
From The Southeastern Utah Wilderness Alliance

by Scott Groene

Green River Canyon Slated for Development

The Green River is currently threatened by two proposals. First, BLM will soon release a new proposal to allow a slew of natural gas wells to be drilled on either side of the Green River just north of the head of Desolation Canyon. The proposal would turn a pristine area, generally reached only by flat water float trips down the river from Ouray, into a mess of scattered roads and pipelines. Over twenty of the wells would be drilled within a proposed wilderness area. This threat appeared to be dead a year ago, when the BLM state director ruled in SUWA's favor on an appeal against an earlier proposal to drill 52 gas wells in the "Desert Springs Unit" in this same area. But the oil and gas industry is back. To get on the mailing list for the plan call the Vernal BLM office at (801) 781-4410.

Second, the BLM's Vernal District Office is proposing to open Nutter's Hole area, on the east side of the Green River near Sand Wash, to commercial collection of building stone, with permits granted for 150 tons of stone per year per permit (with apparently no limit on the number of permits issued). Trucks and hoists would be allowed cross-country travel to retrieve the stone, degrading the remote and rarely visited area which is now proposed for wilderness. Comments on the project, or requests for information, can be directed to:

Richard Wilson, BLM-Vernal District, 170 South, 500 East,
Vernal UT, 84078, (801) 781-4410.