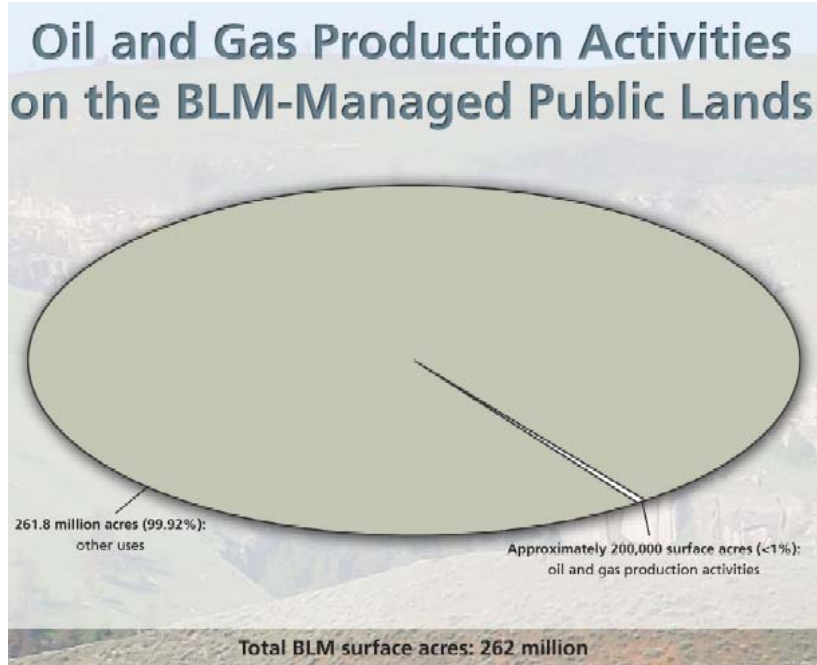


# Natural Gas Development on Public Lands



Oil and natural gas production is found on less than one percent of the 262 million acres of federal lands controlled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

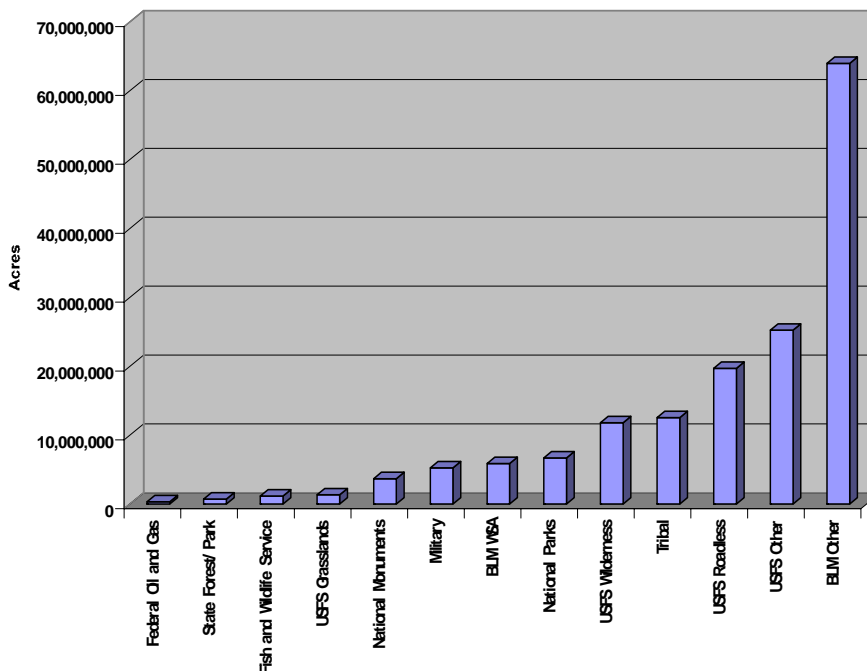
On the less than 1% of federal lands where leasing and production exist, public lands are still available for other multiple use such as recreation and hunting.

As the graph below illustrates, oil and natural gas production occupies much less acreage than other land use designations in the West. For example, compare how much land is used for the following designations:

- National Monuments designation is 11 X more
- Military designation is 16 X more
- Wilderness Study Areas are 18 X more
- US National Forest Service "Roadless Areas" are 60 X more

Most of these designations limit federal lands to a single use. In comparison, oil and gas activity can often occur with many other uses, including hunting, fishing, and many other forms of recreation.

**Federal Land Uses Compared with Oil and Gas Operations**



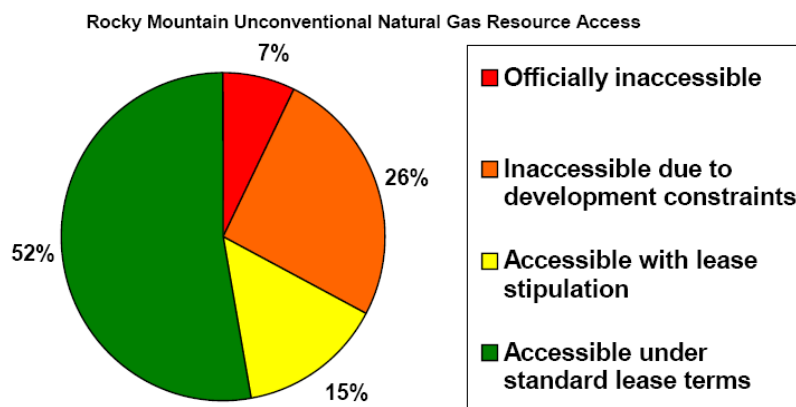
continued

Source: U.S. Bureau of Land Management

# Natural Gas Development on Public Lands

continued

- The federal regulatory process holds up exploration and development of these leases. In some cases, the process to acquire the lease and permits, coupled with seasonal closures, can delay exploration for 5 or more years. Thus, producers may not be able to drill the first test well, let alone a producing well, until the end of their lease term.
- In a coordinated effort to “lock up” America’s oil and natural gas reserves, activist groups have filed a record number of lawsuits to delay and halt new energy supplies. This means more taxpayer dollars are spent fighting litigation and federal officials have less time to do their jobs, such as environmental *enforcement*.
- The National Petroleum Council has estimated that more than 200 Tcf of natural gas has been “locked up” under federal land nationwide. New supplies of natural gas could meet the future demands of U.S. consumers and save them \$300 billion over the next 20 years from estimated decreases in energy prices and meet the current demands of U.S. citizens. As the largest onshore source of natural gas in America, public lands represent a near-term solution to increase natural gas supplies.



Source: EPCA

## Impacts

- Actual physical impacts of oil and gas wells are **small and temporary**.
- Very often new wells are placed on the well pads of older, existing wells, rather than causing new disturbances. Of the 10,000 new wells anticipated in New Mexico over the next 20 years, about half of those wells will utilize existing well pads.
- For the same amount of energy produced from a half-acre gas well, a wind farm would need up to 300 acres, solar panels would take up to 46 acres, and a biomass energy source would need up to 402 acres.
- A typical natural gas well disturbs ½ acre of land. To generate an equivalent amount of energy requires:
  - 300 acres of windmills
  - 46 acres of solar panels
  - 402 acres of biomass

## Recommendations

Updating and improving the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act will move this nation toward a sensible regulatory framework to understand and manage environmental impacts before moving forward with oil and gas and renewable energy projects on public lands. By creating a predictable regulatory process, the government will save taxpayer dollars, reduce the costs of doing business with the federal government, and increase its revenue from energy projects on federal land.

Creating a common sense regulatory environment has several benefits:

- Ensuring a healthy environment for future generations to enjoy
- Reducing delays of energy to consumers
- Producing reliable energy supplies for consumers
- Improving the land management capabilities of federal agencies
- Reducing administrative costs for managing federal lands
- Creating a predictable environment for conducting business