

# **SCOPING STATEMENT**

## **JONES DRAW UNDERGROUND-ACCESS OIL RECOVERY PROJECT**

Bureau of Land Management  
Casper Field Office

### **Description of Proposed Project**

On September 9, 2005, Jones Draw Petroleum, LLC (JDP), of Sheridan, Wyoming, notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Casper Field Office, of its proposal to develop an underground-access oil recovery facility in the Fales Creek drainage of the proposed Jones Draw Field. The proposed Jones Draw Field is located in portions of T33N, R87W and R88W approximately 50 miles west of Casper off Poison Spider Road in the Rattlesnake Mountains (figure 1).

Using proven technology, JDP plans to produce oil reserves by a unique and environmentally friendly enhanced recovery technique which combines thermal stimulation (steam flooding) with underground-access gravity drainage. This technique involves the extraction of crude oil by gravity drainage from production boreholes drilled at various upward angles from underground drilling stations. The underground drilling stations will be located in a tunnel constructed below the oil reservoir. During production, the oil will flow downward via the influences of steam as well as the natural forces of gravity and remaining reservoir pressure. Produced oil will be gathered from boreholes and pumped from the underground drilling/production stations through the tunnel to surface handling facilities. Since the oil reserves in place will be produced by underground-access gravity drainage, there will be minimal surface disturbance; approximately 35 to 45 acres of new surface disturbance within a 3,875-acre proposed federal unit. All surface facilities will be located on private lands. The access road crosses primarily private lands and a small piece of both state and BLM-managed lands. Minerals to be produced are primarily federal managed by the BLM with some privately owned.

Development of the JDP project will take place in two phases. It will require the improvement of approximately 3 miles of existing access road. If necessary, JDP will lay an electrical line and a crude oil pipeline within the footprint of the upgraded road way. Construction of the 10-acre production facility will include topsoil salvage and tunnel excavation consisting of limited blasting and stockpiling of material. The portal facility or tunnel access area will include a closed drilling fluids system with small cuttings and fluid pits, a compressor, steam generators, staging area, field office, and shale storage pile. Recycled and spent drilling fluids will be transported to and from the drilling stations via a temporary pipeline located in the tunnel. A 20-acre services facility will also be constructed approximately 1 mile to the east of the portal adjacent to the access road. Produced fluids will be transported to this facility via a low pressure underground pipeline constructed in the access road right-of-way. Operations at this facility include produced fluids separation, oil storage tanks, produced water handling equipment (tankage or ponds), electrical power generation, a shop and warehouse, fuel storage, and a topsoil storage area. RV hook-ups will be available for crews during the construction and development phases of the project. Two vent shafts will be required for tunnel ventilation and emergency access. The disturbance related to these facilities will be less than one acre each. The ventilation

systems will be muffled to minimize noise. Initially crude oil will be transported off site via tanker truck. All facilities and the tunnel access (portal) will be fenced for security and public safety. All applicable and appropriate state and federal regulations will be followed including those of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the Wyoming Division of Mine Safety and Inspections.

Heavy equipment will be used to construct the tunnel including bulldozers, loaders, motor graders, excavators, scrapers, crushers, water trucks, fuel trucks, rock drilling equipment, and haul trucks. After the tunnel is completed, production boreholes will be drilled from five drill stations within the tunnel. The vast majority of this work from tunnel construction through production will not be visible or audible from the surface with the exception of moving shale from the tunnel to the stockpile and the movement of crews and materials.

Following cessation of production, production boreholes will be permanently plugged and abandoned. Pipelines will be purged and retired in place or removed based on landowner specifications. All above-ground facilities will be removed and roads will be reclaimed or left in place based on landowner preference. The portal and ventilation raises will be sealed to prevent access and inflow-outflow of water. Disturbed sites will be regraded, covered with previously salvaged topsoil, and revegetated. Compacted areas will be thoroughly ripped to a depth of 12-18 inches before topsoil is replaced. The reclaimed area will closely approximate the pre-disturbance contours and appearance.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

Upon reviewing JDP's underground-access oil recovery proposal, the BLM has determined that an environmental assessment (EA) will be prepared to analyze the effects of the proposed federal action. The impact analysis presented in the EA will allow for one of two decisions to be made by the BLM Field Manager. The first is whether to sign a Record of Decision (ROD) with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which would allow JDP's proposal to proceed. The second decision is to identify whether the project, as proposed, would result in significant impacts and would require preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

One element of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process:

- To identify reasonable development alternatives to be considered in the environmental document.
- To identify environmental/socioeconomic issues of concern related to the proposed project.
- To determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the environmental document.

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **Identified Resource Management Issues, Concerns and Opportunities**

The following issues and concerns have been identified to date. The list is a starting point for public input and a means of identifying the resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis:

- Potential impacts to surface and groundwater resources.
- Potential impacts to wildlife habitats within the analysis area.
- Increased traffic and associated impacts on existing county and state roads and highways.
- Impacts from air emissions and noise from tunnel construction and power generation equipment.
- Reclamation of disturbed areas.
- Social and economic impact to local communities and landowners.

## **Interdisciplinary Team**

An interdisciplinary team made up of the following specialists has been identified based on the current understanding of issues, concerns, opportunities, and established objectives from the previous analysis:

- Project Manager
- Air Quality Specialist
- Archaeologist
- Geologist
- Hydrologist
- Paleontologist
- Public Affairs Specialist
- Range Management Specialist
- Soil Scientist
- Wildlife Biologist
- Writer-Editor

## **Timing Needs or Requirements**

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, the alternatives to the proposed action, the other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

An open house will be held to discuss JDP's proposal. The meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 18, 2005 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at the BLM Casper Field Office in Casper, Wyoming.**

There will be a brief presentation at the meeting starting at 7:00 p.m., followed by a question and answer session. There will also be an opportunity to submit any issues or concerns on the proposal.

Your comments are due by **Tuesday, November 1, 2005**. Please submit your comments to:

Address: Patrick Moore, Project Manager  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Casper Field Office  
 2987 Prospector Drive  
 Casper, WY 82301

Email: [casper\\_wymail@blm.gov](mailto:casper_wymail@blm.gov)  
 (Please refer to the Jones Draw Oil Recovery Project in your email response.)

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The following agencies, companies, individuals and organizations have been identified as having a potential interest in the project and will receive a copy of this scoping statement. A press release requesting input from the general public is scheduled to be released concurrently with this scoping notice.

Natrona County Commissioners	Russell Forgey
Wyoming State Planning Office	John DeSanti
Natrona County Library	Spano Ranch
City of Casper	Pedro/Aspen Ltd. Partnership
Wyoming Game and Fish	Doris Shelton
WDEQ Water Quality Division	Keith Forgey
WDEQ Air Quality Division	J. Garnier III
Natrona County Road and Bridge	Thomas Clouner
State Geological Survey	Richard Fell
State Historical Preservation Office	Lee Harris
Office of State Lands and Investments	Kenneth Bale
Jay Backus	Stephen Owens
Clear Creek Cattle Company	Ken Tescher
Gary Myers	Kirk Ziker
Rex Kelson	Robert Ziker
Frederick Cubin II	Tracy Arbaugh
Robert Alan Davidson	Robert Wilson
Robert Weisz	Roger Ary
James Graham	Charmaine Hamel
Andrea Schuehly	Nicholas Cisneros
Michael Coleburn	Timothy Maloney
Tom Arnhart	Rick Legerski
Daniel Aguilar	Rodney Leyendecker
Robert Collins	Jose Ledesma

Mohamed Mourad	James Lester Williamson
Donna Davis	Debra Howe
Pamela Phelps et al Trustees	Juergen Dietz
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Senator Mike Enzi	Senator Craig Thomas