**Section 250.30 Permit to Explore Unknown Territory**

a) Any person (applicant) may request a permit to explore for oil and gas on State owned land designated as unknown territory in accordance with Section 250.20 of this Part. The request shall not be made for more than three sections of land or equivalent acreage (1920 acres) and shall not contain any land where the oil and gas rights are not wholly owned by the State of Illinois. The request shall:

1) be in writing;

2) describe the method of exploration contemplated;

3) contain a legal description of the land for which a permit to explore is sought that includes proof satisfactory to the Office that the oil and gas rights underlying the described land are wholly owned by the State;

4) articulate a general plan for future development in the event oil and/or gas is discovered.

b) If an applicant for a permit to explore for oil and gas on State owned land complies with the provisions of subsection (a), the Office will direct the applicant to secure a signed agreement with the State agency owning the land to be explored, encompassing the scope of all aspects of the exploration operations contemplated by the permittee, including but not limited to:

1) the amount paid for damages to the surface of the land;

2) the method and timing of access to the site for exploration so as to minimize interference with State programs; and

3) the procedures for the mitigation of damage to the site during exploration activities and for the restoration of the site following exploration activities.

c) If the applicant for a permit to explore for oil and gas on State owned land secures a signed agreement with the State agency owning the land to be explored that complies with subsection (b), the Department, with the approval of the Governor, shall issue the exploration permit.

d) The permit to explore shall:

1) specify the provisions and requirements of the State agency owning the land;

2) specify the lease provisions, in accordance with Section 250.40 of this Part;

3) be valid for one year;

4) be non-transferrable; and

5) be limited to the following exploration activities:

A) seismic exploration;

B) structure test holes not penetrating the oil-producing zone;

C) remote sensing; and

D) chemical analysis.

e) Permittee may surrender the permit at any time and shall be relieved of all liability except for physical damage to the land and any other site mitigation and restoration activities specified in the signed agreement with the State agency that has jurisdiction over the land to be explored.