

JUST THE FACTS!

The facts behind the stories and half-truths about the 77 leases Secretary Salazar withdrew from Utah BLM's December 2008 oil and gas lease sale

- On November 4, 2008 the BLM's Utah state office issued a final sale list of parcels to be offered at its December 19, 2008 oil and gas lease sale: 241 parcels coverings 359,450 acres.¹
- BLM did not consult with the National Park Service before releasing the final sale list as it had done for the past 15 years.
- On November 24, 2008 the National Park Service asked the BLM to defer 93 parcels. The NPS said that some of these parcels could be leased if BLM would implement, with no exceptions, a number of protective stipulations recommended by NPS.
 - Many of the parcels that the National Park Service requested be deferred were immediately adjacent or otherwise very close to the boundaries of Arches and Canyonlands national parks and Dinosaur National Monument.
- On November 25, 2008 BLM agreed to withdraw 24 parcels, some of them because of the National Park Service's request (15) and some of them because of requests by Utah Governor Huntsman's taskforce on Outdoor Recreation and Moab (9) (note that the National Park Service had also requested that all of these parcels be removed).
- On December 2, 2008 BLM withdrew 7 more parcels from the proposed lease sale for further review and analysis. In addition, it deleted 9 parcels which were already under lease or which conflicted with existing coal leases.
- On December 4, 2008 BLM received more than 1,600 protests over the December 2008 lease sale, including protests from Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and several other conservation and historic preservation organizations. BLM also received protests from the Outdoor Industry Association, sportsmen organizations, and a collection of river runners, guides, and outfitters.
- On December 12, 2008 BLM announced that it would be offering 163,935 acres on 135 parcels at the auction the following week; this announcement included the withdrawal of some 73 additional parcels from its final sale list.

¹ This is our best effort to make sense of the sale information provided on BLM's December 2008 lease sale website. Discrepancies in numbers in this fact sheet are due to conflicting BLM information. See http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/energy/oil_and_gas/oil_and_gas_lease/december_2008_oil0.html.

- On December 15, 2008 BLM withdrew parcels 142 and 142A. By December 19, 2008 BLM was offering 131 parcels.
- On December 17, 2008 Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and six other conservation and historic preservation groups filed suit against the Interior Department alleging that the sale of 79 parcels violated federal environmental and historic preservation laws. That suit was filed in federal district court for the District of Columbia and captioned *Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. Allred*, 1:07cv2187 (RMU).
 - A majority of the parcels at issue in this litigation were comprised of parcels that the National Park Service had requested be deferred from the December sale, but BLM refused to do so. Several of these parcels are located very close to National Park Service units, including one parcel that was adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument.
- At the lease sale on December 19, 2008 the BLM sold 116 parcels through competitive auction.
- On December 22, 2008 the BLM sold an additional 12 parcels non-competitively.
- Plaintiffs Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance *et al.*'s temporary restraining order sought to prevent the issuance of 77 leases sold at the December 2008 lease sale (competitively and noncompetitively).²
- On January 17, 2009 the U.S. District Court Judge Ricardo Urbina granted Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance *et al.*'s motion for a temporary restraining order and enjoined BLM from issuing the 77 leases. Judge Urbina held that the plaintiffs were likely to prevail on the merits of their claims which alleged that the BLM had not prepared proper analysis of impacts to air quality and cultural resources from the issuance of those leases.
- On February 4, 2009 Secretary Salazar announced that he had directed the BLM not to accept bids on those 77 parcels.
- On April 9, 2009 the Interior Board of Land Appeals dismissed an appeal brought by 13 companies challenging Secretary Salazar's February 4th decision.
- On May 13, 2009 two groups of plaintiffs filed two separate cases in federal district court in Utah challenging Secretary Salazar's February 4th decision. One group of plaintiffs consists of three Utah counties and the other group of plaintiffs includes three companies who were high bidders at the December 2008 lease sale.

² The number of parcels being challenged changed from 79 to 77 because of last minute changes by BLM and the fact that two of the parcels were not sold.