

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BAKERSFIELD FIELD OFFICE**

Decision Record

**Atwell Island Extensive Recreation Management Area
Orphan Well Abandonment
DOI-BLM-CA-C060-2016-0053-EA**

Introduction

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to conduct well abandonment and site restoration for five (5) orphaned gas wells within the Trico Gas Field: Anderson Unit 1 #1-12, Anderson Unit 2 #2-12, Tidewater Associated Fee #2, Tidewater Associated Fee #3, and Guy 1. These wells are located on BLM managed lands within the Atwell Island Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA) and the Sand Ridge Unit of the Ancient Lakeshores Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); BLM does not manage subsurface mineral rights within the project footprint. The Atwell Island ERMA can be accessed using Road 38 in Alpaugh, California. California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (CDOGGR) would serve as contractors for this project and would oversee downhole plug and abandonment activity as well as basic re-contouring of each well location. All ancillary facilities including separators, meters, concrete slabs, and wooden well cellar covers would be removed from site and all underground piping would be purged, capped and abandoned in place.

The purpose of the proposed action is to restore portions of the Atwell Island ERMA and a portion of the Sand Ridge Unit of the Ancient Lake Shores Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to native habitat for wildlife viewing and appreciation activities. The need for the proposed action is to meet ERMA, ACEC and biological goals, objectives, and decisions committed to in the 2014 Bakersfield Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan.

Decision

I have reviewed the recommendations on the proposed action addressed in this environmental assessment. I find this action to be in conformance with applicable land use plans, that it effectively serves the public, and that it will not cause unnecessary or undue degradation. It is therefore my decision to approve the proposed action, including the abandonment of five gas wells within the Atwell Island ERMA, subject to the mitigation measures identified for the proposed action in the Environmental Assessment.

Alternatives Considered but not Selected

A No Action Alternative that would deny the application was considered, but not selected.

Decision Rationale

The decision to contract CDOGGR to conduct well abandonments within the Atwell Island ERMA and Sand Ridge Unit of the Ancient Lakeshores best meets the purpose and need of BLM by meeting

biological goals, objectives, and decisions committed to in the 2014 Bakersfield RMP; this includes: AC-1, BR-G-1, BR-O-1, and BR-D-4.

Consultation and Coordination

Public Involvement

The BLM posts copies of each Application for Permit to Drill (APD) in the front lobby of the Bakersfield Field Office for a 30-day period. In addition, this project was listed on the California BLM NEPA web list on March 3, 2016, to notify the public of this project and invite comments from those interested. No comments were received.

Plan Consistency

Based on information in the EA, the project record, and recommendations from BLM specialists, I conclude that this decision is consistent with the Bakersfield RMP; the Endangered Species Act; the Native American Religious Freedom Act; other cultural resource management laws and regulations; Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice; and Executive Order 13212 regarding potential adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution.

Administrative Remedies

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of the Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712
Sacramento, CA 95825-1890

The effective date of this decision (and the date initiating the appeal period) will be the date of approval by the authorized officer.

/s/John Hodge

4/25/16

Assistant Field Manager-Minerals

Date