

Master Leasing Plans



In 2010, the BLM introduced leasing reform to manage oil and gas development on public lands. Leasing reform allows the BLM to conduct a more in-depth review of areas that are or may be opened to leasing at the planning level through the development of master leasing plans (MLPs). The purpose of an MLP is to plan for oil and gas development at the land-use plan level in a defined area containing a high level of potential resource concerns in an orderly, effective, timely, and environmentally responsible manner. MLPs create more certainty and predictability when leasing for oil and gas resources while protecting multiple-use values and providing consideration of natural and cultural resources. MLPs may apply to the leasing of federal minerals under BLM-administered surface estate and under state-owned or privately-owned surface (i.e., split estate). The two main components of an MLP are:

- Develop goals for maintaining or improving the condition of natural resource values in the area
- Identify resource protection measures and best management practices that may be adopted as lease stipulations in an RMP

The following are examples of planning decisions for the BLM to consider through the MLP process with appropriate supporting NEPA analysis:

- Phased leasing
- Phased development
- Requirements to reduce or capture emissions
- Multiple wells on a single pad
- Additional mitigation measures

The MLP process is conducted through the NEPA process using an interdisciplinary team that coordinates and/or consults with the public and other stakeholders that may be affected by the BLM's MLP decisions. The BLM has identified the South Park area for an MLP as part of this RMP revision. Park County and the Coalition for Upper South Platte have begun a separate preliminary effort to raise public awareness about the South Park MLP. The BLM will ultimately make the decisions related to the South Park MLP but will continue to engage the public and other stakeholders throughout the MLP process.

