

## Atlantic Rim: An Overview

*(The following text was taken from the [Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) for the Atlantic Rim Natural Gas Field Development Project, issued by the BLM.)*

### Wildlife facts:

- The Atlantic Rim is considered the most productive big game region in Wyoming.
- The region includes crucial winter range for pronghorn, mule deer and elk.
- The Baggs Herd Unit of mule deer, in the southern half of the Atlantic Rim, is one of the most heavily hunted in the state.
- Several elk migration routes transverse the Atlantic Rim; the proposed project could alter or block elk movement along existing migration routes.
- The region hosts a large population of greater sage grouse: 88 leks are located in and within 2 miles of the Atlantic Rim project area.

### The project as proposed:

- The project area equals 270,080 acres; approximately 116 exploration wells already are drilled.
- The project eventually would encompass 2,000 wells total (1,800 coal-bed methane wells and 200 traditional gas wells).
- Drilling would take 20 years, with a life-of-project of 30-50 years.
- In addition to the wells, the Atlantic Rim project would include 1,000 miles of new roads, upgrades of existing roads and pipeline construction, plus 1,480 acres of ancillary facilities.

### Impacts to hunting:

- The duration of the effects would be for the life of the project and may affect more than one generation of recreation user.
- Impacts to the predominant recreation activities in the Atlantic Rim – hunting, pleasure driving and wildlife viewing – would be significant.
- The proposed action would diminish the wildlife presence, degrade scenery and introduce traffic and noise.
- The natural setting would be converted to an industrialized setting by development.
- The increased road density, traffic, noise, and dust of development would displace big game species. When big game species leave an area, hunters soon leave as well, because hunting success declines. This could have a serious financial effect on commercial big game outfitters. It also would tend to concentrate game and hunters in undeveloped adjacent areas, which would impact the quality and quantity of forage, and therefore the health of the animals.
- Reduced populations and population viability can be expected.
- The extent of wildlife displacement is impossible to predict.