



ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD

Oil and Gas Lease Sales Glossary of Terms

Area of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC] – An area on BLM land where special management attention is needed to protect, and prevent irreparable damage to important historical, cultural, and scenic values, fish, or wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards.

Application for Permit to Drill (APD) – An application filed by a party interested in drilling on BLM or other lands. This application is filed after a parcel is leased, and is accompanied by a fee, specific details about the plots, and anticipated equipment use. In Colorado, these applications are managed by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

Assessment of Biological Interest (ABI) Screen – An assessment tool developed by Rocky Mountain Wild that determines the ecological and biological impact that ground disturbing activities would have on sensitive wildlife and important habitat areas.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – The Bureau of Land Management is an agency within the United States Department of the Interior that administers more than 247.3 million acres of public lands in the United States, which constitutes one-eighth of the landmass of the country.

Best Management Practices [BMP] – State-of-the-art mitigation measures applied to oil and natural gas drilling and production to help ensure that energy development is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner. BMPs protect wildlife, air quality, and landscapes.

Categorical Exclusion [CX] – Categories of actions that Federal agencies have determined do not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (individually or cumulatively) and for which, therefore, neither an EA nor and EIS is required.

Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) – A state agency in Colorado responsible for regulating and monitoring the development of oil and natural gas resources on public and private lands. Agencies with similar responsibilities exist in other states including the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, The Oil and Gas Program of the Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining, and the New Mexico Oil Conservation Division.

Comment Period – A mandatory period required by NEPA where citizens can comment, by mail or by an electronic system, to the Bureau of Land Management, either supporting or opposing the development proposed in a Draft Environmental Assessment or Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This period can sometimes be extended when requested by the public with good cause.

Conditions of Approval [COA] – Attached to an approved APD to ensure environmental protection, safety, and/or conservation of the mineral resource.

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Determination of NEPA adequacy (DNA) – A determination that an action, as outlined by NEPA, has been adequately analyzed in past documents and is consistent with the approved land use plan.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – A concise public document that provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining the significance of effects from a proposed Federal action. If the EA determines that there will not be significant impacts a FONSI is prepared. If the EA finds there will be significant impacts, the agency will prepare an EIS.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A comprehensive public document that analyzes the impacts of a Federal action that will have significant effects on the human environment. An EIS includes a discussion of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a description of the affected environment, alternatives to the proposed action, and an analysis of the environmental impacts and ways to mitigate such impacts.

Expression of Interest (EOI) – A nomination to request certain lands be analyzed for inclusion in a competitive oil and gas lease sale.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – A document that explains the reasons why an action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and, why, therefore, an EIS will not be required.

Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) – A part of the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Department of the Interior authorized to carry out and decide the hearings, appeals, and other review functions on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. A party can appeal a BLM leasing decision to the IBLA in hopes that the agency decision will be reversed.

Lease Sale – The BLM leases land for a variety of uses. This can be anything from cattle grazing to mineral extraction. The lease does not mean the lessee owns the land, rather they gain a right to use of the land for a set amount of time, subject to specific terms and conditions. Any adult over the age of 18 who is a US citizen may place a bid on BLM land that is up for lease. BLM conducts quarterly oil and gas lease sales. Oil and gas leases are for a term of 10 years.

Master Leasing Plan (MLP) – Master Leasing Plans are developed by the BLM for lands they manage (including lands where the subsurface (mineral) rights are owned by the federal government but the surface lands are not). The purpose of an MLP is to plan for oil and gas development in an area that contains high-level concerns. This allows the BLM to conduct a more in depth review for areas that are or may be opened to leasing at the planning level.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Analysis – NEPA is a Federal statute that requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.

No Surface Occupancy (NSO) - A fluid mineral (oil or natural gas) leasing stipulation that prohibits occupancy or disturbance on all or part of the lease surface in order to protect special values or uses. Directional drilling from lands without NSO stipulations can be used to extract fluid minerals under lands with NSO stipulations.

Parcel – The term used for the plot of land being leased by the BLM. A parcel in cannot exceed 2,560 acres in the lower 48 States and 5,760 in Alaska.

Protest Period – Any person who was involved with an oil and gas planning process has a 30 day period in which to lodge a complaint, in writing, to the BLM. The issues listed must relate to previously stated points contained in comments earlier in the assessment process.

Record of Decision [ROD] – The final step for agencies in the EIS process. The ROD is a document that states what the decision is, identifies the alternatives considered, including the environmentally preferred alternative, and discusses mitigation plans, including any enforcement and monitoring commitments.

Reasonably Foreseeable Development [RFD] – Scenario based on the assumption that all potentially productive areas can be open under standard lease terms and conditions covering a period of 15 years. Helps in analyzing impacts of current leasing within the context of future actions.

Resource Management Plan (RMP) – Used by the BLM to allocate resources within a specific planning area and determine appropriate multiple uses for the public lands, develop a strategy to manage and protect resources, and establish systems to monitor and evaluate the status of these resources.

Scoping Period – A phase of planning prior to drafting an EA or EIS where public comments inform the BLM of issues, alternatives, and mitigation, which should be analyzed.

Split Estate – A situation when the surface rights and subsurface rights (such as the right to develop minerals) are owned by different parties. For example, when someone owns property and the federal government owns the right to develop minerals (including drilling for oil and gas) on that same property. In this case, the BLM can offer leases on this private property.

Wilderness Study Areas [WSA] – Areas of BLM land at least 5,000 acres in size, in a natural state, that provide opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These areas are managed to preserve their suitability for designation as wilderness.