



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Issues Oil and Gas Best Practices for Wildlife Protection

Washington, D.C. – As part of ongoing efforts to continue to increase responsible domestic energy production while protecting wildlife near oil, gas, and geothermal facilities on BLM lands, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced it has expanded best practice standards for the fluid minerals industry.

Under the Obama Administration’s all-of-the-above energy strategy, domestic oil and gas production has grown each year the President has been in office, with domestic oil production currently higher than any time in nearly a decade and natural gas production at its highest level ever. Foreign oil imports now account for less than 50 percent of the oil consumed in America – the lowest level since 1995.

Active cooperation between industry leaders and the BLM has contributed in recent years to significant decreases in the number of wildlife deaths associated with oil and gas operations. The new Best Management Practices (BMP) build on this cooperation in establishing a consistent policy approach and set of practices for guiding future fluid mineral activities.

“Identifying these mitigation strategies is critical to effectively carrying out the BLM’s multi-use mission,” said Acting BLM Director Mike Pool. “Responsive wildlife protection policies demonstrate our Bureau’s fundamental commitment to promoting responsible energy development on public lands while safeguarding wildlife, livestock, and public health.”

Best practices established in the policy focus on the following five industry situations:

1. Open pits and tanks containing freestanding liquid;
2. Chemical tank secondary containment;
3. Pit, tank, and trench entrapment hazards;
4. Open exhaust stacks; and
5. Wire enclosure fencing.

All BLM field offices will ensure new fluid mineral permit approvals contain appropriate BMPs necessary for complying with existing Federal energy, wildlife, and environmental laws and regulations. The BLM has an established policy requiring the use of state-of-the-art environmental mitigation measures in all permits it approves. Through its Onshore Oil and Gas Order Number 1, the BLM also encourages the industry to proactively include these best practices in their permit applications prior to a review by the BLM.

The BMPs identified in the [new policy](#) take into consideration unique wildlife needs and the potential hazards of extractive industry operations. Specific mitigation strategies include using closed loop systems or nets for managing fluids, constructing wildlife escape ramps in open excavation operations, and installing screens on all open exhaust stacks to prevent bird and bat entry or nesting.

Strategies are also included that reduce threats to important bird species like the Greater-Sage Grouse and Lesser Prairie-Chicken. For these species, demonstrably effective mitigation measures will utilize fence markings around production facility enclosures to prevent wire collisions near mating areas. Increased industry adoption of these best practices at field sites across BLM lands promises to yield healthier environments.

BMPs for the fluid minerals industry are critical components in the BLM's larger effort to reduce the preventable causes of wildlife mortality across the country while also protecting human health and safety. Many of the BMPs also improve safeguards against groundwater contamination and emissions that may affect water and air quality for humans and wildlife alike. When identifying appropriate permit conditions for new projects, BLM field offices will incorporate the new BMPs through the existing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process.

The new BMP policy follows a well-established BLM tradition of proactively protecting wildlife as part of the Bureau's multi-use mission facilitating both conservation and energy development. The implemented measures will help the agency and its oil and gas permittees remain in compliance with BLM regulations and Onshore Orders, the Fish and Wildlife Service's enforcement of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as well as with all other Federal regulations dedicated to protecting wildlife on Federal lands.

— BLM —

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land – the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.