

## Scoping Notice

### Horseshoe Basin Unit Oil and Gas Development Project Environmental Assessment

#### Description of Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office (RSFO) has been notified by Devon Energy Production Company, L.P. (Devon) that they are seeking to develop up to 20 new oil or gas wells within the boundary of the Horseshoe Basin Unit.

The Horseshoe Basin Unit was established in 2005 and presently has two producing gas wells, roads, associated pipeline, and a centralized production facility. The new proposal includes the development of 20 horizontal or vertical wells at depths from 8,500 to 11,500 feet on 10 well pads at a rate of two wells a year. The maximum long-term surface disturbance associated with the proposed project is anticipated to be approximately 40 acres with the life of the wells projected to be between 20 to 30 years.

#### Location

The Horseshoe Basin Unit encompasses 24,972 acres of primarily federal land, with a small amount of private and state-owned land, approximately 55 miles southeast of Rock Springs, Wyoming, in Sweetwater County.

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Surface (acres)</b>	<b>Minerals (acres)</b>
BLM	23,261	22,620
State of Wyoming	959	1,600
Private/Fee	752	752
<b>Project Area total</b>	<b>24,972</b>	<b>24,972</b>

#### Wells and Well Pads

Co-locating new wells with existing well pads or establishing multi-well pads will be utilized to the greatest extent possible to minimize surface disturbances. It is anticipated that the average rate of development would be to drill up to two wells per year during a 10-year time frame.

#### Surface Disturbance

In addition, new road construction would be limited and existing roads would be used as much as possible. Power lines and pipelines would be co-located and kept buried within the road rights-

of-way (ROWs) where possible to reduce surface disturbance. The expansion of current facilities will also be utilized to further minimize additional surface disturbance.

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Initial Surface Disturbance<sup>1</sup> (acres)</b>	<b>Long-term Surface Disturbance<sup>2</sup> (acres)</b>
Well Pads	10 pads	70	30
Roads <sup>3</sup>	Up to 17.3 miles	94	42
Pipelines <sup>4</sup>	7 miles	0	0
Power Lines <sup>4</sup>	Up to 7 miles	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>164</b>	<b>72</b>

<sup>1</sup> Initial well pad disturbance is based on an estimated 7 acres per well pad.

<sup>2</sup> Long-term disturbance assumes interim reclamation of 4 acres per pad leaving 3 acres of disturbance per pad.

<sup>3</sup> Road disturbance includes total disturbance to new and existing roads.

<sup>4</sup> Pipelines and power lines would be buried and co-located within the road ROW.

### Water Requirements

The volume of water required for the proposal is estimated. Water would be obtained from existing local wells or surface water sources. Approximately 800,000 barrels of water would be required for the entire project. At the projected drilling rate of two wells per year, the total annual water requirements for drilling and well completion would be approximately 80,000 barrels (3.4 million gallons or 77 acre-feet). Produced water may be utilized in the project area or stored and transported for proper disposal. Reuse of produced water also would reduce the amount of residual waste water that would require disposal.

### Relationship to Land Use Plans

The approved Record of Decision (1997) for the Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP) is the document that directs management of federal lands within the RSFO. The objective for management of oil and gas resources is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. The development of oil and gas within the project area is in conformance with the GRRMP. The environmental analysis that will be prepared for the proposed project will incorporate decisions, terms, and conditions of use as described in the GRRMP.

### Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The proposed project will be analyzed in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). To comply with NEPA and applicable Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations that implement NEPA, the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis. The environmental document, which is an environmental assessment (EA) for this project, will serve the following purposes:

- Provide the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the project and alternatives.
- Identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the project and alternatives; and
- Provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision regarding the project.

One element of the NEPA process is “scoping.” Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to:

- Identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental analysis; and
- Identify issues of environmental concern related to the proposed project.

To determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the EA, this scoping notice has been prepared to enable governmental agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process.

### **Land and Resource Management Issues and Concerns**

A BLM interdisciplinary team of resource specialists from RSFO will be involved in the analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Land and resource issues tentatively identified as potentially affected by this proposed action include: cultural, grazing, visual resource management, climate change, socioeconomics, wildlife, threatened and endangered or special status plants and animals, and air quality.

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The BLM is requesting the public’s help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives for analysis, 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.

Comments are requested by June 4, 2013, allowing a 30-day comment period. Please submit your comments to:

Address:        Brandon Teppo  
                    Horseshoe Basin Unit Oil and Gas Development Project  
                    BLM Rock Springs Field Office  
                    280 Highway 191 North  
                    Rock Springs, WY 82901

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