Wildlife Management Guidelines for Oil and Gas Development

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Endorsements

- Over 35 sportsmen’s, outfitter, environmental, and local citizen alliance groups endorsed the guidelines.
- Town councils, politicians, and county commissioners are supportive.
- Guidelines were referenced in State’s comments on Roan Plateau DEIS/RMP.
- Discussions are ongoing with industry.
Reasons Guidelines are Needed

- Magnitude of Oil and Gas Impacts
- Inconsistent and Inadequate Attention to Protection of Natural Resources
- Need to Get Ahead of the Problem
- Serious Concerns for Special Places and Important Fish and Wildlife Habitats
Mitigation Sequencing

- First, avoid impacts to the degree possible.
- Then, minimize impacts.
- After satisfying the first two requirements, mitigate in this order of preference:
  - Reclamation and Restoration
  - Onsite/In-kind Mitigation
  - Offsite/In-kind Mitigation
However, once a decision is made to lease and/or accept applications for permits to drill, we request incorporation of these guidelines into all phases of management & decision making.
Guideline #1

• Maximize distance between drill pads.
• Maximize use of directional drilling from those pads.
• Minimize road construction impacts and size of drill pads; share roads with others.
• Have one company drill where intermingled ownership exists.
Costs to Implement #1

• Initial costs are high, but over time there can be cost savings. For example:
  – Reduced truck hauling
  – Reduced road, pipeline, electric line, compressor, and pad construction costs, and their associated maintenance costs
  – Reduced number of compressor stations
  – Increased use of closed loop systems that recycle water and other fluids
Guideline #2

• Public Land: After input from CDOW, the BLM & USFS should delineate the allowable number and locations of drill pads in a Geographic Area Plan.

• Private Land: Colorado Oil and Gas Commission should work with affected landowners on acceptable drilling locations.
Guideline #3

• Where large blocks of land are involved, sell leases in a manner that will promote:
  – Maximum surface well spacing
  – Minimum habitat disturbance and fragmentation
Guideline #4

• Develop the field in phases.

• Once drilling has started, continue drilling on that pad until all the subsurface wells have been drilled that are needed to recover the hydrocarbons.

• Move to next pre-selected site and reclaim the old pad and roads immediately and completely.
Guideline #5

• **Require** the use of applicable best management/operating practices such as:
  – Protection of stream riparian areas
  – Interim and final reclamation plans
  – Proper road and pipeline construction
  – Noise, pollutant, and soil erosion control
  – Remote monitoring of wells and compressors

• See BLM’s “Gold Book”
Guideline #6

- Assemble an interagency technical review team to implement and supervise a system for gathering baseline data and monitoring effects of drilling and development.
- Establish a citizen’s advisory group to periodically assess research, impact analysis, monitoring, and enforcement efforts.
Guideline #7

- Initiate a study to determine the effectiveness and longevity of the cement in abandoned well bores.
Guideline #8

• Implement an adequate reclamation guarantee system that follows a well regardless of its ownership.
Guideline #9

• Require that noxious weeds be rigorously controlled.

• Invasive species are the greatest ecological threat to our public lands and waters across the country.
Guideline #10

• Make timely inspections and enforcement a higher priority.
• Companies should not be given years in which to come into compliance on violations.
“It looks like a set of guidelines that reflect, to a large degree, current practices and regulations. Given the right context, most of these are doable and are being done.”

Ken Wonstolen, Senior VP, CO Oil & Gas Assn.  
Rocky Mountain News, August 3, 2006
Bottom Line

• Are most people in Colorado opposed to oil and gas development?

• Do they think it ought to be done in a manner that ensures the long term sustainability of our fish and wildlife?