



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-NWRS-2026-0562; OMB Control Number 1018-0162;

FXRS12610900000-267-FF09R24000]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Non-Federal Oil and Gas Operations on National Wildlife Refuge System Lands

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of information collection; request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), are proposing to renew an existing information collection without change.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: Send your comments on the information collection request (ICR) by one of the following methods (please reference Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control No. “1018-0162” in the subject line of your comment):

- Internet (preferred): <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-HQ-NWRS-2026-0562.
- U.S. mail: Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PRB (JAO/3W); Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Madonna L. Baucum, Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, by email at Info_Coll@fws.gov, or by telephone at (703) 358-2503. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind,

hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States. You may also view the ICR at <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA; 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) and its implementing regulations at 5 CFR part 1320, all information collections require approval under the PRA. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

As part of our continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burdens, we are again inviting the public and other Federal agencies to comment on new, proposed, revised, and continuing collections of information. This helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. It also helps the public understand our information collection requirements and provide the requested data in the desired format.

We are especially interested in public comments addressing the following:

1. Whether or not the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether or not the information will have practical utility;
2. The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
3. Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
4. How might the agency minimize the burden of the collection of

information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of response.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be 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.

Abstract: The authority of the Service to regulate non-Federal oil and gas operations on National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) lands is broadly derived from the Property Clause of the U.S. Constitution (art. IV, Sec. 3), in carrying out the statutory mandates of the Secretary of the Interior, as delegated to the Service, to manage Federal lands and resources under the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (NWRSA; 16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (NWRRIA), and to specifically manage species within the NWRS under the provisions of numerous statutes, the most notable of which are the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; 16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (FWA; 16 U.S.C. 742f).

The Service's regulations at 50 CFR, part 29, subpart D provide for the continued exercise of non-Federal oil and gas rights while avoiding or minimizing unnecessary impacts to national wildlife refuge resources and uses. Other land management agencies have regulations that address oil and gas development, including the Department of the

Interior's National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S.

Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. These agencies all require the submission of information similar to the information requested by the Service.

The collection of information is necessary for the Service to properly balance the exercise of non-Federal oil and gas rights within national wildlife refuge boundaries with the Service's responsibility to protect wildlife and habitat, water quality and quantity, wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities, and the health and safety of employees and visitors on NWRS lands.

The information collected under 50 CFR, part 29, subpart D, identifies the owner and operator (the owner and operator can be the same) and details how the operator may access and develop oil and gas resources. It also identifies the steps the operator intends to take to minimize any adverse impacts of operations on refuge resources and uses. No information is submitted unless the operator wishes to conduct oil and gas operations.

We use the information collected to (1) evaluate proposed operations; (2) ensure that all necessary mitigation measures are employed to protect national wildlife refuge resources and values; and (3) ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the NWRSAA, as amended by the NWRSIA, and to specifically manage species within the NWRS under the provisions of numerous statutes, the most notable of which are the MBTA, the ESA, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), and the FWA.

1. *Preexisting Operations* (§ 29.61)—Within 90 days after the effective date of these regulations or after a boundary change or establishment of a new refuge unit, preexisting operators without a Service-issued permit must submit:

- Documentation of the right to operate within the refuge.
- Contact information (names, phone numbers, and addresses) of the

primary company representative; the representative responsible for field supervision; and the representative responsible for emergency response.

- Scaled map clearly delineating the existing area of operations.
- Documentation of the current operating methods, surface equipment, materials produced or used and monitoring methods.
- Copies of all plans and permits required by local, State, and Federal agencies.

2. *Temporary Access Permit Application (§ 29.71)*—We use Parts 1 and 2 of Form 3-2469, *Oil and Gas Operations – Special Use Permit*, as the application for a Temporary Access Permit. The operator must provide the information requested in Parts 1 and 2 of the form, including:

- Contact information (name, legal address, and telephone number) for the person(s) responsible for the overall management of the proposed operations.
- Documentation demonstrating the right to operate within the refuge.
- Name, legal address, telephone number, and qualifications of all specialists responsible for conducting the reconnaissance surveys.
- Brief description of the intended operation so that we can determine reconnaissance survey needs.
- Description of the survey methods used to identify natural and cultural resources.
- Location map (to-scale and determined by us to be acceptable) delineating the proposed reconnaissance survey area in relation to the refuge boundary and the proposed area of operations.
- Description of proposed means of access and routes for conducting the reconnaissance surveys.

3. *Accessing Oil And Gas Rights From a Non-Federal Surface Location* (§ 29.80)—We encourage operators to provide the Service (at least 60 calendar days prior to beginning operations): the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of the primary company representative, the representative responsible for field supervision, and the representative responsible for emergency response.

4. *Pre-application Meeting for Operations Permit* (§ 29.91)—Before applying for an Operations Permit, operators should participate in a pre-application meeting with the Service and provide:

- Documentation demonstrating the right to operate within the refuge.
- An overview of the proposed operation and timing.

5. *Operations Permit Application* (§§ 29.94, 29.95, 29.96, and 29.97)—We use Form 3-2469 as the application for an Operations Permit. All applicants must provide the information requested in Parts 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10, Form 3-2469, including:

A. *Part 1* (§ 29.94(a)-(b))—

- Contact information (name, legal address, and telephone number) for the person(s) responsible for the overall management of the proposed operations.
- Documentation demonstrating the right to operate within the refuge.

B. *Part 3* (§ 29.94(c)-(f))—

- Description of the natural features of the proposed area of operations such as: streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands (including estimated depths to the top and bottom of zones of usable water); topographic relief; and areas that the Service has indicated are sensitive.
- Locations of existing roads, trails, railroad tracks, pipeline rights-of-way, pads, and other disturbed areas.
- Locations of existing structures that the operations could affect, including

buildings; pipelines; oil and gas wells, including both producing and plugged and abandoned wells; injection wells; freshwater wells; underground and overhead electrical lines; and other utility lines.

- Descriptions of the natural and cultural resource conditions from reconnaissance survey reports or other sources collected for the proposed area of operations, including baseline testing of soils, surface and ground waters within the area of operations that reasonably may be impacted by surface operations.

C. *Part 4 (§ 29.94(g)-(n))*—Location maps (to-scale and determined by the Service to be acceptable) that clearly identify:

- Proposed area of operations, existing conditions, and proposed new surface uses, including the boundaries of each of the oil and gas tracts in relation to the proposed operations and the relevant refuge boundary.
- Proposed access routes of new surface disturbances as determined by a location survey.
- Location of all support facilities, including those for transportation (e.g., vehicle parking areas, helicopter pads, etc.), sanitation, occupation, staging areas, fuel storage areas, refueling areas, loading docks, water supplies, and disposal facilities.
- Method and diagrams (including cross sections) of any proposed pad construction, road construction, cut-and-fill areas, and surface maintenance, including erosion control.
- Number and types of equipment and vehicles, including an estimate of vehicular round trips associated with the operation.
- Estimated timetable for the proposed operations, including any operational timing constraints.

- Type and extent of security measures proposed at the area of operation.
- Power sources and their transmission systems for the proposed operations.
- Types and quantities of all solid and liquid waste generated and the proposed methods of storage, handling, and disposal.
- Source, quantity, access route, and transportation/conveyance method for all water to be used in operations (including hydraulic fracturing), and estimates of any anticipated wastewater volumes generated (including flowback fluids from hydraulic fracturing operations and the proposed methods of storage, handling, and recycling or disposal).

D. *Part 5 Geophysical Exploration (§ 29.95)*—Applicants proposing geophysical exploration must also provide the information requested in Part 5 of Form 3-2469, including:

- Map showing the positions of each survey line including all source and receiver locations as determined by a locational survey, and shot point offset distances from wells, buildings, other infrastructure, cultural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Number of crews and numbers of workers in each crew.
- Description of the acquisition methods (including the procedures and specific equipment that will be used), and energy sources (e.g., explosives, vibroseis trucks, etc.).
- Description of methods of access along each survey line for personnel, materials, and equipment.
- List of all explosives, blasting equipment, chemicals, and fuels that will be used in the proposed operations, including a description of proposed disposal methods, transportation methods, safety measures, and storage facilities.

E. *Part 6 Proposed Drilling Operations (§ 29.96)*—Applicants proposing drilling operations must also provide the information requested in Part 6 of Form 3-2469, including:

- Description of well pad construction, including dimensions and cross sections of cut-and-fill areas and excavations for ditches, sumps, and spill control equipment or structures (including lined areas).
- Description of the drill rig and equipment layout, including rig components, fuel tanks, testing equipment, support facilities, storage areas, and all other well-site equipment and facilities.
- Description of type and characteristics of the proposed drilling mud systems.
- Description of the equipment, materials, and methods of surface operations associated with drilling, well casing and cementing, well control, well evaluation and testing, well completion, hydraulic fracturing or other well stimulation, and well plugging.

F. *Part 7 Production Operations (§ 29.97)*—Applicants proposing production operations must also provide the information requested in Part 7 of Form 3-2469, including:

- Dimensions and a to-scale layout of: the well pad, clearly identifying well locations and noting partial reclamation areas; gathering, separation, metering, and storage equipment; electrical lines; fences; spill control equipment or structures including lined areas, artificial lift equipment, tank batteries, treating and separating vessels, secondary or enhanced recovery facilities, water disposal facilities, gas compression and/or injection facilities; metering points; sales point (if on lease); tanker pickup points; gas compressor, including size and type (if applicable); and any

other well site equipment.

- General description of anticipated stimulations, servicing, and workovers.
- Description of the procedures and equipment used to maintain control of the well(s).
- Description of method and means used to transport produced oil and gas, including vehicular transport; flowline and gathering line construction and operation, pipe size, and operating pressure; cathodic protection methods; surface equipment use; surface equipment location; maintenance procedures; maintenance schedules; pressure detection methods; and shutdown procedures.
- Road and well pad maintenance plan, including equipment and materials to maintain the road surface and control erosion.
- Vegetation management plan for well sites, roads, pipeline corridors, and other disturbed surface areas, including control of noxious and invasive species.
- Stormwater management plan on the well site.
- Produced water storage and disposal plan.
- Description of the equipment, materials, and procedures proposed for well plugging.

G. Part 8 (§ 29.94(o))—

- Description of proposed steps to mitigate anticipated adverse environmental impacts on refuge resources and uses, including: refuge's land features, land uses, fish and wildlife, vegetation, soils, surface and subsurface water resources, air quality, noise, lightscapes, viewsheds, cultural resources, and economic environment.
- Description of any anticipated impacts that cannot be mitigated.

- Description of all alternatives considered that meet the criteria of technologically feasible, least-damaging methods of operations, as well as the costs and environmental effects of such alternatives.

H. *Part 9 (§ 29.94(p))*—

- For spill control and emergency preparedness plan, submit contact information (name, address, and telephone number) for the appropriate officials to be contacted by the Service in the event of a spill, fire, or accident, including the order in which the persons should be contacted.
- Notification procedures and steps taken to minimize damage in the event of spill, fire, or accident, including the order in which individuals should be contacted.
- Identification of contaminating or toxic substances used within the area of operations or expected to be encountered during operations.
- Trajectory analysis for potential spills that are not contained on location.
- Identification of abnormal pressure, temperature, toxic gases or substances, or other hazardous conditions at the area of operations or expected to be encountered during operations.
- Measures (e.g., procedures, facility design, equipment) to minimize risks to human health and safety, and the environment.
- Steps to prevent accumulations of oil or other materials deemed to be fire hazards from occurring in the vicinity of well locations and lease tanks.
- Equipment and methods for containment and cleanup of contaminating substances, including a description of the equipment available at the area of operations and equipment available from local contractors.
- Storm water drainage plan and actions intended to mitigate storm water runoff.

- Safety data sheets for each material that will be used or encountered during operations, including expected quantities maintained at the area of operations.
- Description of the emergency actions that will be taken in the event of injury or death to fish and wildlife or vegetation.
- Description of the emergency actions that will be taken in the event of accidents causing human injury.
- Contingency plans for conditions and emergencies other than spills, such as if the area of operations is located in areas prone to hurricanes, flooding, tornados, fires, or earthquakes.

I. *Part 10 (§ 29.94(q)-(r))*—

- Description of the specific equipment, materials, methods, and schedule that will be used to meet the operating standards for reclamation at §29.117.
- Itemized list of the estimated costs that a third party would charge to complete reclamation.

J. *Financial Assurance (§§ 29.103(b) and 29.150-29.154)*—Before operations begin, operators must submit:

- Financial assurance in the amount specified by the Service and in accordance with the requirements of §§ 29.150 through 29.154.
- Proof of liability insurance with limits sufficient to cover injuries to persons or property caused by the operations.

K. *Identification of Wells and Related Facilities (§ 29.119(b)(3))*—Operators must identify wells and related facilities with a sign that must remain in place until the well is plugged and abandoned and related facilities are removed. Signs must be of durable construction, and the lettering must be legible and large enough to be read under

normal conditions at a distance of at least 50 feet. Each sign must show the name of the well, name of the operator, and the emergency contact phone number.

L. Reporting (§ 29.121)—Third-party monitors will report directly to the Service regarding compliance with the operations permit and efforts to protect federally owned or administered lands, waters, or the resources of refuges, visitor uses and experiences, and visitor or employee health and safety.

- Operators must notify the Service within 24 hours of any injuries to or mortality of fish, wildlife, or endangered or threatened plants.
- Operators must notify the Service of any accidents involving serious personal injury or death and of any fires or spills on the site immediately after the accident occurs. A written report on the accident must be submitted to the Service within 90 days after the accident occurs.
- Operators must submit reports or other information necessary to verify compliance with the permit or with any provision of subpart D of the regulations.
- If operations include hydraulic fracturing, the operator must provide a report including:
 - The true vertical depth of the well,
 - Total water volume used, and
 - A description of the base fluid and each additive in the hydraulic fracturing fluid, including the trade name, supplier, purpose, ingredients, Chemical Abstract Service Number (CAS), maximum ingredient concentration in additive (percent by mass), and maximum ingredient concentration in hydraulic fracturing fluid (percent by mass).

M. Permit Modifications (§ 29.160(a))—To request a modification to operations

under an approved permit, permittees must provide, in writing, to the Service, the operator's assigned permit number, a description of the proposed modification, and an explanation of why the modification is needed.

N. *Transferring Operator's Notifications (§ 29.170)*—Operators conducting operations under § 29.44, must notify the Service in writing within 30 calendar days from the date the new operator acquires the rights to conduct operations. Written notification must include:

- Names and addresses of the person or entity conveying the right and of the person or entity acquiring the right.
- Effective date of transfer.
- Description of the rights, assets, and liabilities being transferred and which ones, if any, are being reserved.
- A written acknowledgement from the new operator that the contents of the notification are true and correct.

O. *Acquiring Operator's Requirements for Wells Not Under a Service Permit (§ 29.171(a))*—The transferee must provide to the Service within 30 calendar days from the date of the transfer:

- Documentation demonstrating that it holds the right to operate within the refuge.
- Names, phone numbers, and addresses of the primary company representative, the representative responsible for field supervision, and the representative responsible for emergency response.

The transferee must submit an operations permit application in compliance with §§ 29.90-97 within 90 calendar days from the date of the transfer. Since production operations are in place, the scope of information requirements would be limited and focused on relevant information requirements listed above for Parts 7, 8, 9, and 10.

P. *Acquiring Operator's Acceptance of an Existing Permit (§ 29.171(b))*—The transferee must provide the following within 30 days of commencing operations:

- Documentation demonstrating that it holds the right to operate within the refuge.
- Names, phone numbers, and addresses of the primary company representative; the representative responsible for field supervision; and the representative responsible for emergency response.
- Written agreement to conduct operations in accordance with all terms and conditions of the previous operator's permit.
- Financial assurance that is acceptable to the Service and made payable to the Service.

Q. *Extension to Well Plugging Requirement (§29.181)*—To maintain a well in a shut-in status for up to 5 years, operators may apply for either an operations permit or a modification to operations under an approved permit. The application or modification must include the information requested in Form 3-2469, including:

- Explanation of why the well is shut-in or temporarily abandoned and future plans for utilization.
- Demonstration of the mechanical integrity of the well.
- Description of the manner in which the operator's well, equipment, and area of operations will be maintained in accordance with the standards in subpart D of the regulations.

R. *Public Information (§ 29.210)*—

(1) An operator, or the operator and the owner of the information required under this subpart, may support a claim to be exempt from public disclosure of information otherwise required. If required information is withheld, the operator must submit an affidavit § 29.210(d) that:

- Identifies the owner of the withheld information and provides the name, address, and contact information for an authorized representative of the owner of the information.
- Identifies the Federal statute or regulation that would prohibit the Service from publicly disclosing the information if it were in the Service's possession.
- Affirms that the operator has been provided the withheld information from the owner of the information and is maintaining records of the withheld information, or that the operator has access and will maintain access to the information held by the owner of the information.
- Affirms that the information is not publicly available.
- Affirms that the information is not required to be publicly disclosed under any applicable local, State, or Federal law.
- Affirms that the owner of the information is in actual competition and identifies competitors or others that could use the withheld information to cause the owner substantial competitive harm.
- Affirms that the release of the information would likely cause substantial competitive harm to the owner and provides the factual basis for that affirmation.
- Affirms that the information is not readily apparent through reverse engineering with publicly available information.

(2) If the operator relies upon information from third parties, such as the owner of the withheld information, to make the previous affirmations, the operator must provide a written affidavit from the third party that sets forth the relied-upon information (§ 29.210(e)).

(3) We may require any operator to submit any withheld information and any

information relevant to a claim that withheld information is exempt from public disclosure (§ 29.210(f)).

(4) The operator must maintain records of any withheld information until the latter of the Service's release of the operator's financial assurance or 7 years after completion of operations on refuge lands (§ 29.210(h)).

(5) If any of the chemical identity information required in this subpart is withheld, the operator must provide the generic chemical name in the submission required. The generic chemical name must be only as nonspecific as is necessary to protect the confidential chemical identity, and should be the same as or no less descriptive than the generic chemical name provided to the Environmental Protection Agency (§ 29.210(i)).

The public may request a copy of Form 3-2469 associated with this collection by sending a request to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer (see **ADDRESSES**, above).

Title of Collection: Non-Federal Oil and Gas Operations on National Wildlife Refuge System Lands, 50 CFR 29, Subpart D.

OMB Control Number: 1018-0162.

Form Number: Form 3-2469.

Type of Review: Extension without change of a currently approved collection.

Respondents/Affected Public: Businesses that conduct oil and gas exploration on national wildlife refuges.

Respondent's Obligation: Required to obtain or retain a benefit.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion.

Total Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost: \$2,250,000 (associated with financial assurances).

Activity/Requirement	Estimated Number of	Completion Time per	Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours
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	Annual Responses	Response (Hours)	
Preexisting Operations (§ 29.61)	40	50	2,000
Temporary Access Permit Application (§ 29.71) <i>Hard Copy</i>	18	17	306
Temporary Access Permit Application (§ 29.71) <i>ePermits</i>	18	12.75	230
Accessing Oil and Gas Rights from Non-Federal Surface Location (§ 29.80)	5	1	5
Pre-application Meeting for Operations Permit (§ 29.91)	45	2	90
Operations Permit Application (§§ 29.94–29.97) <i>Hard Copy</i>	23	140	3,220
Operations Permit Application (§§ 29.94–29.97) <i>ePermits</i>	23	105	2,415
Financial Assurance (§§ 29.103(b), 29.150)	45	1	45
Identification of Wells and Related Facilities (§ 29.119(b))	45	2	90
Reporting (§ 29.121)			
Third-Party Monitor Report (§ 29.121(b))	300	17	5,100
Notification—Injuries/Mortality to Fish and Wildlife and Threatened /Endangered Plants (§ 29.121(c))	20	1	20
Notification—Accidents involving Serious Injuries/Death and Fires/Spills (§ 29.121(d))	20	1	20
Written Report—Accidents Involving Serious Injuries/ Deaths and Fires/Spills (§ 29.121(d))	20	16	320
Report—Verify Compliance with Permits (§ 29.121(e))	240	4	960
Permit Modifications (§ 29.160(a))	10	16	160
Notification—Chemical Disclosure of Hydraulic Fracturing Fluids uploaded to FracFocus (§ 29.121(f))	5	1	5
Change of Operator § 29.170			
Transferring Operator Notification (§ 29.170)	20	8	160
Extension to Well Plugging (§ 29.181(a))			
Application for Permit <i>Hard Copy</i>	5	140	700
Application for Permit <i>ePermits</i>	5	105	525
Modification <i>Hard Copy</i>	3	16	48
Modification <i>ePermits</i>	3	12	36
Acquiring Operator’s Requirements for Wells Not Under a Service Permit (§ 29.171(a)) <i>Hard Copy</i>	10	40	400
Acquiring Operator’s Requirements for Wells Not Under a Service Permit (§ 29.171(a)) <i>ePermits</i>	10	30	300
Acquiring Operator’s Acceptance of an Existing Permit (§ 29.171(b))	1	8	8
Public Information (§ 29.210)			
Affidavit in Support of Claim of Confidentiality (§ 29.210(c) and (d))	1	1	1
Confidential Information (§ 29.210(e) and (f))	1	1	1
Maintenance of Confidential Information (§ 29.210(h))	1	1	1
Generic Chemical Name Disclosure (§ 29.210(i))	1	1	1
TOTALS:	938		17,167

The authority for this action is the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.).

Madonna Baucum,
Information Collection Clearance Officer,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.