Twitter Thread by Eric Lipton



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MINING THREAD PART 4: Industrial-scale helium project will be give FINAL approve by Trump Interior Depart(not mining but drilling) as soon as this week in one of most iconic locations in US. An unspoiled area of majestic beauty. Pics by Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance/Bloxham



The plan near here, in part controlled by Interior's Bureau of Land Management: one of the largest helium drilling operations in the US. Would start small, to prove the reserves. But backers of project could ultimately produce "5 to 10% of world annual helium production"

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Twin Bridges Bowknot Helium Project
Administrative Draft Environmental Assessment
Emery County, Utah
October 2020
DOI-BLM-UT-G020-2020-0033-EA



As BLM evaluated this project, it asked a series of questions.

abandonment of the Project are included in Appendix A.

1.5 IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

A BLM Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) reviewed the proposed well locations and ROW applications submitted by Twin Bridges using an ID Team Checklist (Appendix B) and identified resources that may be affected by the Proposed Action and Alternative that warranted analysis in the EA. The resources and issues identified by the BLM ID Team include the following:

- **Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions**:
  - What are the potential effects of the Project on air quality?
  - What are the potential GHG emissions of the Project and how do GHG emissions contribute to climate change?
- **Soils**: What are the potential effects on soils from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project?

The helium project would be in part on state land, part of in the LABYRINTH CANYON WILDERNESS AREA "one of the most sublime and least traveled areas of federal public lands in the nation. A stunning and remote redrock landscape, it lacks any sign of human development"

4. The Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness is located in the San Rafael Desert region of southeastern Utah. This is one of the most sublime and least traveled areas of federal public lands in the nation. A stunning and remote redrock landscape, it lacks any sign of human development. The overwhelming silence is broken only by the wind or the call of a circling raven. There are no buildings or fixed lights to detract from the natural form of the cliffs, canyons, and plateaus.

So what kind of IMPACT would this project have on this WILDERNESS area? Let's look at the findings by Interior Department, which is slated to approve the project in the coming week. Eight NEGATIVE impacts on this page.

Wilderness Character

What is the effect of each component activity on the qualities of wilderness character? What mitigation measures will be taken?

UNTRAMMELED

Activity #	Component Activity for this Alternative	Positive	Negative	No Effect
1	Road upgrade; 30-foot-wide ROW for approximately 2.7 miles (14,445 feet), 9.9 acres disturbed; 10-14 day construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☐	☒
2	Wellpad: 300 × 590 feet, 5.4 acres disturbance (2.4 after initial reclamation); 10-14 days construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
3	Drilling rig, 150 ft derrick height, up to 5 temporary trailers on site; mobilization & drilling period up to 34 days	☐	☒	☐
4	Holding tanks, transfer pumps, separators, vessels, flowlines, safety equipment; painted or buried to blend with surroundings	☐	☒	☐
5	Pipeline; 30-foot-wide ROW for approximately 4.9 miles (25,880 feet); 17.8 acres disturbed; 30-day construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
6	Drilling additional wellheads, separator, and flow lines to existing well pad facility and pipelines; up to 20 days drilling period for each	☐	☒	☐
7	Soil recontouring, redistribution & reseeding; 3.0 acres (2.4 acres disturbance after initial reclamation)	☐	☒	☐
8	Well capped below ground level; soil recontouring, redistribution & reseeding; complete when 75% background cover achieved; 43.1 acres total disturbance	☐	☒	☐
9	Improved access and increased visitation	☐	☐	☒
	Total Number of Effects		8	NE
Untrammeled Total Rating		-8		

Another FIVE on this page.

Explain:

Untrammeled quality is defined as unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation. Construction work on Emery County Road 1025 and the well pad, drilling activities, production infrastructure, pipeline construction, drilling additional wells, and any rehabilitation activities will be observable from numerous locations within the surrounding wilderness area, in particular the Fivehole Arch trailhead and trail which the majority of visitors to this area use to experience the wilderness. Although temporary in nature and occurring adjacent to the wilderness boundaries within the 200 foot wide cherrystem corridor, these construction activities will nevertheless be observable to wilderness visitors and have an impact on their impression of human manipulation of the local environment. Drilling and casing of wells under this alternative will create a sub-surface impact to the federal mineral estate located outside the boundary of Twin Bridges' federal lease UTU-93713 and withdrawn from mineral entry in accordance with the designation of the Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness.

UNDEVELOPED

Activity #	Component Activity for this Alternative	Positive	Negative	No Effect
1	Road upgrade; 30-foot-wide ROW for approximately 2.7 miles (14,445 feet), 9.9 acres disturbed; 10-14 day construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
2	Wellpad: 300 × 590 feet, 5.4 acres disturbance (2.4 after initial reclamation); 10-14 days construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
3	Drilling rig, 150 ft derrick height, up to 5 temporary trailers on site; mobilization & drilling period up to 34 days	☐	☒	☐
4	Holding tanks, transfer pumps, separators, vessels, flowlines, safety equipment; painted or buried to blend with surroundings	☐	☐	☒
5	Pipeline; 30-foot-wide ROW for approximately 4.9 miles (25,880 feet); 17.8 acres disturbed; 30-day construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
6	Drilling additional wellheads, separator, and flow lines to existing well pad facility and pipelines; up to 20 days drilling period for each	☐	☒	☐
7	Soil recontouring, redistribution & reseeding; 3.0 acres (2.4 acres disturbance after initial reclamation)	☐	☐	☒

Another SEVEN on this page, evaluating how it will impact the sense of SOLITIDUE, which is a goal of national wilderness areas.

SOLITUDE OR PRIMITIVE & UNCONFINED RECREATION

Activity #	Component Activity for this Alternative	Positive	Negative	No Effect
1	Road upgrade; 30-foot-wide ROW for approximately 2.7 miles (14,445 feet), 9.9 acres disturbed; 10-14 day construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
2	Wellpad: 300 × 590 feet, 5.4 acres disturbance (2.4 after initial reclamation); 10-14 days construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
3	Drilling rig, 150 ft derrick height, up to 5 temporary trailers on site; mobilization & drilling period up to 34 days	☐	☒	☐
4	Holding tanks, transfer pumps, separators, vessels, flowlines, safety equipment; painted or buried to blend with surroundings	☐	☐	☒
5	Pipeline; 30-foot-wide ROW for approximately 4.9 miles (25,880 feet); 17.8 acres disturbed; 30-day construction period; adjacent to wilderness	☐	☒	☐
6	Drilling additional wellheads, separator, and flow lines to existing well pad facility and pipelines; up to 20 days drilling period for each	☐	☒	☐
7	Soil recontouring, redistribution & reseeding; 3.0 acres (2.4 acres disturbance after initial reclamation)	☐	☒	☐
8	Well capped below ground level; soil recontouring, redistribution & reseeding; complete when 75% background cover achieved; 43.1 acres total disturbance	☐	☒	☐
9	Improved access and increased visitation	☐	☐	☒
	Total Number of Effects		7	NE
Solitude or Primitive & Unconfined Rec. Total Rating		-7		

Explain:

Solitude is defined as the state of being alone or remote from habitations or the sights and sounds of other people; the experience of a lonely, unfrequented, or secluded place.

Stepping back, it is clear that the United States needs more helium. A lot more. It is broadly used in medical devices, electronics, and even balloons for kids. And there is not enough of it. https://t.co/HfbxEaGf2y

Also, the backers of this project are working hard to minimize impact. The actual drilling will take place, according to the plan, just outside the wilderness area, but then travel horizontally underground. Also roads and other improvements needed. Statement from the company

1- The Bowknot Helium Project is projected to generate hundreds of high-paying jobs and provide between $250 and $575 million in royalties (to Utah public schools) and taxes to county state and federal governments. We believe that Bowknot may ultimately provide between 5 and 10% of world annual helium production. The USA may otherwise become increasingly dependent on supplies from Russia and the Middle East. Strong bi-partisan support for Helium as a critical mineral is due to its unique role in medical, semiconductor and aerospace applications. Our leases were issued to the company prior to the designation of the wilderness. The company is proposing no surface activity on wilderness lands.

We also love these lands and are committed to our project enhancing and not detracting from them.

2- Twin Bridges will assess the timing of any proposed activity based the result of the permitting process and other considerations.

Officials at Interior Department told The NYT that the Trump administration is rushing these permits. It is pushing staff to wrap up the review by as soon as this week. It transferred authority to oversee project out of local office. Environmentalists sued last week to block it

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, *et al.*, Plaintiffs, v. David Bernhardt, *et al.*, Defendants.	Civ. No. 1:20-cv-03654-RC **HEARING REQUESTED**

PLAINTIFFS' MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER AND PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

Here readers is the draft Environmental Impact study by Interior for this project. You can read it yourself. https://t.co/XjnxGqxR72

CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze the potential impacts of Twin Bridges LLC's (Twin Bridges') proposed application for permits to drill (APD) its federal oil and gas lease for exploratory helium, including the associated federal authorizations that would be necessary to support an APD, including underground authorizations to access its oil and gas leases and various rights of way permits the well pad and product lines (collectively the Project). The proposed Project is located in Emery County, Utah (the Project).

This EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result from the implementation of the Proposed Action or its alternatives. An EA assists the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in project planning, ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and determining whether any significant impacts could result from the analyzed actions. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) updated the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the NEPA in 2020. These new regulations became effective on September 14, 2020. As outlined in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1506.13 of the new regulations, the new regulations apply to all NEPA processes begun after the effective date, but agencies have the discretion to apply them to ongoing NEPA processes. The BLM had already initiated the preparation of this EA on September 14, 2020. Therefore, the BLM is completing the EA using the CEQ NEPA regulations that were in place before September 14, 2020. Significance is defined by the applicable CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA in 40 CFR 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). A FONSI documents why the selected action would not result in significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in BLM's *Price Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan* (Price RMP) (BLM 2008a), as amended. If the BLM determines that approving Twin Bridges' ROWs and/or APDs would result in significant impacts, then the BLM would prepare an EIS for the action. If not, a decision record (DR) may be signed for the EA that approves the alternative selected.

1.1.1 Background and Project Overview

Twin Bridges holds three mineral leases in Emery County, Utah, all located within a recently designated wilderness area (see Appendix F Map F-1). Twin Bridges acquired two mineral leases with the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA):

- ML-53189 was acquired on July 1, 2015, and is located in Section 2, Township 26 South (T26S), Range 16 East (R16E) (596 acres).
- ML-53420 was acquired on December 1, 2016, and is located in Section 36, Township 25 South (T25S), R16E (640 acres).

In addition to these SITLA leases, on December 11, 2018 Twin Bridges also purchased a federal oil and gas lease (Parcel 257, UTU-93713), which is located in Section 7, and portions of Sections 5, 6, and 8, Township 26 South, Range (T26S), Range 17 East (R17E) (1,410 acres). On February 18, 2020, Twin Bridges and BLM entered into a Contract for Extraction and Sale of Federal Helium (Contract No. 20-02) for the federal lease pursuant to the Helium Privatization Act 50 United States Code (USC) 167.

And here again is the story where we examine this project, and three other public land mining projects--all of which expect to soon get or just recently received major approvals from Trump admin. Please read and share. This is your land. https://t.co/hARCFWtqph