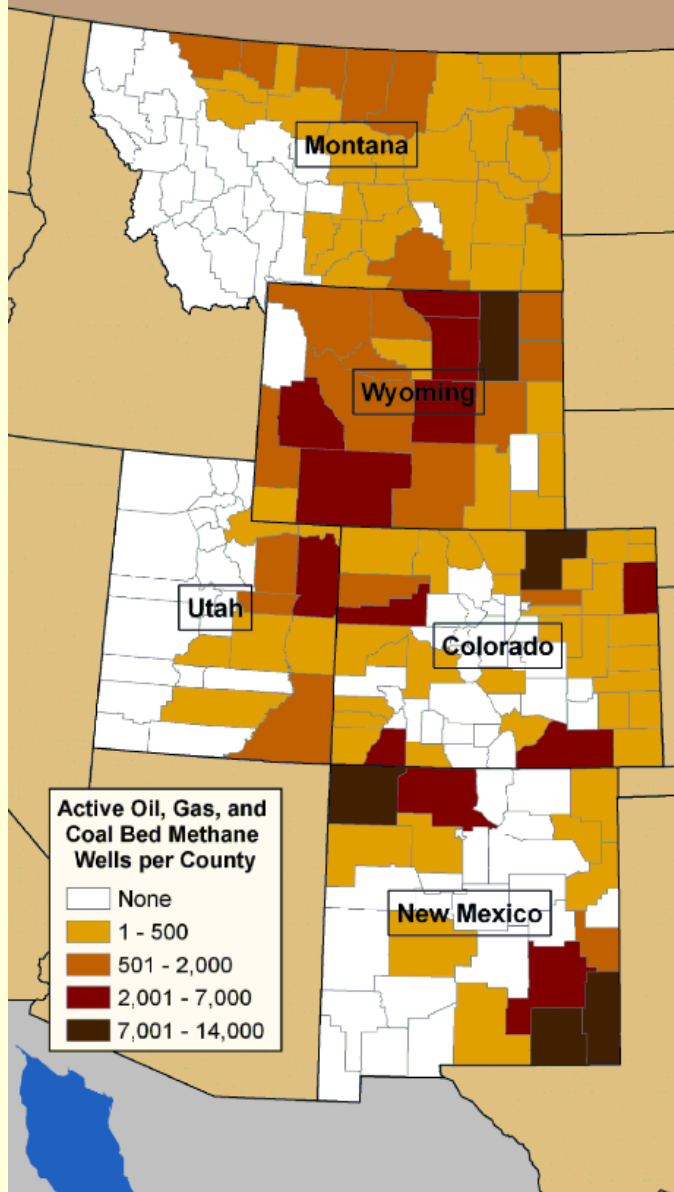
Jonah Field, Wyoming



Well pads



Wells in the Rocky Mountain Region



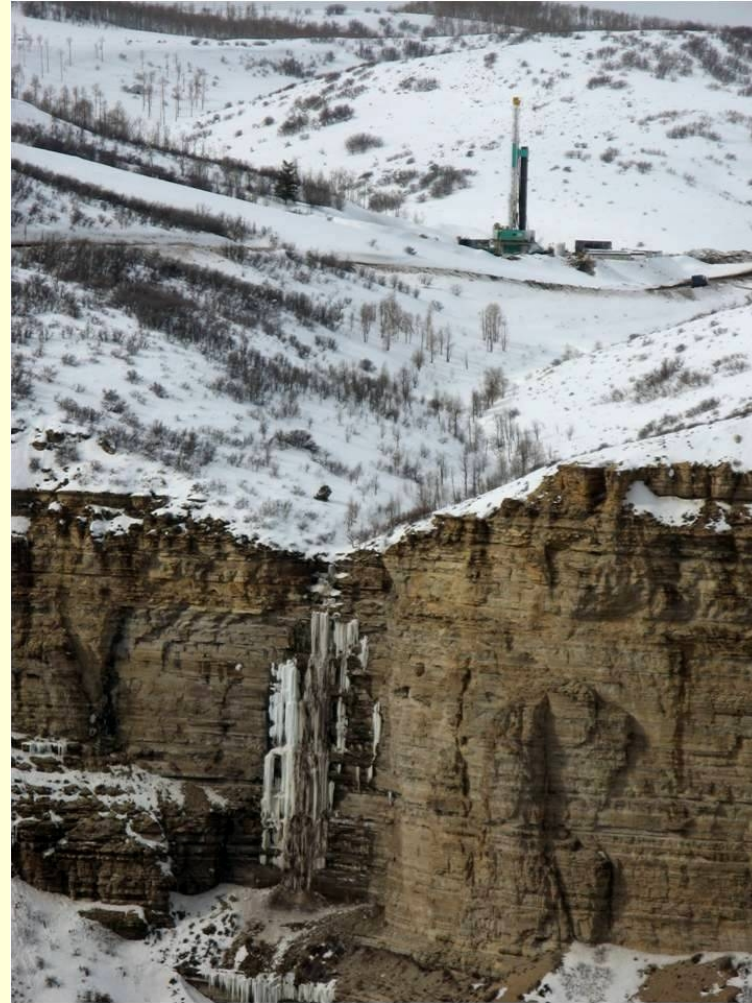
Coming to a county near you.....

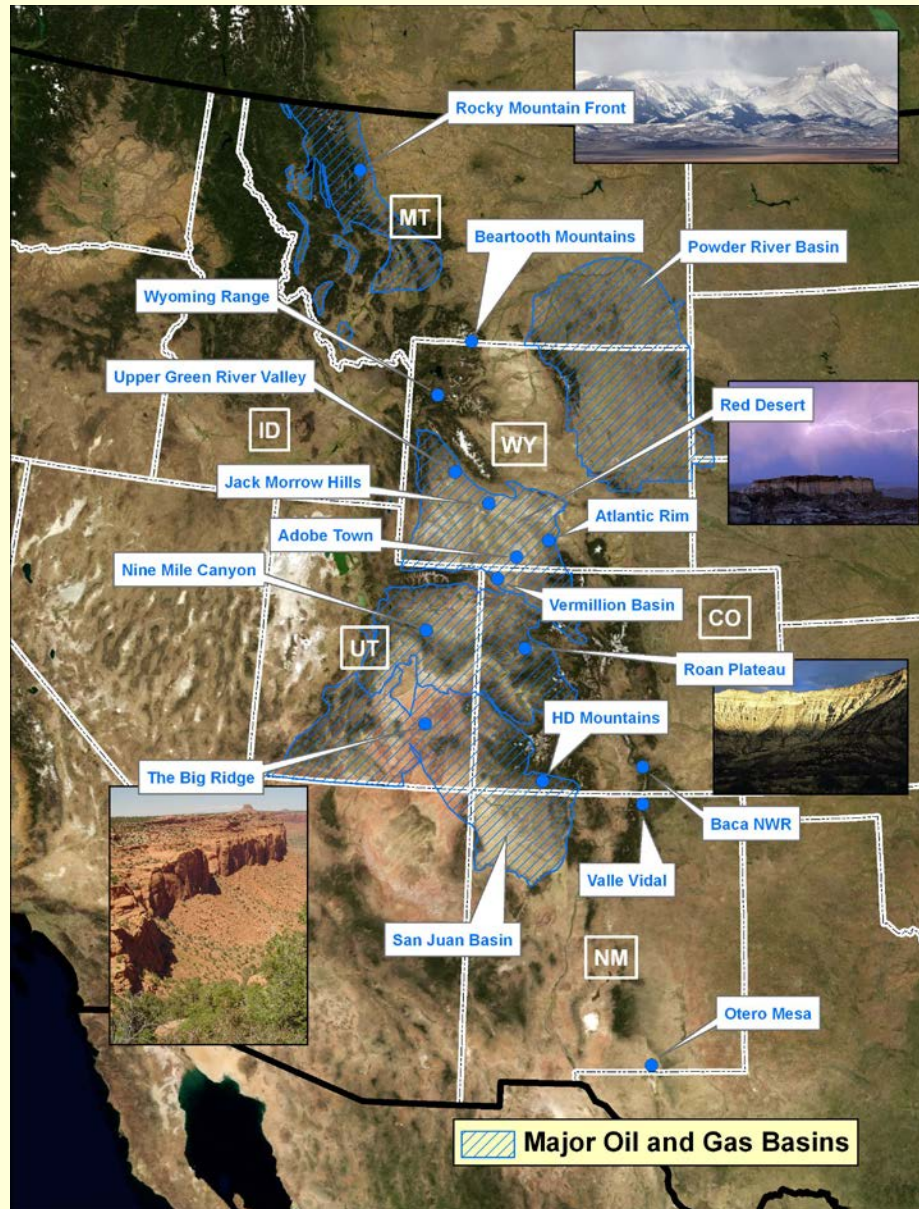
Impacts of Oil and Gas Drilling

- Wildlife habitat, including vegetation and aquatic habitat, can be destroyed. Wildlife avoid human disturbance such as roads, noise, and structures.
- Air, groundwater, and surface water contamination from hazardous substances, diesel engines, and chemicals.
- Wild landscapes and solitude are lost forever.
- Impacts on communities and local economies.

DANGER
H₂S
POISONOUS GAS

BP AMERICA PRODUCTION COMPANY
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL
326-9200
AFTER HOURS 599-7656
BLANCO COM 2-1B







Roan Plateau

- 70,000 acres in the bulls-eye for drilling
- More biodiversity than almost any other place in CO
- Congressionally-proposed wilderness
- Almost \$5 million annually contributed to the local economy from hunting and outdoor recreation

Upper Green River Valley



Upper Green River Valley

- BLM has proposed 4,400 more wells — almost nine times the number currently in place.
- Crucial wildlife habitat — including the second longest migration route in the Americas;
- Ozone in region has reached over 120 ppb; national limit is now 75 ppb.
- Benzene found in water supply wells.

Federal Statutory Exemptions

Clean Air Act

- exempt from requirement that related small sources of hazardous pollutants, like wells, be added together for purposes of measuring emissions;
- exempt from requirement that unrelated small sources be regulated -- unless they are within a metro area of at least one million;
- hydrogen sulfide is not on the list of hazardous air pollutants.

Federal Water Laws

Safe Drinking Water Act: Hydraulic fracturing exempt from Underground Injection Control program.

Clean Water Act: Oil and gas operations exempt from permit requirements for stormwater runoff.

RCRA, CERCLA, NEPA

- **RCRA:** E&P waste exempt from RCRA and can be discarded into pits, ponds, land farms, injection wells, or buried;
- **CERCLA:** Oil and gas exempt from CERCLA
- **NEPA:** EPA Act increased the ability to categorically exclude a broad range of oil and gas exploration and drilling activities from public involvement and impact analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Oil Shale and Tar Sands



Oil Shale and Tar Sands

- BLM proposal opens up almost 2 million acres in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah for development;
- Important area for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and clean water would be destroyed;
- Could require as much power as 7 million homes;
- Could require as much water as used by 1.5 million people per year;
- Tar sands production in Canada generates three times the global warming pollution per barrel as convention petroleum and has produced 30 square miles of toxic waste.

Transmission Lines

Impacts:

- wildlife habitat
- solitude and recreation opportunities
- historical or cultural values
- water quality
- ecosystems

GOOD NEWS!!

SOLUTIONS

#1 Reduce demand through efficiency, renewables, alternatives like public transit, and green building

Efficiency: the United States can cost-effectively reduce energy consumption by an additional 25-30% or more over the course of the next 20-25 years (ACEEE).

- Natural Gas: High-efficiency furnaces and hot water heaters can save 15%
- Fuel: By 2050 we can triple the fuel efficiency of cars.
- Electricity: Energy Star appliances can save up to 50% of power needed.

SOLUTIONS

#2 Protect the Wildest Places:

roadless areas, wildlife refuges, wilderness quality lands, and more.

*“I strongly support oil and gas development in our state, but I also believe **some places are simply too special to develop.**”*

U.S. Senator John Barrasso, R-WY

*“There are some places that because of their outstanding recreational, scenic, and wildlife attributes, exploration should not occur because the technology currently available for exploration is still too invasive to be compatible with other uses of the land. The Valle Vidal is **one of these special places.**”*

U.S. Representative Heather Wilson, R-NM

SOLUTIONS

#3: Voluntary efforts by companies to implement Best Management Practices:

- Preventive maintenance
- New equipment
- Substituting non-toxic materials
- Reduce, reuse, recycle
- Modifying processes
- Available, affordable and often profitable

Oil and Gas BMP examples

- Capturing air emissions;
- Fracturing with water or green fluids;
- Stormwater pollution prevention, like vegetative ground cover and berms;
- Closed-loop drilling to manage waste;
- Centralized operations to reduce truck traffic and ground disturbance;
- Directional drilling and multiple well pads

SOLUTIONS

#4 New public policies to keep up with rapid growth and new technologies by requiring more environmentally friendly drilling.

Federal

State

County

City

