

DNRC-Trust Land Management Division

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: State 43C-3691 Coal Bed Natural Gas Exploratory Well
 Proposed Implementation Date: Prior to 12-6-04
 Proponent: Fidelity Exploration & Production Company
 Type and Purpose of Action: Drill an exploratory well to a proposed depth of 1168 feet, to check the coal seams in an area with potential coal bed natural gas development.
 Location: NESE Sec.36, T9S-R41E
 County: Bighorn

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Surface lessee, Fra A. Porter contacted.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Permit to drill from BOGC
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Approve application No action

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS
	N = Not Present or No Impact will occur. Y = Impacts may occur (explain below)
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N]This is a clayey loam soil found on a high sedimentary ridgetop. Pits will be dug. Upon completion, they will be filled back in, reclaimed and seeded to a native mix. This is a level site requiring no blade work.
5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[N]No de-watering or testing of natural gas will be required during this initial core test phase. RECEIVED DEC 2 11 2004
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N]What minimal emissions are released as part of this drilling process will quickly dissipate. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N] There are no known endangered plants present. The drill site is dominated by short to mid grass prairie. Little sagebrush occurs at the drill site. As this is a relatively flat ridgetop, blade work will not be required. The pits will be reclaimed and seeded to a native mix similar to the surrounding vegetation.
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Pronghorn antelope, deer and upland gamebirds including Sagegrouse frequent the area. Sagegrouse droppings witnessed within a couple hundred yards of proposed drill site may signify a lek. The proposed drilling should have no effect on this as it should be completed long before the critical March 1st to June 15th time frame. Whatever temporary disturbance is caused from the proposed activity, effected species can move into surrounding areas.
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?	[N] Quantity of Sagegrouse droppings near the drill site may signify a lek although this has not been confirmed. The proposed action will be completed prior to critical use periods for sagegrouse.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] No sites were discovered during the on-site review. The staff archaeologist was consulted.
11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	[N] High benchland with some exceptional views looking south into Wyoming.
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N]
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[N] The information from this core test will provide data to the applicant to analyze future coal bed natural gas development on this tract. If the data is favorable, future environmental reviews would be done to address production of wells.

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N]
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	[N] Access will be restricted to dry or frozen conditions and not allowed from March 1st to June 15th. No additional services are needed.
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N]
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N] This is a remote location with no legal public access.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]
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EA Checklist Prepared By: Gary Brandenburg LUS-SLO MT DNRC

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Proposed Action
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	There will be minimal surface impacts with the plan as submitted. All disturbances will be reclaimed and seeded to a native mix resembling the surrounding vegetation. The well will be shut in and no further action will take place under this proposal.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:	
<input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By:

Sharon Moore

Name

11/22/04

Title

Sharon Moore

Signature

Area Manager

Date