PROGRAM facts

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF FOSSIL ENERGY
NATIONAL ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY

Petroleum Environmental Solutions

01/2004

FEDERAL LANDS

Development of oil and gas resources on Federal Lands and development of coalbed natural gas in the West are the most promising approaches for significant near-term increases in domestic production. The technologies and the resources are fairly well known, but environmental concerns are restricting both.

Public support for environmental issues continues to grow: However, in the past year these concerns were expressed in:

- Opposition for drilling in ANWR
- Public support for drilling bans offshore for Florida, California, and the East Coast
- Restrictions on seismic data acquisition in both the Gulf of Mexico and the Four Corners region
- Apprehension on the affect of coalbed natural gas development in the Rocky Mountains

A sizable segment of society remains opposed to development of any kind, especially in environmentally sensitive locations. They provide a stiff challenge to anyone seeking further access to public lands. The public is not generally aware of advances in production technology that have resulted in significantly smaller drilling footprints and geologic knowledge of oil fields that require fewer wells to be drilled to produce the same amount of petroleum.

Photo credit: Jerry Sintz, BLM

Pump unit producing coalbed natural gas, Utah.

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Federal Lands Objectives

Working with Industry, BLM, FS, EPA and USGS

2004
Expand the Federal Lands Technology Partnership with BLM to include Forest Service

2005
Develop a prioritized list of the primary environmental concerns that prevent or delay access to Federal lands.

2006
Develop a road-map to remove or minimize those environmental barriers.

2009
Complete environmental baseline studies with to support oil and gas development in NPR-A.

2009
Create maps overlaying environmental restrictions with the all of the major Rocky Mountain basins.

Federal Lands Goal

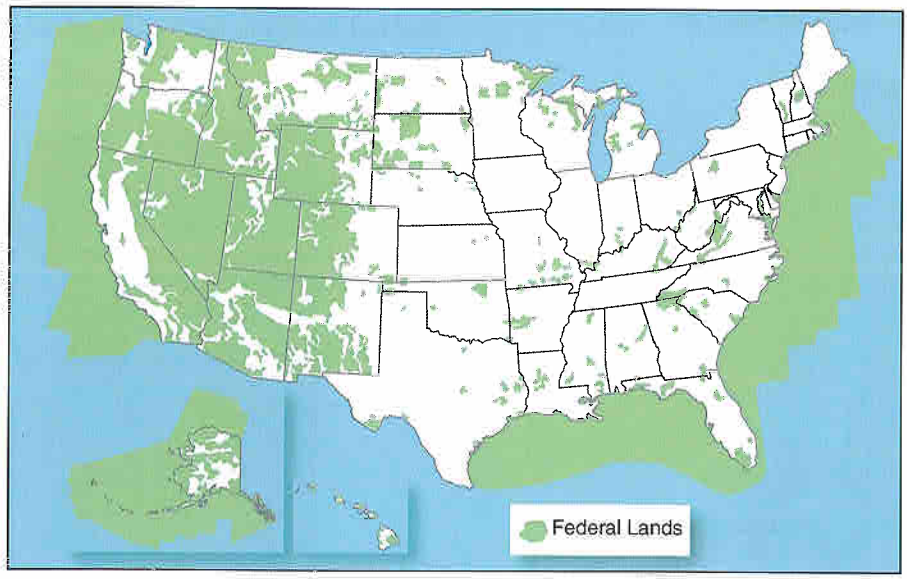
By 2015, to provide the environmental solutions needed to increase access to oil and gas resources on Federal lands by 25%.

Federal Lands Issues/Barriers

- DOE cannot directly control access to Federal lands. We can only provide the tools and information that will allow Federal land management agencies to do so.
- Some non-government interest groups view oil and gas development as incompatible with environmental protection and/or with other uses of the land.
- Some individuals within BLM/FS view oil and gas development as incompatible with environmental protection.
- BLM and Forest Service have complicated planning and permitting processes that are time consuming and man-power intensive.
- Most BLM and Forest Service offices do not have the human resources to keep pace with oil and gas permitting and leasing activities using current practices.
- Many permit stipulations concerning wildlife are not based on sound scientific studies and/or do not account for modern industry practices.

Federal Lands Strategy

The Federal Lands resource strategy is to work collaboratively with BLM, FS, and EPA to provide sound scientific answers to environmental questions concerning oil and gas development. The goal is to provide Federal Lands managers with the technology tools to overcome administrative barriers created by environmental regulations; and to identify and develop minimal-impact technologies that will allow development in sensitive or pristine environments.



Onshore and offshore Federal Lands in the United States.

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