

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Proposed Action:** Approve Drilling Permit (Form 22)

**Project/Well Name:** Ed & Paul 17-20 XE

**Operator:** EMEP Operating, LLC

**Location:** SW SW Section 21 T25N-R53E

**County:** Richland MT; **Field (or Wildcat):** Wildcat

**Proposed Project Date:** 4/1/2024

### I. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

Triple derrick drilling rig to drill a single lateral horizontal Middle Bakken Formation test, 19,452' MD/9,318' TVD.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS, OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED

Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, GWIC website (Richland County Wells).

US Fish and Wildlife, Region 6 website

ENDANGERED, THREATENED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES MONTANA COUNTIES, Richland County

Montana Natural Heritage Program Website (FWP)

Heritage State Rank= S1, S2, S3, T25N R53E

Montana Cadastral Website

Surface Ownership and surface use Section 21 T25N R53E

Montana Department of Natural Resources MEPA Submittal

#### 2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No Action Alternative: The proposed well would not be drilled.

Action Alternative: EMEP Operating, LLC would have permission to drill the well.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

#### 3. AIR QUALITY

Long drilling time: No, 5-10 days.

Unusually deep drilling (high horsepower rig): No

Possible H<sub>2</sub>S gas production: Potentially in Mississippian formations.

In/near Class I air quality area: No.

Air quality permit for flaring/venting (if productive): Yes, DEQ air quality permit required under 75-2-211. AQB review.

Comments: No special concerns – Triple derrick drilling rig to drill a single lateral horizontal Middle Bakken Formation test, 19,452' MD/9,318' TVD. If there are no gas gathering systems nearby, associated gas can be flared under Board Rule 36.22.1220.

#### 4. WATER QUALITY

Salt/oil based mud: Will drill with oil based invert drilling fluids for the intermediate casing hole.

Horizontal hole will be drilled with saltwater. Surface casing hole will be drilled with freshwater and freshwater mud system, Rule 36.22.100.1

Surface drainage leads to live water: No, the nearest drainage is an unnamed ephemeral drainage about 3/10 of a mile to the east and 1/4 of a mile to the west. West Charlie Creek is located about 2 miles to the northeast from the proposed location.

Water well contamination: No water wells listed within a ½ mile radius.

Porous/permeable soils: No, sandy clay.

Class I stream drainage: No.

Groundwater vulnerability area: No.

Mitigation:

☐ Lined reserve pit

☒ Adequate surface casing

☐ Berms/dykes, re-routed drainage

☒ Closed mud system

☐ Off-site disposal of solids/liquids (in approved facility)

Comments: Steel surface casing to be set at 2,060' to protect ground water. (Rule 36.22.1001).

#### 5. SOILS/VEGETATION/LAND USE

Vegetation: Grassland.

Stream crossings: None anticipated.

High erosion potential: No, small cut of 5.0' and a small fill of 1.9' required.

Loss of soil productivity: No, location to be restored after drilling, if plugged.

Unusually large wellsite (Describe dimensions): No wellsite for a one well pad, 400' by 400'.

Damage to improvements: Slight.

Conflict with existing land use/values: Slight.

Mitigation

- ☐ Avoid improvements (topographic tolerance)
- ☐ Exception location requested
- ☒ Stockpile topsoil
- ☐ Stream Crossing Permit (other agency review)
- ☒ Reclaim unused part of wellsite if productive
- ☐ Special construction methods to enhance reclamation

Access Road: CR 317, and existing dirt road. A new access of 65' will be built into location.

Drilling fluids/solids: A closed mud system will be utilized. Drill cuttings and drilling fluids will be separated on-site using solids control equipment. Recovered liquids will be returned to the system, and solid waste will be temporarily stored in steel containers on site, until ready for transportation. Solid waste will be hauled off to the state approved facility owned and operated by IHD Solids Management, LLC, Alexander, ND.

## **6. HEALTH HAZARDS/NOISE**

Proximity to public facilities/residences: No residences within a ½ mile radius. Nearest town is Lambert, MT and is about 19 miles to the southeast.

Possibility of H2S: Possibility in Mississippian formations.

Size of rig/length of drilling time: Triple derrick, 5-10 days.

Mitigation:

- ☒ Proper BOP equipment
- ☐ Topographic sound barriers
- ☐ H2S contingency and/or evacuation plan
- ☐ Special equipment/procedures requirements
- ☐ Other:

## **7. WILDLIFE/RECREATION**

Sage Grouse: No.

Proximity to sensitive wildlife areas (DFWP identified): None identified.

Proximity to recreation sites: None.

Creation of new access to wildlife habitat: None.

Conflict with game range/refuge management: None.

Threatened or endangered Species: Species listed as threatened or endangered in Richland County, MT are the Pallid Sturgeon, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Piping Plover, Whooping Crane, and Northern Myotis.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists three (3) species of concern, the Baird's Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and Sprague's Pipit.

Mitigation:

- ☐ Avoidance (topographic tolerance/exception)
- ☐ Other agency review (DFWP, federal agencies, DNRC Trust Lands)
- ☐ Screening/fencing of pits, drillsite
- ☐ Other:

Comments: Private grasslands. There may be species of concern that maybe impacted by this wellsite. We ask the operator to consult with the surface owner as to what he would like done if a species of concern is discovered at this location. The Board of Oil & Gas has no jurisdiction over private surface lands. No concerns.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

##### 8. HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/PALEONTOLOGICAL

Proximity to known sites:

Mitigation

☐ avoidance (topographic tolerance, location exception)

☒ other agency review (SHPO, DNRC Trust Lands, federal agencies)

Other: The Board of Oil & Gas has no jurisdiction over private surface lands. No concerns.

##### 9. SOCIAL/ECONOMIC

Substantial effect on tax base

☐ Create demand for new governmental services

☐ Population increase or relocation

Comments: No concerns.

#### IV. SUMMARY

No long term impacts expected. Some short term impacts will occur, but can be mitigated.

I conclude that the approval of the subject Notice of Intent to Drill (does/**does not**) constitute a major action of state government significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and (does/**does not**) require the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

**EA Checklist  
Prepared By:**

**Name:** John Gizicki  
**Title:** Chief Field Inspector

**Date:** 1/22/24