

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT

**Proposed Action:** Approve Drilling Permit (Form 22)  
**Project/Well Name:** ML&E NW Cherry Patch 3-5-34N-21E  
**Operator:** Montana Land and Exploration, Inc

**Location:** NE NW Section 5 T34N R21E  
**County:** Blaine MT; **Field (or Wildcat):** Wildcat

**Proposed Project Date:** 10/24/2017

**I. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION**

Small rig to drill an Upper Bowes Formation test, 4460' MD/TVD.

**II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

US Fish and Wildlife, Region 6 website  
ENDANGERED, THREATENED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES MONTANA  
COUNTIES, Blaine County

Montana Natural Heritage Program Website (FWP)  
Heritage State Rank= S1, S2, S3, T34N R21E

Montana Cadastral Website  
Surface Ownership and surface use Section 5 T34N R21E

Montana Department of Natural Resources MEPA Submittal

**2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

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

Action Alternative: Montana Land and Exploration, Inc would have permission to drill the well.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

#### 3. AIR QUALITY

Long drilling time: No, 3-4 days.  
Unusually deep drilling (high horsepower rig): No

Possible H<sub>2</sub>S gas production: None anticipated.

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 – Using small rig to drill an Upper Bowes Formation test, 4460' MD/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: Surface casing hole will be drilled with freshwater and freshwater mud system, Rule 36.22.100.1. Main hole will be drilled with freshwater as well.

High water table: No.

Surface drainage leads to live water: No, closest drainage is Thirtymile Creek ½ of a mile to the west.

Water well contamination: No water wells within a 1/2 mile radius. This proposed oil well will be drilled with freshwater and freshwater mud to 473' and steel surface casing will be run and cemented to surface to protect groundwater.

Porous/permeable soils: No, sandy silty clay soils.

Class I stream drainage: None.

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)

Other:

Comments: Steel surface casing will be run and cemented to surface to protect ground water. (Rule 36.22.1001).

Comments: 473' surface casing will be drilled with freshwater, steel casing will be run to 473' and cemented back to surface, to protect freshwater zones in adjacent water wells, Rule 36.22.1001. Adequate surface casing and BOP equipment to prevent problems, (3,000 psi annular and double ram), Rule 36.22.1014.)

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

Vegetation: Grassland.

Steam crossings: None anticipated.  
High erosion potential: Possible No cut required and a small fill of 2.0' required.  
Loss of soil productivity: No, location will be restored after drilling if unproductive.

Unusually large wellsite (Describe dimensions): No, 250'X250' required.

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: Access will be over existing trail. A new access of 490' will be built into location.

Drilling fluids/solids: The drilling fluids will be allowed to settle in the unlined reserve pit and the free water removed, tested, and spread on an approved landowner site or left in the pit to evaporate. The solids will be allowed to dry and then mix-bury-cover method in spring 2018.

## 6. HEALTH HAZARDS/NOISE

Proximity to public facilities/residences: Nearest residence is about 1 mile to the northwest.

Possibility of H2S: None anticipated.

Size of rig/length of drilling time: 3-4 days.

Mitigation:

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

## 7. WILDLIFE/RECREATION

Sage Grouse: In General Habitat. Program analysis received on 9-15-17.

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

Proximity to recreation sites: None.

Creation of new access to wildlife habitat: No.

Conflict with game range/refuge management: No.

Threatened or endangered Species: Listed threatened or endangered species in Richland County are the Pallid Sturgeon, Black-footed Ferret, and Piping Plover. The Montana Natural Heritage Program website lists eight (8) species of concern, Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, American Bittern, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Black Tern, McCown's Longspur, Forster's Tern, and Common Tern.

Mitigation:

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

Comments: Private cultivated surface lands. 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:

**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.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> John Gizicki	<b>Date:</b> 09/12/17
	<b>Title:</b> Compliance Specialist	