

# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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

**Project/Well Name:** Donkey Kong 27-16-2H

**Operator:** MorningStar Operating, LLC

**State:** Montana

**Location:** NWNE T25N R54E Sec. 34

**County:** Richland

**Field (or Wildcat):** Wildcat

**Proposed Project Date:** TBD

## I. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

Triple derrick drilling rig to drill a single lateral horizontal Bakken Formation test, 25,527' MD/9,784' TVD.

## II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

10 days from public notification opportunity to protest for hearing:

- Published in Helena Independent Record on 12/16/2025.
- Published in the Sidney Herald on 12/13/2025.

No written demand for hearing has been filed per ARM 36.22.601 as of 12/26/2025.

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

US Fish and Wildlife, ENDANGERED, THREATENED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES MONTANA COUNTIES, Richland County

Montana Natural Heritage Program Website (FWP)  
Heritage State Rank= S1, S2, S3, T25N R54E

Montana Cadastral Website  
Surface Ownership and surface use Section 34 T25N R54E

Montana Department of Natural Resources MEPA Submittal

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-Soils Map

### B. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

**No Action Alternative:** Permit to drill the well would not be issued by BOGC.

**Action Alternative:** Referred to the BOGC for further environmental review.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

#### A. AIR QUALITY

**Long drilling time:** No, 10-20 days.

**Unusually deep drilling (high horsepower rig):** No

**Emission sources:** Vehicles traveling on county road to location, combustion engines on location during drilling operations. Fugitive dust from traveling operations and location during active drilling.

**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 Bakken Formation test, 25,527' MD/9,784' TVD. If there are no gas gathering systems nearby, associated gas can be flared under Board Rule 36.22.1220.

#### B. WATER QUALITY

**Salt/oil-based mud:** Steel surface casing hole will be drilled with freshwater and freshwater mud system to 1600', Rule 36.22.100.1. Will drill with oil-based invert drilling fluids for the intermediate casing hole. Horizontal hole will be drilled with saltwater.

**High water table:** No.

**Surface drainage leads to live water:** There is an unnamed ephemeral drainage approximately 1510' west of location.

**Water well contamination:** There are six domestic water wells within a ½ mile radius. The first is approximately 1247' northwest with a depth of 300' and a static water level of 200'. The next is approximately 1703 miles northwest with a total depth of 63' and a static water level of 12'. The next is approximately 1804' northwest with a total depth of 55' and static water level of 12'. The next is approximately 1804' northeast with a total depth of 29' and a static water level of 14'. The next is approximately 2115' northeast with a total depth of 160' and a static water level of 59'. Last is approximately 2650' northwest with a total depth of 156' and a static water level of 95'. The surface hole will be drilled with freshwater and freshwater mud to 1600' and steel surface casing will be run and cemented back to the surface to protect groundwater.

**Porous/permeable soils:** No, silty loam.

**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 to 1600' and cemented back to surface to protect freshwater zones (Fox Hills aquifer) in adjacent water wells, Rule 36.22.1001. Adequate surface casing and BOP equipment to prevent problems, (5,000 psi annular and double ram), Rule 36.22.1014.

#### C. SOILS/VEGETATION/LAND USE

**Vegetation:** Cultivated farmland.

**Stream crossing:** None anticipated.

**Erosion potential:** Low, cut of up to 14.8' and fill of up to 9.5'.

**Loss of soil productivity:** No, location will be restored after drilling if unproductive.

**Unusually large wellsite (Describe dimensions):** A well site of 397'X 401' required for a four-well pad.

**Damage to improvements:** Slight, to cultivated farmland.

**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 from existing 128' access road from County Road 137

**Drilling fluids/solids:** MorningStar Operating, LLC will not be utilizing a drilling pit. Drilling fluids and solids will be transported to a state approved disposal facility.

**Comments:**

## D. HEALTH HAZARDS/NOISE

**Proximity to public facilities/residences:** There are no occupied structures within a ¼ mile radius. The closest occupied structure is approximately 0.33 miles northwest in SESW Section 27 T25N R54E.

**Possibility of H2S:** Possibility in Mississippian formations.

Size of rig/length of drilling time: 10-20 days.

**Mitigation:**

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

## E. WILDLIFE/RECREATION

**Sage Grouse:** No.

**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 within 5 miles:** Loggerhead Shrike, and Iowa Darter.

**Mitigation:**

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

**Comments:** Cultivated farmland. There may be species of concern that may be 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

### A. 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.

<b>B. SOCIAL/ECONOMIC</b>
---------------------------

**Substantial effect on tax base:**

- Create demand for new governmental services
- Population increase or relocation

**Comments:** No concerns.

<b>IV. SUMMARY</b>
--------------------

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> Allison YoungSwallow <b>Title:</b> Compliance Technician	<b>Date:</b> 1/16/2026
--------------------------------------	--	------------------------