

Oil and Gas Division

Mark F. Bohrer - Assistant Director

North Dakota Industrial Commission

Department of Mineral Resources

www.dmr.nd.gov/oilgas/

August 9, 2024

Sent via Email

Dear North Dakota, Indian Affairs:

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Orphaned Wells Program Office (OWPO) administers \$4.7 billion in financial assistance authorized under Section 40601 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ([P.L. 117-58](#)), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), to plug, remediate, and restore orphaned oil and gas wells located on Federal, Tribal, State and private lands. Orphaned wells, generally, no longer produce oil or natural gas, or otherwise serve their intended purpose. Orphaned wells have no known owner or operator capable of properly plugging or closing the well and reclaiming the well site.

The State of North Dakota (State) received Notice of Award for the DOI Orphaned Wells Program Formula Grant – Phase 1 (Grant) on August 1, 2024. The State identified possible Tribal Nation(s) as being potentially located within the project work area as shown on the enclosed Sites Map dated August 2, 2024. It is important to stress this Grant funds the plugging, reclamation, and remedial work of wells that are no longer productive, that may pose potential safety, environmental, and human health hazards to nearby residents and the broader community.

Certain orphaned well related activities are considered undertakings with the potential to affect historic properties, for the purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), [54 USC § 306108](#). As such, they are subject to review under Section 106 of the NHPA and the implementing regulations, [36 C.F.R. part 800](#). We invite you to engage with us if you have any interest or concerns in the areas identified for possible orphaned well plugging activities. The general scope of the proposed Grant activities may include:

- Providing for site access, primarily using existing roadways. Limited instances may require temporary road construction or driving equipment off-road to the well site.
- Transporting heavy machinery to well sites (*e.g.*, workover rigs, wireline, and cement trucks).
- Testing to determine if methane gas is leaking from the orphaned well prior to plugging quantification of emissions where present, and confirmation of no emissions of methane after plugging.
- Pumping cement downhole to set plugs at intervals of the wellbore to prevent the migration of harmful fluids and or gases into other formations, freshwater aquifers, and the surface. Mechanical plugs or tools may also be placed at certain intervals.

- Sampling of soil and other remediation activities in instances where contamination of soil or other media is suspected due to conditions at the well site.
- Disposing of contaminated waste through proper methods.
- Removing and properly disposing of associated infrastructure, as appropriate.
- Post-plugging surface reclamation work.
- Remediation of potential environmental impact areas.

Please contact Cody VanderBusch, Reclamation Specialist, North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources, at 701-328-8020 if you have any interests or concerns in the possible areas or activities identified in this letter or its enclosure(s), or if you would like to obtain more information regarding the consultation process. Should you prefer to interact directly with the OWPO, or if you are interested in learning more about the \$150 million available for Tribal grants and assistance to address orphaned wells on Tribal lands, we will put you in contact with that federal office.

Sincerely,

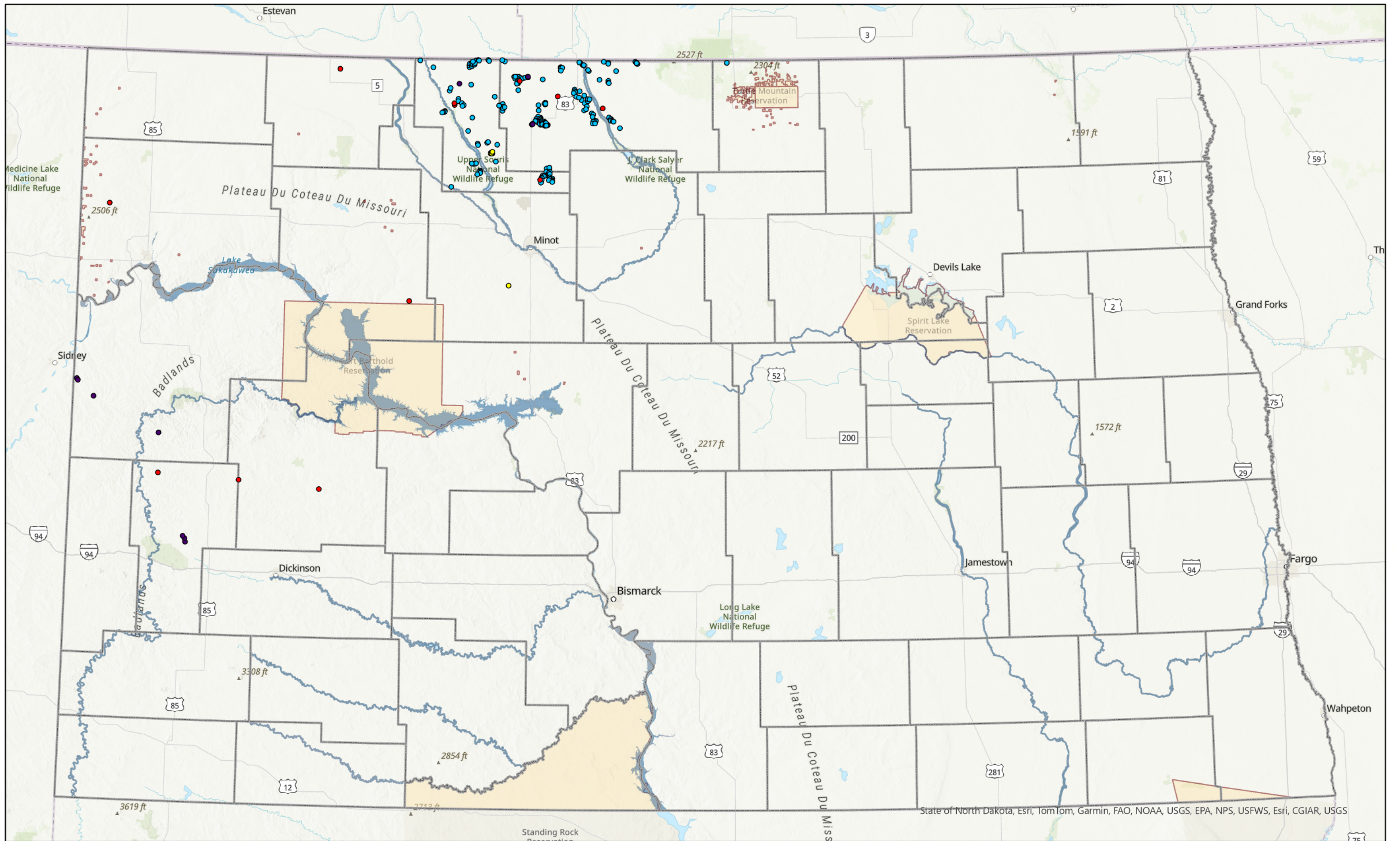


Cody VanderBusch
Reclamation Specialist

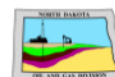
Enclosure: Sites Map

CC: Eleni Sarris, Financial officer, Interior Business Center (Via email)

Maureen Gallagher, Policy and Compliance Division Chief, Orphaned Wells Program Office
(Via email)



State of North Dakota, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USFWS, Esri, CGIAR, USGS



8/2/2024

● Reclaimed Brine Pond

● Reclamation

● Remediation

● Plugging and Reclamation