Restoring the Land after Gas and Wind Energy Activities
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Gas drilling activities, construction of pipelines, and erecting wind turbines require access roads and, in some cases, platform construction. Once the projects are completed, farmers and landowners want assurance that their land will be restored to its prior condition. Here are some of the items you will want to consider with regards to agricultural mitigation for right of ways and energy construction sites.

1. Strip the topsoil and store it in a berm.

2. Allow a right of way wide enough to allow for storage of topsoil, subsoil, and two-way truck traffic. For the larger regional and interstate gas transmission pipelines, those measuring 18-40 inches in diameter, the construction right-of-ways are usually between 90-120 feet wide.

John Lacey notes that the most common of the smaller gas gathering lines (4-6 inches diameter) are usually constructed through open lands in a temporary construction right-of-way of only about 55-60 feet width (on gentle terrain or at right-angle to a respective slope). Sometimes a gas gathering line may need up to 65-70 feet...or so, if it is going "cross slope" (generally along the contour line), in moderately steep terrain, and requires temporary "cut and fill grading" to make a temporarily "level" work surface; which is returned to its original slope when work is completed.

3. For pipeline trenches excavated on sloped land, make sure there are sandbag “trench breakers” placed in the trench to stop water from following the excavated “path of least resistance”.

4. Installation of culverts or drain tile may be needed to eliminate pooling water.

5. Replace material in the reverse order in which it was removed.

6. Subsoil should be ripped and de-compacted before covering it with topsoil.

7. After replacing topsoil they should go over again with a subsoiler. When finished, you should be able to easily penetrate the soil 18 inches below surface. Rocks larger than 4" need to be picked.

You will find the best mitigation practices for agricultural landscapes in the publication, “Pipeline Right-of-Way Construction Projects: Agricultural mitigation through the stages of Project planning, construction/restoration and follow-up monitoring”. It is available online at http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/ap/agservices/WEBAPConstrGuides.pdf

According to Matt Brower, NYS Dept. Ag and Markets agricultural resource specialist, “Crops will always tell you if they've done it right.” In addition to inspecting the

construction as it happens, make sure you continue to monitor your landscape for at least two years after the work is complete.