

Osage County Oil and Gas EIS



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Eastern Oklahoma Region

October 2015

Osage County Oil and Gas Draft Environmental Impact Statement Available

The United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Eastern Oklahoma Regional Office, has released the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). A 45-day public comment period began with the official announcement in the Federal Register on November 6, 2015. The DEIS is available on the project website, <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/RegionalOffices/EasternOklahoma/WeAre/Osage/OSAGEOilGasEIS/>

Three Draft Alternatives

The DEIS analyzes three alternatives for managing oil and gas development in Osage County, one of which is the No Action Alternative. The alternatives represent the range of reasonable actions that could be taken to satisfy the purpose of and need for the BIA's action. The objective of the alternatives is, to the extent possible, to minimize potential adverse impacts on landowners, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources from noise, traffic, excavations, dust, and other disturbance associated with construction and operations under oil and gas leases. The alternatives development process for the Osage County Oil and Gas EIS consisted of public scoping, an alternatives development workshop with cooperating agencies and entities, and a draft alternatives concepts public listening session.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the BIA would continue to administer oil and gas development in Osage County according to practices currently in use. It would continue to approve leases according to the 2014 Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Leasing Activities (the Leasing PEA). For workovers (i.e., wellbore maintenance) and other maintenance operations, the BIA would continue to perform workover reviews according to the 2015 Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Permitting of Workover Operations (the Workover PEA). For applications for

permits to drill and other permit applications not covered under the Workover PEA, the BIA would issue permits based on site-specific NEPA analyses, which would incorporate best management practices on a case-by-case basis. The BIA would ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations on a case-by-case basis during the site-specific permitting process.

Action Alternative I

Under Action Alternative I, the BIA would identify a list of standardized resource conservation measures to provide additional certainty to lessees and to streamline the permitting process. Resource conservation measures would be applied to permitted activities through mandatory permit conditions and to workovers via an attachment to the workover review form. Resource conservation

Mark Your Calendar!

Osage County Oil and Gas DEIS Public Meeting

November 30, 2015 from 3-6 pm

Wah-Zha-Zhi Cultural Center
1449 W. Main, Pawhuska, OK 74056

Sign up at the BIA Osage Agency or at the meeting for a two-minute time slot if you wish to provide verbal input. The BIA encourages groups or organizations wishing to provide verbal input to elect a single representative to speak on behalf of the group or organization. You can also submit written comments at the meeting, email them to osagecountyoilgaseis@bia.gov, or mail them to Jeannine Hale, BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region, 3100 W. Peak Boulevard, Muskogee, OK 74401.

This is the second in a series of bulletins from the Bureau of Indian Affairs regarding the Osage County Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement. Contact us at osagecountyoilgaseis@bia.gov if you would like to be added to the mailing list for future project updates.

Three Draft Alternatives Continued...

measures may be applied to all lease activities, including non-permitted lease activities, through a Notice To Lessees (NTL) or Order of the Superintendent interpreting the regulations at 25 CFR, Part 226. Resource conservation measures included in an NTL or Order of the Superintendent would survive the life of any permit and would govern reclamation and revegetation activities. These resource conservation measures would protect sensitive resources and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Resource conservation measures would be tailored to planning area-specific conditions and issues. Therefore, as a general rule, these measures would apply to all newly permitted activities and workovers in the planning area. Similarly, if an NTL or Order of the Superintendent were issued requiring these measures, that NTL or Order of the Superintendent would apply to all leases in the planning area. However, the BIA would still have the flexibility to allow exceptions based on site-specific circumstances. Exceptions would be granted where a resource conservation measure was not applicable or where

another measure proposed by the lessee would achieve the goals of the resource conservation measure, given site-specific conditions.

Action Alternative 2

Similar to Action Alternative 1, this alternative would apply a county-specific list of resource conservation measures to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Action Alternative 2 builds on Action Alternative 1 by adding more specific resource conservation measures. These would be applied in specific areas, based on available information about where sensitive resources need to be protected. The BIA identified additional measures to proactively protect other resources, such as special status species and water resources. This alternative is more protective of natural and cultural resources and includes proactive measures to comply with requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

How to Comment on the DEIS

The BIA encourages the public to provide information and comments on the DEIS. We are particularly interested in feedback concerning the draft alternatives, the adequacy and accuracy of the analysis of the management actions, and any new information that would help us as we develop the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted by email to osagecountyoilandgaseis@bia.gov, or by US mail to Jeannine Hale, BIA Eastern Oklahoma Region, 3100 W. Peak Boulevard, Muskogee, OK 74401. The BIA can best use your comments and resource information submissions if received by **December 21, 2015**. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that your entire document—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

