



**Bureau of Land Management**  
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**Categorical Exclusion**  
**Drilling of a Natural Gas Well – BRU 243-34**

**Applicant: ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.**  
**Case File Number: A-029657**  
**AK-010-08-CX-035**



**Location:**  
Section 34, T. 13 N., R. 10 W., Seward Meridian  
Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska

**Prepared By:**  
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Physical Scientist  
April 30, 2008

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Anchorage Field Office  
**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX) FORM**

CX No.: AK-010-08-CX-035

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: A-029657

Proposed Action:

Drilling of a natural gas well: Beluga River Unit (BRU 243-34)

Location of Proposed Action:

Section 34, T. 13 N., R. 10 W., Seward Meridian, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska.

Description of Proposed Action:

ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. wishes to drill a natural gas well, BRU 243-34 on Pad 214-35, in the Beluga River Field within the boundaries of lease number, A-029657. The proposed surface location is anticipated to be 1146' from the south line (FSL) and 959' from the east line (FEL) in Section 34, T.13N., R.10W., Seward Meridian. The proposed total vertical depth (TVD) of the well is 6,691', with a measured depth (MD) of 6,920'.

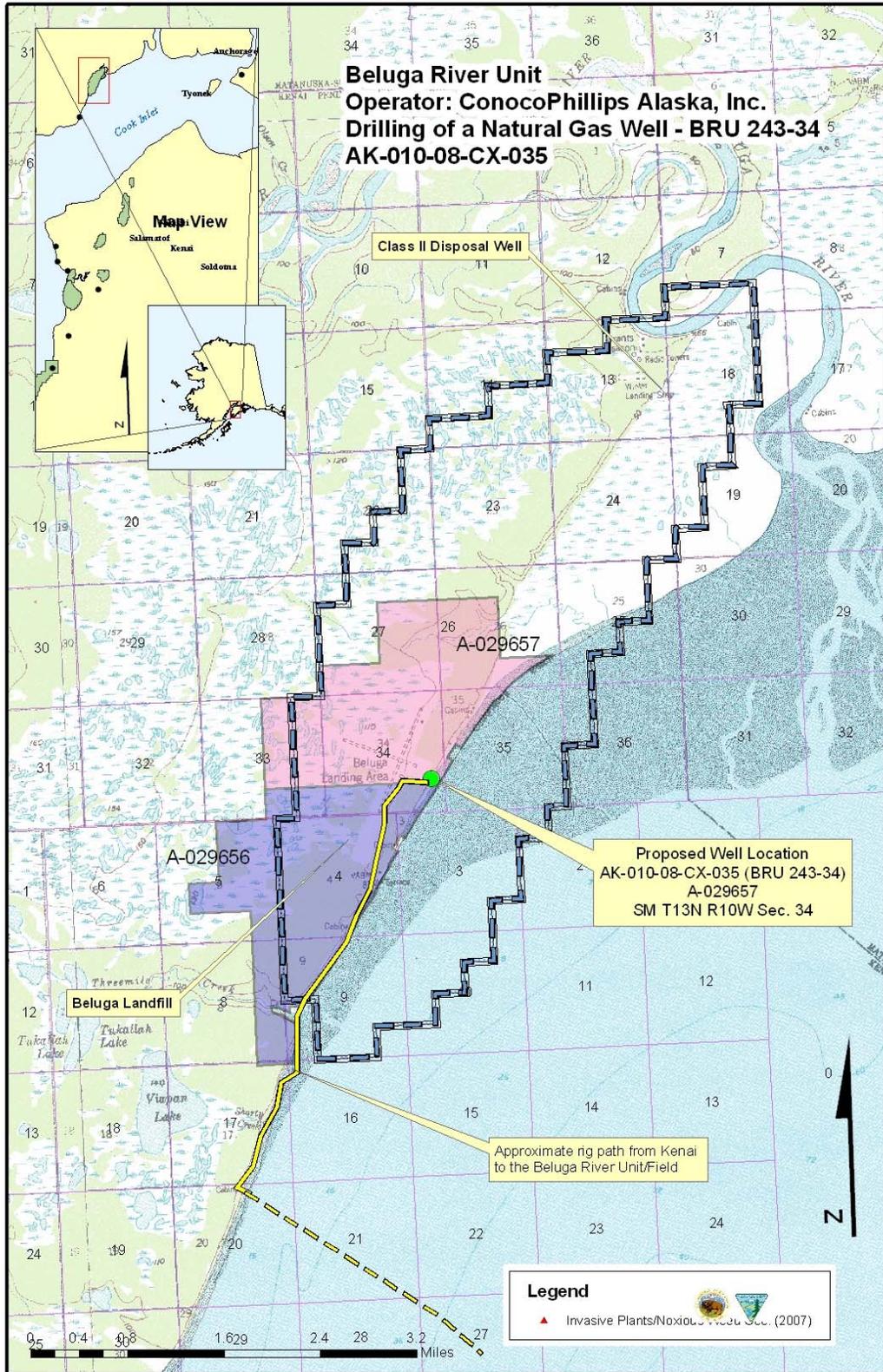
Existing roads will be used to access the Pad 214-35. No new construction is planned on the pad. There will, however, be a flowline installed from the wellhead to an existing line heater and separator located on the same pad from which the well will be drilled. Water supply wells located on pads off site will be used during operations, and will be trucked to drilling site via existing roads, where necessary.

Excess muds, drilling, and clear fluids will be hauled to and injected into a Class II disposal well at Beluga River Water Disposal-1 (BRWD-1) in the northern part of the Beluga River Unit (Section 18, T.13N., R.10W SM, Pad 212-18) (AOGCC Disposal Injection Order DIO 003—permit #186-009). The cuttings/ drilling solids will be hauled to an ADEC permitted Central Waste Facility (#SWKPB0021992:2010ADA) in Section 4, T.12N., R. 10W SM. Domestic and approved industrial trash will be hauled to the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Beluga Landfill (Sec. 4, T.12N, R.10W, SM).

Any unused chemicals will be returned to the vendors that provided them. Efforts will be made to minimize the use of all chemicals.

A minimal camp will be established on the pad to house various supervisory and service company personnel. Approximately four trailer house type structures will be required for this purpose. Potable water will be obtained from the existing water well on the pad. Human/ sanitary waste will be injected into one of two proposed near-by septic systems. If the near-by septic system(s) becomes unavailable, a local waste handler will collect and transport sanitary wastes to their Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation approved disposal facility in the Kenai via trucks and barge. No additional structures will be necessary. BRU 243-34 will be drilled on an existing pad; reclamation of the pad will occur after abandonment of BRU 243-34 and other existing wells on the pad. Approval of the plan of reclamation will be obtained from the surface owner, Cook Inlet Regional, Inc. (CIRI), prior to initiating any reclamation work.

Applicant: ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.



**PART I - PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW**

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Township 13 North, Range 10 West, Seward Meridian, Alaska is within the boundaries of the Ring of Fire Record of Decision and Approved [Resource] Management Plan (March, 2008), p.12 Sec. J. Minerals – Fluid Leasables, J-1: Goal, states to:

“Maintain or enhance opportunity for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values. Pubic lands and the Federal mineral estate will be made available for orderly and efficient exploration, development and production unless withdrawal or other administrative action is justified in the national interest. In addition to oil and gas, geothermal resources would be available for leasing in areas open to oil and gas leasing. Areas closed to oil and gas leasing are also closed to geothermal leasing.”

**PART II - NEPA REVIEW**

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A. Categorical Exclusion Review.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provides that an:

Action by the Secretary of the Interior in managing the public lands, or the Secretary of Agriculture in managing National Forest System Lands, with respect to any of the activities described in subsection (b) shall be subject to a rebuttable presumption that the use of a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) would apply if the activity is conducted pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act for the purpose of exploration or development of oil or gas.

[42 U.S.C. §15942(a)]

The Act of 2005 specifically provides that where: “3. Drilling an oil or gas well within a developed field for which an approved land use plan or any environmental document prepared pursuant to NEPA analyzed drilling as a reasonably foreseeable activity, so long as such plan or document was approved within five (5) years prior to the date of spudding the well,” the Federal action is presumed to be categorically excluded from NEPA analysis, 42 U.S.C. §15942(b)(2).

B. Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances Review.

**BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1790-1 (2008) states that:**

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS ESTABLISHED BY THE ENERGY POLICY ACT**

Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 established five statutory CXs that apply only to oil and gas exploration and development pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act. The CXs do not apply to geothermal actions. These CXs are listed in **Appendix 2, *Using Categorical Exclusions Established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005.***

The decision-maker must include in the well file or case file a brief rationale as to why one or more Energy Act CXs apply. No other documentation for application of Energy Act CXs is required. These CXs are different in application from the Departmental CXs and the BLM non-Energy Act CXs. **Energy Policy Act CXs do not require review for extraordinary circumstances.** This is because these CXs are established by statute, and their application is governed by that statute. However, other procedural requirements still apply, such as consultation under the Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act.

I certify that this proposed categorically excluded federal action is oil and gas exploration and development related and thus does not require review for extraordinary circumstances as established by statute.

Preparer(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ Sindra Wolfson

Date: April 30, 2008

**PART III – DECISION**

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The proposed action is in conformance with a management framework plan or a resource management plan or a record of decision, 43 C.F.R. § 1610.8(a)(3) (2006). I have reviewed the proposal to ensure the appropriate categorical exclusion, as described in Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, has been correctly applied. There is a rebuttable presumption that the use of a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) would apply as the activity will be conducted pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act for the purpose of exploration or development of oil or gas, 42 U.S.C. §15942(a).

It is therefore my decision to implement the action, as described, with the following mitigation measure:

The operator will:

Prevent and control nonnative invasive plant/ noxious weed infestations.

Keep area of operation will be left clean of all debris.

Take all feasible precautions to avoid attracting wildlife to food and garbage that may be temporarily stored on site.

Authorized Official: /s/ Mike Zaidlicz Date: 5/16/2008