



For Immediate Release

August 13, 2007

Study Shows Pronghorn Antelope Coexisting with Gas Wells at Current Development Levels

New York- As the fastest land animal in North America, the pronghorn antelope is also proving adaptable to science-informed development, according to the Wildlife Conservation Society, which has just released its second annual report on the interactions of pronghorn with oil and gas development in the Upper Green River Basin in Wyoming. Similar to the first annual report published last summer, the new data suggest that the population of the pronghorn antelope herds remain strong throughout the Anticline at the current level of development. The ongoing five-year study by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) utilized input from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The Upper Green River Basin in western Wyoming holds vast reserves of natural gas, including the Pinedale Anticline, which is the nation's second largest gas field. It is also home to several species of wildlife, including pronghorn antelope that rely on the Anticline for crucial wintering range.

Researchers again did not detect any differences in survival rates or body mass of pronghorn captured in and among the gas fields (designated experimental animals) and those captured at sites far from petroleum activities (designated control animals).

"Although we initially predicted some potential negative impacts from habitat loss and disturbance, at this juncture none have been detected. With appropriate actions it remains possible to responsibly manage the resources of the Upper Green River Valley," said WCS researcher Joel Berger, co-author of the study with lead WCS scientists Drs. Kim Murray Berger and Jon Beckmann. Such management actions will be determined in the yet to be released BLM Resource Management Plan.

The second-year report indicates that antelope are not avoiding gas field areas within the Anticline; however, to date only about 3% of the surface area in the Pinedale Anticline has been disturbed. In the Jonah field, researchers detected that some animals appear to be avoiding those areas of highest-intensity development. The data were collected by fitting 50 pronghorn with global positioning system (GPS) radio collars. Researchers this year deployed 100 VHF radio collars to expand the scope of their study for the remaining three years.

The GPS tracking system also showed that pronghorn rely disproportionately on specific parcels of federal and state land that facilitate major movements between summer and winter ranges. Several of these parcels are within development areas. Thus, gas field development in some

Contact:

John Delaney: (718) 220-3275; jdelaney@wcs.org

Leigh Work: (208) 787-3069; lwork@wcs.org

Deena McMullen: (303) 222-6348; deena.mcmullen@shell.com



areas of the Upper Green River Basin may have little impact on the animals, whereas development in other areas may hinder pronghorn movements or limit pronghorn numbers.

The five-year study is voluntarily funded by Ultra Resources and Shell Exploration & Production Company, in cooperation with Questar Market Resources.

“Balancing resources in the Pinedale Anticline requires a collaborative effort. We realize that by investing in wildlife studies, such as this antelope research, we can better understand how to protect wildlife and maintain high standards for energy development,” explained J.R. Justus, from Shell Exploration & Production Company.

Bill Picquet from Ultra Resources commented, “The operators on the Pinedale Anticline are committed to developing this gas field in an environmentally responsible manner. Reliable data from WCS at the end of the five-year study will be invaluable to show us how we can continue to sustain the pronghorn antelope and other wildlife in the area.”

The next three years of research will evaluate the relationship between development location and movement of antelope herds. The second annual report is now available to the public and can be accessed by the WCS web site (www.wcs.org/yellowstone) or at www.pinedaleseis.com.

About WCS

The Wildlife Conservation Society saves wildlife and wild lands. We do so through careful science, international conservation, education, and the management of the world’s largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together, these activities change individual attitudes toward nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in sustainable interaction on both a local and a global scale. WCS is committed to this work because we believe it essential to the integrity of life on Earth.

#

Contact:

John Delaney: (718) 220-3275; jdelaney@wcs.org

Leigh Work: (208) 787-3069; lwork@wcs.org

Deena McMullen: (303) 222-6348; deena.mcmullen@shell.com