

**Montana Board of Oil and Gas Conservation  
Environmental Assessment**

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

**Operator:** Interstate Explorations, LLC

**Well Name/Number:** Hill #1

**Location:** NESE Section 9 T18N R56E

**County:** Dawson, MT; **Field (or Wildcat)** W/C

**Air Quality**

(possible concerns)

Long drilling time: 20-30 days drilling time for a vertical Red River Formation test.

Unusually deep drilling (high horsepower rig): No, large triple drilling rig for a 13,000' MD / TVD test.

Possible H<sub>2</sub>S gas production: Possible, H<sub>2</sub>S gas from Mississippian Formations.

In/near Class I air quality area: No Class I air quality area.

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

Mitigation:

Air quality permit (AQB review)

Gas plants/pipelines available for sour gas

Special equipment/procedures requirements

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: No special concerns, adequate surface casing, 2000' to be set and cemented back to surface, Rule 36.22.1001. Proper BOP stack should mitigate any concerns (5000 psig Double ram and annular preventer), Rule 36.22.1014. If well is successful and there are existing pipelines for natural gas in the area. Then associated gas must be tied into gathering system or if no gathering system nearby limited quantities of associated gas can be flared under Board Rule 36.22.1220.

**Water Quality**

(possible concerns)

Salt/oil based mud: Use freshwater and freshwater mud system on surface hole, Rule 36.22.1001. Invert oil based mud for mainhole from the base of surface casing to TD.

High water table: No high water table expected.

Surface drainage leads to live water: Yes, Linden Creek is located about 50' to the southeast. The Yellowstone River is located 4 miles to the southeast.

Water well contamination: No, closest water wells are 2/5 of a mile to the north, and two wells 2/5 of a mile to the southeast. Depths of these wells are between 96'-128'.

The other water wells are located farther than 1/2 a mile from location. Surface hole will be drilled with freshwater and steel surface casing set and cemented from 2000' to protect surface waters and the Fox Hill aquifer, Rule 36.22.1001.

Porous/permeable soils: No, sandy clay soils.

Class I stream drainage: The Yellowstone River is about 4 miles to the southeast from this location.

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: 2000' of surface casing cemented to surface adequate to protect freshwater zones, Rule 36.22.1001. Also, fresh water mud systems to be used on surface hole, Rule 36.22.1001.

### Soils/Vegetation/Land Use

(possible concerns)

Stream crossings: No stream crossings anticipated.

High erosion potential: No, small cut of 7.9' with a small fill of 9.0' required for this location pad.

Loss of soil productivity: No, location will be restored after drilling, if nonproductive. If productive, unused portion of drillsite will be reclaimed.

Unusually large wellsite: Large, 330'X375' location size required.

Damage to improvements: Slight, surface use is cultivated land.

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: Access will be over highway 16 and existing road 549. About 856' of new access road will be built into this location. Pits will be lined with a synthetic 16 mil pit liner. Invert based oil drilling fluid will be recycled. Completion fluids will be hauled to a permitted commercial Class II disposal. Solids will be allowed to dry in the lined cuttings pit and then backfilled. Topsoil will be spread and seeded to vegetation per landowner specification. No special concerns

### Health Hazards/Noise

(possible concerns)

Proximity to public facilities/residences: Closest residences are 2/5 of a mile to the northeast from this location. Intake Dam is located about 4 miles to the southeast. The town of Glendive, MT is located 17 miles to the southwest.

Possibility of H2S: Yes, small amounts of H2S possible from the Mississippian Formations.

Size of rig/length of drilling time: Triple drilling rig 20 to 25 days drilling time.

Mitigation:

Proper BOP equipment

Topographic sound barriers

H2S contingency and/or evacuation plan

Special equipment/procedures requirements

Other: Standard for the area H2S safety equipment and training for rig crews.

Comments: The location is close to a drainage that eventually leads to the Yellowstone River. Proper BOP stack (5,000 psig double ram and annular prevent, Rule 36.22.1014) and adequate surface casing should be able to control any problems that occur. Distance to nearest residence and H2S safety plan sufficient to mitigate any concerns for H2S.

### **Wildlife/recreation**

(possible concerns)

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

Proximity to recreation sites: Intake Dam is located 3.2 miles to the southeast.

Creation of new access to wildlife habitat: No

Conflict with game range/refuge management: No

Threatened or endangered Species: Species listed as threatened or endangered are the Pallid Sturgeon, Interior Least Tern, and Whooping Crane. Candidate species are the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sprague's Pipit. NH tracker website lists seventeen (17) species of concern: Hoary Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Great Blue Heron, Black-billed Cuckoo, Least Tern, Spiny Softshell, Snapping Turtle, Western Milksnake, Northern Redbelly Dace, Blue Sucker, Shortnose Gar, Sturgeon Chub, Sicklefin Chub, Paddlefish, Sauger, Pallid Sturgeon, A Sand-dwelling Mayfly. One special status species is listed as the Bald Eagle.

Mitigation:

- Avoidance (topographic tolerance/exception)
- Other agency review (DFWP, federal agencies, DSL)
- Screening/fencing of pits, drillsite
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: Private cultivated surface lands. Not close to live water. 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.

### **Historical/Cultural/Paleontological**

(possible concerns)

Proximity to known sites: None identified

Mitigation

- avoidance (topographic tolerance, location exception)
- other agency review (SHPO, DSL, federal agencies)
- 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.

### **Social/Economic**

(possible concerns)

- Substantial effect on tax base
- Create demand for new governmental services
- Population increase or relocation

Comments: Wildcat well. No concerns.

**Remarks or Special Concerns for this site**

Well is a vertical Red River Formation test.

**Summary: Evaluation of Impacts and Cumulative effects**

No long term impact expected. Some short term impacts will occur.

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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.

Prepared by (BOGC) John Gizicki  
(title:) Compliance Specialist  
Date: July 30, 2015

Other Persons Contacted:

Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, GWIC website

(Name and Agency)  
Area water wells  
(subject discussed)  
July 30, 2015  
(date)

MT Cadastral website  
(Name and Agency)  
Aerial Photo, topo map, ownership  
(subject discussed)  
July 30, 2015  
(date)

Montana Natural Heritage Program Website (FWP)  
(Name and Agency)  
Species of concern, special status and potential species of concern  
(subject discussed)  
July 30, 2015  
(date)

US Fish and Wildlife, Region 6 website  
(Name and Agency)  
ENDANGERED, THREATENED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES MONTANA COUNTIES, Dawson County  
(subject discussed)  
July 30, 2015

(date)

If location was inspected before permit approval:

Inspection date: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_

Others present during inspection: \_\_\_\_\_