

Pat O'Dell

09/10/02 11:10 AM  
MDT

To: Darrell Echols/PAIS/NPS@NPS  
CC:  
Subject: Noise & Blowdown

Hi Darrell,

Here is suggested response language for you to consider:

The process of "blowdown" described by [commentor] and the reasons for doing it do not occur at Padre Island as part of routine operations. The impacts of such operations are therefore not a consideration in this assessment.

Below is an excerpt from a 5/23/2002 email to Arlene about water wells, blowdown, and other noise...where I provided a little more discussion of blowdown.

#### Impacts on Natural Soundscapes

The person from NPCA commenting on "blowdown" seems to be misinformed about the normal operation of a natural gas well. The process described (and the reason for doing it) does not occur at Padre Island as part of routine operations or anywhere else that I am aware. Including any specific discussion about "blowdown" as described in NPCA comments would only serve to confuse readers. I suggest beefing up the detail on possible noise from production operations.

During drilling, rig traffic is also a source of noise. During gas well production, traffic is substantially reduced to perhaps one personal pickup truck per day and maybe a periodic tanker truck hauling produced liquids (brine and/or condensate). Periodic well workover or well servicing is also a short-term source of noise, perhaps once every 5 to 10 years for a period of one to two weeks. Gas well production (in the absence of compressors) might generate noise from gas moving through lines or liquids dripping into a tank. In most instances, you can be standing in the middle of the production site and not hear any production sounds.

Lastly, the use of a diesel electric rig in and by itself does not "substantially" reduce noise from the location. There is some noise reduction just by removing all the belts, pulleys, and chains used to drive a mechanical rig, but the biggest source of noise are the diesel engines. I would remove the word "substantially" when talking about the diesel-electric rig, UNLESS BNP tells us they are contracting a rig that includes additional sound reduction from the diesel engines (enhanced mufflers or sound barriers). The rig contracted to drill the Dunn-Murdock No. 1 did not include any noticeable sound reduction measures on the diesel engines.

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