

including referrals to enforcement authorities. BLM and the State should also include provisions for the regular review or audit of these agreements.

(b) To satisfy the requirements of § 3809.31(b), if BLM and the State elect to address suction dredge activities in the agreement, the agreement must require a State to notify BLM of each application to conduct suction dredge activities within 15 calendar days of receipt of the application by the State. BLM will inform the State whether Federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed activities and any necessary mitigating measures. Operations must not begin until BLM completes consultation or conferencing under the Endangered Species Act.

§ 3809.202 Under what conditions will BLM defer to State regulation of operations?

(a) *State request.* A State may request BLM enter into an agreement for State regulation of operations on public lands in place of BLM administration of some or all of the requirements of this subpart. The State must send the request to the BLM State Director with jurisdiction over public lands in the State.

(b) *BLM review.* (1) When the State Director receives the State's request, he/she will notify the public and provide an opportunity for comment. The State Director will then review the request and determine whether the State's requirements are consistent with the requirements of this subpart, and whether the State has necessary legal authorities, resources, and funding for an agreement. The State requirements may be contained in laws, regulations, guidelines, policy manuals, and demonstrated permitting practices.

(2) For the purposes of this subpart, BLM will determine consistency with the requirements of this subpart by comparing this subpart and State standards on a provision-by-provision basis to determine—

(i) Whether non-numerical State standards are functionally equivalent to BLM counterparts; and

(ii) Whether numerical State standards are the same as corresponding numerical BLM standards, except that State review and approval time frames do not have to be the same as the corresponding Federal time frames.

(3) A State environmental protection standard that exceeds a corresponding Federal standard is consistent with the requirements of this subpart.

(c) *State Director decision.* The BLM State Director will notify the State in writing of his/her decision regarding the State's request. The State Director will address whether the State requirements are consistent with the requirements of this subpart, and whether the State has necessary legal authorities, resources, and funding to implement any agreement. If BLM determines that the State's requirements are consistent with the requirements of this subpart and the State has the necessary legal authorities, resources, and funding, BLM must enter into an agreement with the State so that the State will regulate some or all of the operations on public lands, as described in the State request.

(d) *Appeal of State Director decision.* The BLM State Director's decision will be a final decision of BLM and may be appealed to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, but not to the Department of the Interior Office of Hearings and Appeals. The items you should include in the appeal are the same as the items you must include under § 3809.802.

[65 FR 70112, Nov. 21, 2000, as amended at 68 FR 32656, June 2, 2003]

§ 3809.203 What are the limitations on BLM deferral to State regulation of operations?

Any agreement between BLM and a State in which BLM defers to State regulation of some or all operations on public lands is subject to the following limitations:

(a) *Plans of Operations.* BLM must concur with each State decision approving a plan of operations to assure compliance with this subpart, and BLM retains responsibility for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The State and BLM may decide who will be the lead agency