

Anadarko Petroleum Corporation Atlantic Rim Wildlife Survey

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Prepared for:

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And

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Introduction

Anadarko Petroleum Corporation (Anadarko) plans to develop portions of the Atlantic Rim Natural Gas Project, which is located in Carbon County, Wyoming. This project will involve drilling coal bed natural gas and conventional natural gas wells, water reinjection wells, constructing pipelines and electrical infrastructure, and developing roads. Project activities will be conducted on private lands and on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management Rawlins Field Office (BLM). Implementation of this project is planned for late 2007 through 2008. In support of this project, Anadarko contracted Grasslands Consulting, Inc. (Grasslands) to conduct biological field surveys as required in the Wildlife Protection and Monitoring Plan in the Atlantic Rim FEIS.

Methods

Greater Sage Grouse Survey

Breeding greater sage grouse (lek) surveys were conducted within the Atlantic Rim Project Area between March 1st and April 27th. All previously identified leks within 2-miles of proposed 2007 and 2008 wells were observed. All observations were made between one hour before sunrise and one hour following sunrise. The lek observation locations were accessed by vehicle. Observations were made by listening for booming grouse and visually observing sage grouse lek locations for individuals. Occupied locations were observed to count individual males and females. Following the early morning lek surveys, lek locations were visually observed for sage grouse sign including fecal pellets and feathers. Table I includes specific lek locations, observations made, dates, and names of the biologists who conducted the surveys.

Nesting Raptor Survey

Prior to conducting the field survey, Grasslands biologists obtained known nesting raptor locations within the project area. These locations were provided by the BLM and include observations that were made by BLM biologists and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. All known raptor nest locations and suitable raptor nesting habitats within 1-mile of a proposed 2007 and 2008 developments were observed.

Grasslands biologists Nick Hall and Grant Leadem conducted raptor surveys on June 5-6 and June 19-21, between the hours of 1000 and 1730. Observations of historic nesting locations and new locations were conducted from ATVs and on foot in areas that are inaccessible by vehicle. Coordinates of each nest location were recorded using hand-held GPS. To maintain a non-invasive, low stress presence, observations of active nests were made following approved raptor survey methods from an appropriate distance using 10X50-power binoculars (call 1978). All survey observations were recorded in field books and active nests were documented with digital photos and raptor data sheets.

Mountain Plover Survey

Three mountain plover surveys were conducted within the Atlantic Rim Project Area between May 15th and June 20th. Grasslands biologists Daniel Soucy, Nick Hall, and Luke Moussa conducted the first mountain plover survey on May 15th and 16th, the second survey was conducted by Nick Hall and Grant Leadem on June 5th and 6th, and the third survey was conducted by Nick Hall and Grant Leadem on June 19th and 20th. Surveys were conducted from sunrise to 1000 and from 1730 to sunset, focusing on areas characterized by level terrain, prairie dog colonies, short vegetation, grazing, widely spaced plants, and other areas as indicated by the mountain plover protocol. These habitats were identified using BLM models of potentially suitable habitat. Observations were made using 10X50-power binoculars from a vehicle or ATV within previously identified mountain plover habitat. The vehicle was stopped frequently and turned off to listen for vocalizations and to scan open terrain. All survey observations were recorded using hand-held GPS units, digital photographs, and field notebooks.

Results

Greater Sage Grouse Survey

Breeding greater sage grouse (lek) surveys conducted in March and April of this year identified 4 active leks out of the 27 leks within 2-miles of proposed 2007 and 2008 well locations. On March 1st, seven males were observed from approximately ¼-mile, displaying on the Dry Cow 4 lek. This area was revisited on the afternoon of March 2nd to map the perimeter of the lek. On March 1st and 2nd, six and ten males were observed respectively in the vicinity of the Pipeline lek. On April 25th, approximately 110 grouse were observed ¼-mile southwest of the Wild Horse Basin 2 lek. This area was revisited on April 27th to map the perimeter of the lek. On April 27th, seventy grouse were observed on the Filmore Ranch lek. The East Dry Cow and Willows 2 leks contained indicators of recent activity (scat, and feathers), although though no birds were observed. No grouse or other signs of recent activity were observed on the other leks. Table I includes the activity status and survey dates of all leks.

Nesting Raptor Survey

83 nests were observed within 1 mile of proposed 2007 and 2008 well locations. Six nests were identified as active; 3 were occupied by golden eagles, 1 by ferruginous hawks, and 2 by red-tailed hawks. Recently active nests were identified based on the presences of fresh white-wash, downy, and mature feathers and recorded in the notes (Table II).

Mountain Plover

No mountain plover were observed during the three surveys. Habitat conditions within the Atlantic Rim Project Area are typically not ideal for mountain plover. A large percentage of the habitat included in the BLM modeling includes habitats that are not suitable for the species.

Conclusion

As a result of this wildlife survey 4 greater sage grouse leks have been identified as active. These leks include the Dry Cow 4 lek, the Pipeline lek, the Wild Horse Basin 2 lek, and the Fillmore Ranch lek.

Six raptor nest were identified as being active including nests 04 RT A, 34 GE A, 38 FH A, 71 GE A, 74 GE A, and 82 RT A. All other previously identified nests and nest identified during this survey were observed as inactive.

Three mountain plover surveys were conducted within the modeled habitat. No mountain plover were observed in the Atlantic Rim Project Area. Habitat conditions within these areas do not constitute good mountain plover habitats. Mountain plover habitat mapping should be conducted prior to surveys in 2008.

References

Bureau of Land Management. 2007. Digital Mapping Files of Raptor Nest Locations, Sage Grouse Lek Locations, and Mountain Plover Habitat. Provided by BLM Rawlins Field Office.

Call, Mayo W. 1978. Nesting Habitats and Surveying Techniques for Common Western Raptors. USBLM Technical Note TN-316. USBLM Denver Service Center; May 1978. 115pp.