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Battle Lake Watershed Synergy Group BMP

BMPs and who is the BLWSG

[Topics]

- Who is the Synergy Group
- Why BMPs
- BMPs in practice
- BMP Key Points

[History]

- Response to direction provided by Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) decision 2005-129 and commitments listed in the resulting published report titled “Battle Lake Watershed Development Planning, Summary Report of the Multi-stakeholder Pilot Project Team December 2006”.
- Recommendation number four of the Report identified the need to create a suite of Battle Lake Watershed Best Management Practices. Some, but not all of the recommended facility design and operating practices that were to be considered were listed as follows.
 - noise sources in the Battle Lake basin
 - reduced nighttime lighting of facilities
 - Spill and runoff containment
 - timely reclamation of spills and non producing sites
 - measures to reduce truck traffic hazards and impacts
 - other relevant measures as identified through other synergy group products and
 - signage to identify oil and gas company operating and maintenance staff vehicles

Introduction to Battle Lake Watershed Synergy Group

- Formed in 2005 in response to community concerns regarding the development of oil and gas resources in the watershed.
- Ensures effective and sensitive planning of oil and gas development in the Battle Lake watershed area through open, honest and respectful communication.
- Provides a venue by which residents, the oil and gas industry and government agencies can participate in development planning through integrated decision making.
- The group works with the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and industry to coordinate oil and gas development with community concerns and interests in mind. The objectives of the group are to:
 - Protect the watershed from adverse and cumulative effects of oil and gas development.
 - Mitigate the potential adverse affects of oil and gas development on area residents, other land users and wildlife habitats.

[WHY]

- Identify the suggested best practices for industry as they relate to work in the Battle Lake Watershed (BLW). BLW requires special consideration as industry pursues the development of resources in the area.
- Identify the legislative requirements that apply to oil and gas development in general as well as the additional considerations that apply to this unique setting. Best management practices start with the Provincial legislative requirements that always apply. The intent is to provide context for industry and land holders and land users alike.
- While industry may be familiar with legislative requirements, and local land holders are familiar with the unique elements of the Battle Lake Watershed, each may not be familiar with the others expectations and requirements. This document offers the venue by which all considerations are summarized for all participants in one location. This document should be used as a baseline to offer continuity in process for resource development in the BLW.

[BLWSG]

The group's mission statement follows.

“To provide an effective and proactive forum to allow community, industry and government to communicate and share information respectfully and cooperatively as well as aid in an integrated approach to developing and planning oil and gas activity in a manner that protects and preserves the Battle Lake Watershed.”

Community Engagement

Concerns

- Residents wish to be engaged in the planning process for oil and gas development within the Battle Lake Watershed. Industry requires an orientation on community expectations so that they can engage community members in a manner that is consistent with expectations.
- All BLWSG participants must understand the terms of engagement and the appropriate manner in which they can communicate information, seek input and offer feedback.

Practices

- Active operators are encouraged to attend regular meetings of the BLWSG.
- The operator will use the Synergy Group meetings and independent Open Houses to communicate Project Plans.
- The operator will provide and or make available BLWSG BMP's to stakeholders. Copies will be available at Open Houses, Public Information Meetings and from Land Agents.
- Operators will notify local synergy groups of Open Houses and Public Forums and invite them to participate appropriately.
- expected continue to dialogue with parties whom are affected and interested

[Planning]

Concerns

- Community members require an opportunity to identify unique characteristics of an area to the developer during the planning stages. Local input could help identify strategies to reduce the impact of the development.

Practices

- The operator:
 - is committed to involving members of the local community and landowners in decisions that may potentially affect them, such as drilling, completions, service work, dust control, weed control, fracturing and flaring.
 - will conduct a comprehensive assessment including on-site evaluations of environment, watershed and community impacts.
 - records concerns that are raised, investigates and takes action as appropriate.

[Land Survey]

Concerns

- Interested parties should have a clear understanding of their rights and interests as they relate to land surveys completed for the purpose of oil and gas development. For this document, 'Surveying' refers to survey required to locate existing plans or evidence, and for the establishment of new Right-of-Ways, Riser Sites, Access Roads, Lease sites, Power Lines and or other dispositions.

Practices

- Communication:
 - Obtain contact information
 - Ensure documentation and/or endorsement/approval of:
 - any concerns or specific requests
 - any commitments agreed upon in the field with the surveyors
 - Landowners and occupants have a responsibility to inform the energy company and/or its contractor(s) if situations arise which may affect the companies work
 - BLWSG strongly encourages and stresses the importance of good communication between the oil company, the landowner and the survey crews, both initially and throughout the survey process. Through effective communication, all parties will gain a complete understanding of the full scope and nature of the proposed work.

[Drilling]

Concerns

- Stakeholders are concerned that drilling natural gas and oil wells will have a negative impact on the groundwater, local ecology and community quality of life. These recommended practices have been established by BLWSG to help stakeholders understand the steps involved when drilling. The intent is to demonstrate that industry recognizes the sensitive nature of the area and applies more rigorous standards in the BLWS.

Practices

- Review of the water wells in the general area will occur within 400m of the proposed drilling location.
- As drilling fluids are comprised of non-toxic and environmentally approved components, the fluids are disposed of via one of two methods: land-spraying or hauling off-site. **There should be no land spraying of any drilling fluid on any land within the Battle Lake watershed;**
- Prior to drilling, a source of suitable water to be used for drilling fluid must be located and secured. No water should be used from within the Battle Lake Watershed defined boundary. A temporary water diversion license may be required from Alberta Environment prior to removing the water.

Site Planning and Design

Concerns

- This practice is intended to address public concerns regarding the basis for placement and design of well-sites, pipelines and compressors.
- In determining the placement of wells, the operator should consider the Battle Lake Pilot Project tier structure, cumulative effect, and overall footprint.
 - well location is appropriately spaced from adjacent wells in the same target zones;
 - a new well can be drilled or directionally drilled from an existing lease (pad drilling);
 - a new well (lease) can be located next to an existing pipeline or access.
 - setback considerations / restrictions;
 - environmental sensitivity – setbacks from water bodies [wetlands, fens, bogs, sloughs]; and
 - landowner preferences.

Pipeline Design and Construction

Concerns

- The public requires assurances that the site specific requirements for pipeline construction in the BLWS are understood and clearly stated. The best management practices provide an overview of the construction requirements for this area and required setbacks. Routing of pipelines is covered in Project Planning and Design.

Practices

- Pipelines for gas gathering systems are buried to a minimum depth of 0.8 m. **Within the Battle Lake Watershed area this shall be 1.5 m.**
- The operator will appropriately compensate landowners for damages due to pipeline construction. In cases where damages cannot be agreed upon, the operator or landowner may engage a 3rd party to assess damages.
- Upon request, the operator will confirm the operational status of any pipeline for which the operator is the licensee.

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Questions

<http://synergyalberta.ca/group/battle-lake-watershed-synergy-group>