

BLM Colorado Oil and Gas Lease Sale Process

Step	Process
Expressions of Interest (EOI) submitted to BLM	In order for lands to be considered for an oil and gas lease sale, a corporation or individual must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) or the BLM must make a motion to nominate particular lands. Once the BLM receives an EOI, the EOI is entered into the BLM database and given a number known as an EOI number. All EOIs coming into the SO on or after January 1, 2014, will be available for public viewing.
EOIs are adjudicated and parceled	<p>The lands proposed for lease sale in a particular EOI are then broken out into parcels of land no larger than 2560 acres. The maximum size of a lease is regulated by statute. Each parcel is given a unique parcel ID number.</p> <p>Once the EOI's have been parceled, BLM verifies the status of the land in each parcel to determine if they are available to be leased. If the lands are available for leasing, they are schedule for a specific sale. By statute, oil and gas lease sales are held quarterly. As a general rule, in BLM Colorado, field offices are assigned to one sale per year.</p>
Parcels provided to the field office to begin review process	<p>The lists of parcels proposed for lease along with GIS shapefiles and other mapping tools are provided to the field office(s) responsible for the lands being offered. The field office conducts an initial review of the parcels to determine conformity to the Resource Management Plan (RMP) and supplies a listing of the current lease stipulations for each parcel. Stipulations could range from standard lease stipulations to controlled surface use and timing limitations to no surface occupancy.</p> <p>If the field office's review of the parcels identifies a lack of resource protection measures not covered under the current RMP, the BLM may seek to defer the parcel until such time appropriate protective measures can be established.</p> <p>The field office compiles a listing of the parcels they propose to go forward in the leasing process and reasoning for those they believe should be deferred for further analysis.</p>
Deputy State Director Briefing	After the field office has conducted its initial review, the Deputy State Director is briefed and reasons for deferral(s) are provided. Upon vetting the reasons for deferral, the Deputy State Director approves list of parcels to be offered.
Parcels are posted for a 30 day public scoping period	<p>30 days prior to the start of the NEPA document, the general public is notified that specific parcels are being considered for a lease sale. The purpose of the scoping period is to allow the public along with state and other federal agencies to provide support for the lease sale or identify specific issues/concerns about a parcel(s) that BLM may not be aware of.</p> <p>The listing of the proposed parcels is posted to the BLM Colorado website along with maps of the parcels.</p>
Private land owners are notified	If a listed parcel is found to be on a privately-owned surface which overlays federally-owned minerals, the field office notifies the private surface owner, through a letter informing them the federal minerals below their surface lands have been proposed for leasing. The letter provides the surface owner an opportunity to make comments to BLM regarding the leasing of the mineral estate.
Coordination with local governments, state and other federal agencies.	At the same time the 30 day scoping period is initiated, BLM field offices will engage with local government, state and other federal agencies to obtain their input to the proposed leasing action. For BLM Colorado this would include City and County governments, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado State Land Board, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks System, Bureau of Reclamation and other surface management agencies.
Review of comments received during scoping	Information received during scoping is incorporated into a preliminary NEPA document. This is another point in the sale process where, as a result public feedback; a parcel(s) may be deferred or withdrawn from the sale.

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<p>Prepare Preliminary NEPA Document: Environmental Assessment (EA)/Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)</p>	<p>Following the analysis of public comment received during scoping, a preliminary EA/DNA is prepared by the field office that analyzes the effects of the proposed leasing action.</p> <p>The preliminary EA/DNA takes into account the potential impacts and conflicts that leasing a parcel could have while deferring detailed site specific analysis until an actual proposal for development has been submitted and more information is available.</p> <p>Lease notices could also be attached informing the prospective bidder(s) that specific conditions may be applied at the time a well is permitted. An example would be a permit condition of approval requiring a closed loop drilling system.</p> <p>The decision whether a parcel should be leased is based on the level of resource conflicts that may exist and if mitigation measures can be established to protect the resource(s). If our NEPA analysis shows that current protective measures contained in the governing RMP support the proposed action, the BLM proceeds with the action.</p> <p>The preliminary EA/DNA may make recommendations to defer additional parcels if conflicts that cannot be mitigated by existing stipulations or future conditions of approval are identified.</p>
<p>30 Day Public Comment Period</p>	<p>Through a press release the BLM Colorado State Office notifies the public that the preliminary EA/DNA and an unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are available for review and comment. The public can access the Preliminary EA/DNA and unsigned FONSI by either requesting a copy or through BLM Colorado's website. The BLM would prefer that the website be used. Maps are also provided for use by the public.</p> <p>The 30 day public comment period provides the public an opportunity to review BLM's analysis and proposed decision to lease lands where an individual/entity has expressed interest in leasing. The BLM is looking for comments about its analysis, did we consider all of the relevant factors; did BLM have access to sufficient information to make an informed decision and did we consider all relevant information in our decision. The NEPA process is about disclosing the potentially significant impacts of the proposed action/s and, while it considers public input, does not seek public consent. Although the affects to the human environment contributes to the analysis, it's not the deciding element. The BLM's multiple use mission requires a balanced approach and consideration of all resources and uses of all resources.</p>
<p>Prepare Final EA/DNA</p>	<p>At the conclusion of the 30 day comment period, the field office responds to all comments in the final EA/DNA and incorporates changes as necessary. Additional lease notices, if determined necessary, may also be attached. As a result of the information provided during the comment period, a parcel(s) may require further analysis and may be deferred or withdrawn from the sale.</p>
<p>Deputy State Director Briefing</p>	<p>Once the field office has reviewed and addressed the comments received during the comment period and prepared the final list of parcels, the Deputy State Director is briefed regarding the parcels to be offered for sale. Upon discussion of the comments provided by the public and the issues/concerns uncovered and addressed by the final EA/DNA the Deputy State Director approves the list of parcels to be offered.</p>
<p>Sale Notice and 30 Day Protest Period</p>	<p>Upon preparation of the Final EA/DNA, parcels are assigned a serialized case number. A Lease Sale Notice containing all of the parcels and specific stipulations is prepared and posted on the BLM Colorado website 90 days prior to the lease sale. The sale notice is available upon request in hard copy format. The Final EA/DNA, unsigned FONSI, updated maps, and GIS Shapefiles are also posted on the BLM website. Parcels and shapefiles will be available on the Energy Net website for public viewing 10 days after the Sale Notice is posted.</p>

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	<p>The posting of the Lease Sale Notice initiates a 30 Day Protest Period. The BLM Colorado State Office issues a press release to alert the public that BLM is accepting protests on the lease sale parcels to be offered.</p> <p>The protest period allows the public to express concerns about leasing on public lands and can encourage a parcel(s) to be deferred or withdrawn from the sale. All properly filed protests are reviewed and given a written response.</p> <p>In order for BLM Colorado to take protests into consideration, the protests must provide a substantial statement of reasoning for altering or withdrawing the lease sale. A statement of reasoning must be specific to a parcel(s) and provide specific information why the parcel(s) should not be considered for lease.</p>
State Director Briefing	<p>Prior to holding the lease sale the State Director is briefed regarding the protests, how they were addressed and the final list of parcels to be offered.</p>
Hold Sale	<p>The competitive oil and gas lease sale is held on line and is hosted by Energynet.com. The sale is open to the public; anyone wanting to participate in the sale must register to bid on the Energynet website. By regulation parcels are auctioned off starting at \$2 per acre. Parcels that did not receive a bid are available over the counter noncompetitively the day after the sale, or can be picked up in a 2 year window.</p> <p>Leases are issued after all monies have been received and protests have been responded to or dismissed, typically within 60 days after the sale.</p>