

**CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Project Name: LUL 4116	Proposed Implementation Date: 7-01-2004
Proponent: Decker Operating Company, LLC	
<p>Type and Purpose of Action: Installation of a gas well. The Decker company wants to drill a well approximately 2000' deep in hopes of finding natural gas. The surface casing is to be 7" 17# J-55 (used or new) to be set at 150' and will be cemented with 65 sacks of class G cement. The production casing will be 4½" 10.5# J-55 (new) and to be set at 2000' deep. This casing is to be cemented to surface with Pozmix. A pad will be constructed for this well that is 160' by 200'. The access road to this site will be an undeveloped two-track road located in the N¼NW¼ of this section. This road will be constructed on off-site, unneeded land to the north of this tract.</p>	
Location: SE¼NW¼ S19 T33N R31E	County: Phillips

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I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Bureau of Land Management.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	DNRC Trust Land Division; The Bureau of Land Management owns the mineral rights within the referenced legal description. The BLM will submit NEPA documentation regarding this proposed project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p><b>Action Alternative:</b> Construct the proposed gas well.</p> <p><b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No gas well will be constructed.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactable or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	<p>Action Alternative:</p> <p>No Action Alternative:</p> <p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The soils in this area are a Phillips-Elloam complex. Drilling the proposed well will result in the permanent displacement of the soils where the well casing will be placed. The surface soils where the well pad is proposed will be disturbed to some degree, but not permanently. The soils in the two-track access road may be compacted to some degree.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No soil disturbance will occur.
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?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> Some ground water may come to the surface during the installation of the gas well and there may be some ground water that is discharged from the gas well if the well is put in operation.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> There will be no ground water disturbance.
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> During the construction of this proposed gas well there will be some air bourn dust particles produced.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> The air quality will not be effected.
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The vegetation within the proposed drill site (including pad) will be altered. The vegetation on the two-track road may be temporarily disturbed.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> The vegetation will not be effected.
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> There have been mule deer seen in the immediate area of this proposed project. The installation of this project may temporarily disperse mule deer from the immediate area.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Mule deer will not be effected.
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?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> According to the last DNRC lease evaluation form there were no threatened or endangered species or habitats observed in the immediate area.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No habitat will be effected.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> An archeological survey of the proposed drill site will be conducted by the BLM for there NEPA process.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No archaeological sites will be disturbed.
11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The well site will be visible from State Highway 191.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> The aesthetics in the area

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
excessive noise or light?	will not be effected.
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?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> There is the possibility that some ground water will be displaced due to the installation of this gas well.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No environmental resources will be effected.
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The BLM will submit a NEPA document.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No documents will be submitted.

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?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> There will be some health and safety concerns during the construction of this project. A drill rig and other heavy equipment will be used during the construction of this project. Workers are aware of these health and safety hazards and recognize them as occupational hazards. Once the construction has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> There will be no health and safety concerns in this area.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The installation of this project will enhance industrial and commercial activities for the State of Montana as well as increasing revenue to the State from the natural gas.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Industrial and commercial activities will not be effected.
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> Job security for the workers currently employed by the Decker Operating Company will be enhanced by the installation of this project.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Job security for employees of the Decker Operating Company will not be enhanced.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> Gas produced from the well of this proposed project will increase local and State tax revenue.  [N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Local and State tax revenue will not be increased.

<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> There may be some increased traffic on State Highway 191 due to service trucks sent to maintain the gas facility.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Demands for government services will not be effected.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> No zoning or management plans will be effected.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No zoning or management plans will be effected.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> Recreation in this area consists of deer hunting and upland bird hunting. The proposed project may temporarily effect these hunting opportunities.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No recreational activities will be effected.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> Population and housing will not be effected.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Population and housing will not be effected.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> Social structures will not be effected.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> Social structures will not be effected.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The cultural uniqueness and diversity of this area will not be effected.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> The cultural uniqueness and diversity of this area will not be effected.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>[Y] <b>Action Alternative:</b> The proposed gas well will produce valuable tax revenues for the Sate of Montana. This project will also provide temporary job security for employees of the Decker Operating Company.</p> <p>[N] <b>NO Action Alternative:</b> No social or economic benefit would result.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: Craig Biggart  
Craig Biggart

Date: June 25, 2004

IV. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Grant permission to construct Well pad and access
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:  <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By

R. Hoyt Richards  
R. Hoyt Richards, Glasgow Unit Manager

Date: June 25, 2004