



## **USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference**

### [Land and Water Inventory Guide for Landowners in Areas of Coal Bed Methane Development](#)

Coal bed methane (CBM) development occurs widely in the western United States and is rapidly expanding in scale. The CBM development process potentially leads to natural resource impacts and alteration. As CBM progresses across the region, extension educators, conservation district employees, watershed groups, tribal members, and landowners have expressed a need for guidance regarding natural resource management and stewardship. To address resource issues associated with CBM development, the CSREES Northern Plains and Mountains Regional Water Program, Prairie County Conservation District, and EPA Region 8 partners have co-developed the “Land and Water Inventory Guide for Landowners in Areas of Coal Bed Methane Development”. The guide is intended to empower landowners within CBM development areas of Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado to initiate a watershed approach to soil, water, and vegetation monitoring. Goals of the project include enabling landowners to: 1) understand baseline conditions of soil, water, and vegetation resources; 2) understand potential impacts of CBM development prior to contracting with a developer; and 3) monitor resource changes over time as a result of CBM development. The guide addresses steps to mitigate and prevent degradation of natural resources, emphasizes landowner education regarding surface and mineral rights, describes how to develop an inventory map, and outlines baseline data collection and simple protocols for implementing an ongoing monitoring program including site selection, sampling protocol, and data interpretation. To ensure that the guide was regionally appropriate, drafts were extensively reviewed by CSREES partners along with industry and agency professionals in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. To ensure the monitoring protocols described were meaningful, yet monetarily and time efficient, the guide was reviewed by a number of landowners throughout the region. The resulting document is a concise and timely tool for landowners and resource managers throughout the Northern Plains and Mountains region.

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