UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Farmington District
Farmington Field Office
6251 N College Blvd., Ste. A
Farmington, NM 87402

Finding of No Significant Impact

ROSA UNIT 03, 04, 05, AND 06 NATURAL GAS WELL PADS AND WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-NM-FO10-2012-0402-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

I have determined that the proposed action, as described in the EA will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because there would not be any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

In making this determination, I considered the following factors:

1. The activities described in the proposed action do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)). The EA includes a description of the expected environmental consequences of construction and drilling of seven horizontal wells on four well pads, construction of two fluid management pits, and a subsurface waterline.

2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).

3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.

4. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).

5. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)). Drilling and development in the area has been ongoing since the leases were issued in 1948. There are more than 825 wells and 193.6 miles of road within the Middle Mesa Wildlife Area SDA based on BLM/FFO data as of May 1, 2011. Although types of equipment employed for horizontal drilling as opposed to directional/vertical drilling may vary, the processes are the same. The main variation between the two types of drilling are the trajectory and length of the well bore. As discussed in Section 2.3 of the ROSA UNIT 03, 04, 05, AND 06 NATURAL GAS WELL PADS AND WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EA., a directional well bore traverses the target formation vertically, while horizontal drilling crosses the target formation on a horizontal plane (Figure 2-1). Therefore, horizontal drilling results in a longer well bore, which relates to variances in time, space, and resource use. The reason for using horizontal drilling is to take advantage of the naturally occurring geologic features of the shale formation.

Hydraulic fracturing is consistently used in the basin and has been for decades. Ten years ago, directional drilling was considered "new" technology—but now is commonplace in the basin. Horizontal drilling is a variation of directional drilling.

6. My decision to implement these activities does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

7. The effects of construction and drilling of seven horizontal wells on four well pads, two fluid management pits, and a subsurface waterline would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)). The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts.

8. I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Cultural resource surveys of the entire area of potential affect for the proposed well pads and the south fluids management pit was surveyed between March 3 and May 25, 2011, by LAC at a BLM Class III level (100 percent) (LAC 2011-16 No. 1; BLM 2012(II)028F). The entire area of potential effect for the proposed water line, bore entry/exit points, and the north fluids management pit were surveyed between November 28, 2011, and April 13, 2012, by LAC at a BLM Class II level. (LAC 2012-16; BLM 2012(III)052F). Effects to significant cultural sites would be avoided by adherence to BLM/FFO cultural resources requirements, based on the archaeological survey report recommendations and the results of the BLM field check. These requirements would be detailed in the Cultural Resource Record of Review, attached to the COAs in each APD. (Pg 57- ROSA UNIT 03, 04, 05, AND 06 NATURAL GAS WELL PADS AND WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EA.)

9. The proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)). The project area does not contain any known populations or designated critical habitat. *(Pg 68 ROSA UNIT 03, 04, 05, AND 06 NATURAL GAS WELL PADS AND WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EA.)*

10. The proposed activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)). Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans and Other Environmental Assessments can be found on pages 4-5 of the ROSA UNIT 03, 04, 05, AND 06 NATURAL GAS WELL PADS AND WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EA.

APPROVED:

Gary Torres
Field Manager
Farmington Field Office

12/17/2012
Date