

QUICK FACTS ON THE OIL & GAS DRILLING DECISION LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

Three Expanded Drilling Areas

- ✓ The agency's decision allows **new oil drilling in 3 areas** totaling 106,584 acres. These areas are called High Oil and Gas Potential Areas (HOGPAs) and include:
 - San Cayetano HOGPA – 13,444 acres northeast of **Ojai** in Ventura County
 - Sespe HOGPA – 12,882 acres north of **Lake Piru** in eastern Ventura County
 - South Cuyama HOGPA – 80,258 acres in **eastern Santa Barbara and western Ventura counties**
- ✓ In these three areas, **52,075 acres will be opened to potential leasing** with varying degrees of restrictions, including:
 - No Surface Occupancy (47,798 acres) – Slant drilling is allowed, but no surface disturbance.
 - **Surface Occupancy (4,277 acres)** – Surface disturbance allowed with varying restrictions, including limited surface use, timing limitations, and standard lease terms.
- ✓ There are approximately 4,863 acres of **existing oil and gas drilling and development** on the Los Padres. The agency's decision represents a nearly **two-fold increase** over existing drilling acreage.

Impacts to the California Condor

- ✓ The Los Padres National Forest is home to only **56 California condors**, one of the world's most endangered species.
- ✓ Areas within **critical habitat** of the California condor will be zoned as LSU ("Limited Surface Use"), meaning some sort of surface occupancy will be allowed in Condor critical habitat. According to the agency, 135 acres of suitable condor habitat will be subject to development.
- ✓ Individual oil leases will include restrictions on drilling to protect California condors. One of these restrictions is a 1.5 mile **buffer** around historic or active nest sites, and 0.5 miles around active roost sites. These buffers may be inadequate, as condors travel up to 120 miles per day.
- ✓ All three drilling areas share boundaries with **areas that are essential to condor recovery**. San Cayetano and Sespe HOGPAs both border the Sespe Condor Sanctuary and the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. These areas support critical habitat for the condor, and are key areas in the Condor Reintroduction Program. The South Cuyama HOGPA follows the Sierra Madre Ridge, one of the primary flight paths of the condor and the home of a condor reintroduction site.
- ✓ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded, after reviewing the Forest Service's plan, that new drilling would adversely affect the California condor and **might even kill some of the birds**. Specifically, the USFWS concluded, "We expect that, although California condors may be adversely affected, *few* or none are likely to be killed."

Impacts to Other Endangered & Threatened Species

- ✓ The decision allows for leasing of up to **3,468 acres of suitable habitat and 82 acres of occupied habitat** for threatened and endangered species. Suitable habitat is defined as unsurveyed or partially surveyed areas that could actually be occupied by such species.
- ✓ **Protected species** that could be impacted by new oil drilling include the San Joaquin kit fox, the arroyo toad, the California red-legged frog, steelhead, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and the California spotted owl.

Impacts to Roadless & Wilderness Areas

- ✓ All inventoried roadless areas will be designated "No Surface Occupancy," but **slant drilling** will be allowed immediately adjacent to these areas and may still impact these pristine wildlands.
- ✓ The San Cayetano HOGPA is **88% roadless**, the Sespe HOGPA is **45% roadless**, and the South Cuyama HOGPA is **93% roadless**.
- ✓ The plan allows **surface drilling** right up to the boundaries of three Congressionally-designated wilderness areas – **the Sespe, Chumash, and Dick Smith wilderness areas**. The plan also allows surface drilling within a few hundred feet of the **San Rafael Wilderness Area**.

Impacts to Watersheds & Rivers

- ✓ Slant drilling is allowed underneath a one-mile stretch of Sespe Creek that is eligible for Wild & Scenic River designation. The **Sespe Wild & Scenic River** is also classified by the agency as an "Area of High Ecological Significance" and has been dubbed Southern California's last free-flowing wild river.
- ✓ New drilling will be allowed around the upper half of **Lake Piru**. This reservoir was designed to replenish the groundwater basins of the Santa Clara River, and provides clean water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural uses. It is already considered "impaired" under the Clean Water Act, and its use as a drinking water supply is considered "threatened" by the State Water Resources Control Board.
- ✓ Significant amounts of surface drilling will be allowed in the **Upper Cuyama River** watershed. The Forest Service has also declared this area to be an "Area of High Ecological Significance."

Impacts to Air Quality

- ✓ According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement, new oil drilling will result in an additional **12,179 pounds per day of air pollutants**, including oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic compounds, the prime components of smog.
- ✓ The drilling plan will allow so much air pollution that it will **exceed local air quality standards** designed to protect human health.