

# Oil & Gas



## Drilling Exploration

If an oil company develops a target and secures the mineral rights, the drilling of an exploratory “wildcat” well may be the next step. If a wildcat proves to be commercially viable, it becomes a “producer” and may lead to “step-out drilling” to further define an oil and gas field.

**Wildcat wells** are exploratory wells drilled in areas or at depths where commercial-scale oil or gas hasn’t previously been discovered.

- Historically in Florida, 97% of all wildcat wells have been dry holes.
- Florida’s rules for wildcat wells include requirements to minimize surface impacts, protect aquifers, provide contingency plans, prevent spills or accidental gas releases, and provide data, samples and various regulatory reports to the state.



*Typical southwest Florida oil production well with downhole electric pump, Raccoon Point*

**Production (field) wells** are drilled within the known boundaries of oil and gas reservoirs and therefore are expected to be productive. Field wells often are drilled directionally, not vertically, so that multiple wellheads can be situated on a single drilling pad. Once established, field wells usually are referred to as production wells.

**Step-out wells** are drilled outward from discovery wells to delineate oil and gas field reservoir boundaries. If successful, step-out wells become production wells, and additional step-out wells are drilled farther from the center of the established oilfield.