



THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CASPER FIELD OFFICE



DECISION RECORD/FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Environmental Assessment of Southwestern Production Corporation's
Eight Well Horizontal Drilling Program - Hornbuckle Field, Converse County, WY
NEPA Compliance Document - WY060-EA09-57

Introduction

Southwestern Production Corporation (SWPC) has proposed to drill the following horizontal wells in Hornbuckle Field:

| Well Name & Number | Surface Hole Location | Bottom Hole Location | Section | Township | Range |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|----------|-------|
| BR Federal 44-4H | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ | 4 | 37 N | 73 W |
| BR Federal 11-10H | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ | 10 | 37 N | 73 W |
| DCR Federal 31-24H | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ | 24 | 37 N | 73 W |
| HR Federal 44-20H | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ | 20 | 38 N | 73 W |
| GH Federal 44-21H | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ | 21 | 38 N | 73 W |
| GH Federal 24-22H | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ | 22 | 38 N | 73 W |
| BR Federal 24-26H | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ | NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ | 26 | 38 N | 73 W |
| HR Federal 11-28H | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ | SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ | 28 | 38 N | 73 W |

SWPC will construct a 460' by 341' well pad (3.6-acres) to accommodate the drill rig at each well site, but the overall size of the disturbed area for individual well sites will vary due to topography and the areas needed for storage of spoil and top soil. The length of new access road construction and total new surface disturbance associated with each well is depicted in the table below:

| Well Name & Number | Length/New Road | Acres/Access Road | Acres/Well Location | Total/Acres |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| BR Federal 44-4H | 500' | .46 | 4.5 | 4.96 |
| BR Federal 11-10H | 600' | .55 | 4.85 | 5.40 |
| DCR Federal 31-24H | 1,500' | 1.38 | 5.13 | 6.51 |
| HR Federal 44-20H | 1,300' | 1.20 | 4.78 | 5.98 |
| GH Federal 44-21H | 500' | .46 | 4.76 | 5.22 |
| GH Federal 24-22H | 600' | .55 | 4.53 | 5.08 |
| BR Federal 24-26H | 1,200' | 1.10 | 4.44 | 5.54 |
| HR Federal 11-28H | 400' | .37 | 5.4 | 5.77 |
| Total | 6,600' | 6.07 | 38.39 | 44.46 |

SWPC will obtain fresh water for drilling purposes from a privately owned water well in the SW¼ of Section 27, T. 38 N., R. 73 W., and will use an oil-based drilling mud to facilitate drilling the horizontal portion of each well bore.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires the Bureau of Land Management (NEPA) to review the environmental impacts of this proposal through the preparation of an environmental analysis; in this case an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA is available to the public at the Casper Field Office at 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The proposed action is in conformance with the Casper Resource Management Plan of December 2007. I have reviewed the above mentioned EA along with the attached Addendum and determined that SWPC's eight well horizontal drilling program will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and an environmental impact statement is not required. This determination is based on the rationale that significance criteria as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (**40 CFR 1508.27**) are not being met, or if met will be mitigated to a level that will not be significant. I used the following rationale to determine that significant impacts were not present for each criteria mentioned in **40 CFR 1508.27**:

Rationale for Decision

- (1) The short and long term impacts as disclosed in EA WY060-EA09-57 as well as the attached Addendum are not considered to be significant to the human environment. The short term impacts from implementation of the proposed action are local and not national or regional in nature.
- (2) Implementation of the proposed action will not adversely affect the goals of the Casper Resource Management Plan.
- (3) Mitigation measures along with the surface use plan in each application for permit to drill (APD) will limit the adverse impacts of the proposed action.
- (4) The proposed action will not affect public health and safety.
- (5) There will be no significant irreversible resource commitments or irretrievable loss to areas of critical environmental concern, cultural resources, prime or unique farmlands, Native American religious concerns, threatened and/or endangered species, candidate species, BLM sensitive species, wetlands or riparian zones, wild and scenic rivers, or wilderness.
- (6) There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
- (7) The proposed action does not set a precedent.
- (8) The proposed action does not violate Federal, State, or local law requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

DECISION

It is my decision to approve the proposed action as described in EA WY060-EA09-57 with the mitigation measures identified below. These mitigation measures along with the mitigation measures in the surface use plan of each APD will limit the adverse impacts of the proposed action.

- (1) All available topsoil (e.g., 6 – 12 inches) shall be stripped from areas of new construction and stockpiled for future reclamation purposes of disturbed areas. The stored topsoil as well as the cut and fill slopes of individual well pads shall be secured from erosion through mulching, installation of erosion control fabric, and temporary revegetation if reclamation is not anticipated within one year following initial construction.
- (2) Unused areas (borrow ditch) along the access roads which would be denuded of existing vegetation during initial construction shall be reseeded in order to re-establish vegetative cover and reduce the overall potential for erosion and off-site sedimentation.
- (3) Sandy soils which are prone to wind and water erosion should be uniformly mulched with certified weed-free native grass, hay, or small grain straw at a rate of two tons/acre. Cotton, jute, or synthetic netting shall be applied where appropriate to steep slopes as required by the Authorized Officer (AO) in consultation with the affected private surface owner.
- (4) Mulch shall be crimped two to four inches into the soil on the contour, tackified, or incorporated into erosion control blankets to prevent soil from blowing or washing away and from entering waterways. Mulching shall occur prior to or after broadcast seeding but shall not occur before drill seeding.
- (5) Hydromulch, biodegradable erosion control netting or matting shall be firmly attached to the soil surface on steep slopes where it is unsafe to operate equipment, at sites where soils have 35% or more surface rock content, and/or notably unstable areas.
- (6) All reclaimed areas shall be left rough and mulched to reduce wind and water erosion. Erosion and sediment control structures shall be installed on areas wherever slopes exceed 3:1. Runoff from hillsides with 3:1 or greater slopes shall be controlled by using standard structures like waterbars, silt fences, geotextiles, and/or energy dissipaters. All runoff and erosion control structures shall be monitored and maintained by SWP on a regular basis until the site is stable.
- (7) To protect nesting raptors, no drilling, completion, or surface disturbing activities shall occur within one-half mile of an occupied raptor nest from February 1st through July 31st without the consent of the AO.


Assistant Field Manager, Lands & Minerals
Casper Field Office

3-2-2009
Date