

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0072
February, 2014**

Newfield Proposes Five New Oil Wells on Two New Pads

***Location: Section 16 T3S R2W Mer UBM
Section 7 T3S R3W Mer UBM***

***Applicant/Address: Newfield Exploration Company
Route 3 Box 3630
Myton, UT 84052***

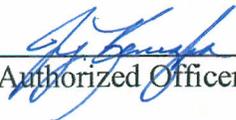
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Newfield Proposes Five New Oil Wells on Two New Pads
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0072-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact:

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.



Authorized Officer (signature)

FEB 21 2014

Date of signature

DECISION RECORD
Newfield Proposes Five New Oil Wells on Two New Pads
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0072-EA

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize Newfield's proposed split estate well as described in the proposed action of DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0072-EA.

<i>Well Identification</i>	<i>Legal Location</i>	<i>Lease Number</i>
Ute Tribal 3-18-19-3-3WH	NWNW Sec 7 T3S R3W	1420H626486
Parkinson 1-16-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269
Snow 2-16-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269
Ute Tribal 3-16-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269
Ute Tribal 16-9-4-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269

*Well Pad 16-9-3-2

Summary of the Selected Alternative:

This decision includes the following components:

<i>Well ID</i>	<i>Well Pad including Reserve Pit</i>		<i>Access Road</i>		<i>Pipeline</i>		<i>Total</i>	
Ute Tribal 3-18-19-3-3WH	7.4	acres*	1.3	acres*	0.6	acres*	9.3	acres*
Well Pad 16-9-3-2	12.9	acres*	1.7	acres*	2.0	acres*	16.6	acres*
Total	20.3	acres*	3.0	acres*	2.6	acres*	25.9	acres*

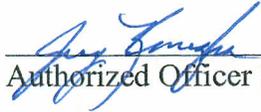
*Approximate acres

Rationale for the Decision:

The proposed wells and related facilities meet the BLM's purpose and need to allow the lessee to develop the subject mineral lease indicated above. The need for the action is established by BLM Onshore Orders (43 CFR 3160) which require BLM approval of APDs on a federal lease, even with split estate.

An on-site review of the APDs was held on 8/21/2013 for Well Pad 16-9-3-2 and 9/4/2013 for Ute Tribal 3-18-19-3-3WH; the surface owner was invited to attend. The operator has provided certification that they have a surface owner's agreement(s) [Or adequate information showing a surface owner's agreement is in place] which was/were received by the BLM on 8/5/2013 and 8/12/2013. No issues were identified by the surface owner(s).

The above factors and the analysis contained in DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0072-EA for Newfield's proposed wells were carefully considered and evaluated. In addition, the APDs and surface owner agreements were reviewed. All reports were read and the information contained weighed in determining the appropriateness of the decision stated above.


Authorized Officer (signature)

FEB 21 2014
Date of signature

Appeals: This decision is effective upon the date it is signed by the authorized officer. The decision is subject to appeal. Under BLM regulation, this decision is subject to administrative review in accordance with 43 CFR 3165. Any request for administrative review of this decision must include information required under 43 CFR 3165.3(b) (State Director Review), including all supporting documentation. Such a request must be filed in writing with the State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office, P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84145-0155, within 20 business days of the date this Decision is received or considered to have been received.

If you wish to file a petition for stay, the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits;
- (3) The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted;
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by the Bureau of Land Management Vernal Field Office to analyze Newfield's Application(s) for Permit to Drill (APDs), including roads, pipelines, well pads, and associated infrastructure. The subject wells are on split estate lands. The surface owners are Newfield RMI, Murray Sheep Ranch LLC, E. Leon Sprouse, and Dart Homestead Ranch Inc. The well(s) are as follows:

Table 1-1.

Well Identification	Legal Location	Lease Number
Ute Tribal 3-18-19-3-3WH	NWNW Sec 7 T3S R3W	1420H626486
Parkinson 1-16-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269
Snow 2-16-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269
Ute Tribal 3-16-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269
Ute Tribal 16-9-4-3-2WH*	SESE Sec 9 T3S R2W	1420H626269

*Well Pad 16-9-3-2

The EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any "significant" impacts could result from the analyzed actions.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The BLM decision to be made is whether or not to approve the APD. The purpose of the action is to allow the lessee to develop the tribal mineral lease indicated above. The need for the action is established by BLM Onshore Orders (43 CFR 3160), which require the BLM to review and approve APDs on federal leases, even with split estate lands. However, the BLM has no jurisdiction over surface impacts on these split estate lands.

SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVMENT AND ISSUES

An on-site review of the APDs was held on 8/21/2013 for Well Pad 16-9-3-2 and 9/4/2013 for Ute Tribal 3-18-19-3-3WH; the surface owner was invited to attend. The operator has provided certification that they have a surface owner's agreement(s) [Or adequate information showing a surface owner's agreement is in place] which was/were received by the BLM on 8/5/2013 and 8/12/2013. No issues were identified by the surface owner(s).

CHAPTER 2

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Table 2-1 summarizes the maximum proposed site dimensions.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.2-1.

<i>Well ID</i>	<i>Well Pad including Reserve Pit</i>		<i>Access Road</i>		<i>Pipeline</i>		<i>Total</i>	
Ute Tribal 3-18-19-3-3WH	7.4	acres*	1.3	acres*	0.6	acres*	9.3	acres*
Well Pad 16-9-3-2**	12.9	acres*	1.7	acres*	2.0	acres*	16.6	acres*
Total	20.3	acres*	3.0	acres*	2.6	acres*	25.9	acres*

*Approximate acres

**Parkinson 1-16-3-2WH, Snow 2-16-3-2WH, Ute Tribal 3-16-3-2WH, and Ute Tribal 16-9-4-3-2WH

New surface disturbance from the construction of the well pads, reserve pits, and pipeline corridors would be approximately 25.9 acres. Surface and subsoil materials in the immediate project area would be used for construction. The reserve pits would be fenced on three sides during drilling operations and on the fourth side when the rig moves off location. It would be fenced, and the fence maintained, until the pit would be reclaimed.

Approximately 4,309 linear feet of new access road(s) would be needed to access the proposed locations. Total new surface disturbance would be approximately 3.0 acres. A BLM right-of-way (ROW) would not be required.

Approximately 3,723 linear feet of new pipeline corridor would be needed to transport production materials. Total new surface disturbance would be approximately 2.6 acres. A BLM right-of-way (ROW) would not be required.

All production facilities would be located on the disturbed portion of the well pad and a minimum of 25 feet from the toe of the back slope or the top of the fill slope. A dike large enough to hold 110% of the capacity of the largest tank would be constructed completely around those production facilities which contain fluids.

Upon well completion, the operator would reclaim the reserve pit in accordance with Onshore Orders, regulations, and the surface owner requirements. Upon well abandonment, the operator would reclaim the well pad, road, and pipeline as directed by the surface owner.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL

Under the no action alternative, the proposed well and associated facilities would not be constructed or installed. The no action was considered but not analyzed in detail because

there are no unresolved conflicts about the proposed action with respect to alternative uses of available resources.

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Air Quality: The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are standards that have been set to protect human health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety. Pollutants for which standards have been set include ground level ozone (O₃), SO₂, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), CO, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. The Project Area is located in the Uinta Basin, which is designated as unclassified/in attainment of the NAAQS by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Clean Air Act. The Greater Natural Buttes FEIS, Tables 3.1-2 and 3.1-3 list ambient air quality background values for the Uinta Basin and the NAAQS standards.

Two year-round air quality-monitoring sites were established in summer 2009 near Red Wash (southeast of Vernal, Utah) and Ouray (southwest of Vernal). The complete EPA monitoring data can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/airexplorer/index.htm>. Both monitoring sites have recorded numerous exceedences of the 8-hour ozone standard during the winter months (January through March 2010 and 2013). The exceedences did not occur in 2012 due to lack of snow cover. Winter ozone formation is a newly recognized issue, so the ozone precursor sources are still being identified and the methods of analyzing and managing this problem are still being developed.

During the 2006-2007 winter season in Vernal, Utah, the UDAQ recorded PM_{2.5} levels higher than the PM_{2.5} health standards that became effective in December 2006, likely due to combustion and dust, similar to other areas in northern Utah that experience wintertime inversions, plus nitrates and organics from oil and gas activities in the Basin. PM_{2.5} monitoring that has been conducted in the vicinity of oil and gas operations in the Uinta Basin by the Red Wash and Ouray monitors beginning in summer 2009 have not recorded any exceedences of either the 24 hour or annual NAAQS.

Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) are pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects or adverse environmental impacts. The EPA has classified 187 air pollutants as HAPs. There are no applicable Federal or State of Utah ambient air quality standards for assessing potential HAP impacts to human health. Refer to Section 3.1 (pages 3-2 through 3-13) in the Greater Natural Buttes Final EIS for additional information on air quality conditions relevant to the Project Area.

Greenhouse Gases: Greenhouse gases keep the planet's surface warmer than it otherwise would be but as concentrations of these gases increase, the Earth's temperature is climbing above past levels. The analysis of the Regional Climate Impacts prepared by the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) (2009) suggests that recent warming in the region including the project area was nationally among the most rapid. Past records and future projections predict warmer nights and effectively higher average daily

minimum temperatures. For eastern Utah, the USGCRP projects an approximate 5 percent to 40 percent annual precipitation decrease. Refer to Section 3.1.3.7 (pages 3-12 through 3-13) in the Greater Natural Buttes Final EIS for more information on climate change.

Soils/Vegetation

The proposed well pads are located in the NWNW of section 7 of T3S R3W, and SWSE of section 9 of T3S R2W. The soils in the area are loams with high amount of rock in them. The vegetation in the area consists of Indian ricegrass, black sagebrush, shadscale, prickly pear cactus, galleta grass, greasewood, and juniper.

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

PROPOSED ACTION DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Air Quality: Emissions during well development include: NO_x, SO₂, and CO tailpipe emissions from earth-moving equipment, vehicle traffic, drilling, and completion activities; small amounts of HAPs emissions from construction equipment; fugitive dust from vehicle traffic on unpaved roads and wind erosion where soils are disturbed; and NO_x, CO, and lesser amounts of SO₂ from drill rig and fracturing engine operations. These emissions would be short-term during the drilling and completion phases.

Emissions during well production include: continuous NO_x, CO, VOC, and HAP emissions from well pad separators, condensate storage tank vents; and daily tailpipe and fugitive dust emissions from operations traffic. Emissions would be dispersed and/ or diluted to the extent where any local ozone impacts from the Proposed Action would be indistinguishable from background conditions.

Annual estimated emissions from the Proposed Action are summarized in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Proposed Action First Year Emissions (tons/year).

Pollutant	Development^{1,2}	Production¹	Total^{1,3}
NO _x	17.360	4.865	22.23
CO	5.505	9.170	14.68
VOC	1.660	9.165	10.83
SO ₂	0.090	0.0180	0.11
PM ₁₀	2.030	27.15	29.18
PM _{2.5}	0.510	3.0	3.51
Benzene	0.0060	0.0220	0.03
Toluene	0.0040	0.0140	0.02
Ethylbenzene	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xylene	0.0020	0.0020	0.00
n-Hexane	0.00	0.010	0.01
Formaldehyde	0.00	0.20	0.20

¹ Emissions include 5 new wells and associated operations traffic during the year in which the project is developed.

² Development emissions would likely only occur during the first year while wells and other infrastructure are being developed.

³ Total emissions after the first year would be substantially lower following completion of development.

Greenhouse Gases: The assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change remains in its earliest stages of formulation. Applicable EPA rules do not require any controls and have yet to establish any emission limits related to GHG emissions or impacts. The lack of scientific models that predict climate change on regional or local level prohibits the quantification of potential future impacts of decisions made at the local level, particularly for small scale projects such as the Proposed Action. Drilling and development activities from the Proposed Action are anticipated to release a negligible amount of greenhouse gases into the local air-shed.

Mitigation Measures:

- Stationary internal combustion engines would comply with the following emission standards: 2 g/bhp-hr of NO_x for engines less than 300 HP and 1 g/bhp-hr of NO_x for engines over 300 HP.
- Either no or low bleed controllers would be installed on pneumatic pumps, actuators or other pneumatic devices.
- VOC venting controls or flaring would be utilized for oil or gas atmospheric storage tanks.
- VOC venting controls or flaring would be used for glycol dehydration and amine units.
- Where feasible, green completion would be used for well completion, re-completion, venting, or planned blowdown emissions. Alternatively, use controlled VOC emissions methods with 90% efficiency.

Soils/Vegetation

During construction, the soils in the project area would be stripped of vegetation, moved around and compacted until the road and location are formed. The proposed action alternative would result in 25.9 acres of disturbance. Upon well completion, the reserve pit would be reclaimed in accordance with Onshore Orders, regulations, and the surface owner's directions. Upon well abandonment, the well pad, road, and pipeline would be reclaimed in accordance with the surface owner's directions.

NO ACTION DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

Under the No Action Alternative, the proponent would not drill the proposed oil wells or develop the associated pipelines and infrastructure. Effects on ambient air quality would continue at present levels from existing oil and gas development in the region and other emission producing sources. Refer to Section 4.1.1 (pages 4-6 through 4-10) in the Greater Natural Buttes Final EIS for additional information on potential air quality impacts under the No Action.

Soils/Vegetation

No surface disturbance would occur under the no action alternative because the proposed wells would not be approved.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases

The cumulative impact area for air quality is the Uinta Basin, bounded on all sides by higher terrain, which results in similar climate and dispersion conditions for pollutants in the cumulative impact area. The Greater Natural Buttes Air Quality Technical Support Document, and the Greater Natural Buttes Final EIS section 5.3.1, are incorporated by reference and summarized below. Most of the cumulative emissions in the Uinta Basin are associated with oil and gas exploration and production activities. Consequently, past, present and reasonably foreseeable wells in the Uinta Basin are a part of the cumulative actions considered in this analysis. Table 6 summarizes the 2006 Uinta Basin emissions as well as the incremental impact of this project's alternatives. As indicated in Table 4-2, the Proposed Action comprises a small percentage of the Uinta Basin emissions summary.

Table 4-2: 2006 Uinta Basin Oil and Gas Operations Emissions Summary.

County	NO _x (tpy)	CO (tpy)	SO _x (tpy)	PM (tpy)	VOC (tpy)
Uintah	6,096	4,133	247	344	45,646
Carbon	995	814	22	40	2,747
Duchesne	3,053	2,448	96	173	19,019
Grand	337	207	16	22	2,360
Emery	273	199	9	14	453
Uinta Basin Total	10,754	7,800	391	592	70,226
Proposed Action	22.23	14.68	0.108	32.69	10.83
No Action	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Greater Natural Buttes Final EIS Table 5.3-1.

The GNB model predicted the following impacts to air quality and air quality related values for the GNB Proposed Action, which encompassed 3,675 new wells:

- Cumulative impacts from criteria pollutants to ambient air quality are well below the NAAQS at Class I airsheds and selected Class II areas;
- The incremental impacts to visibility would be virtually impossible to discern and would not contribute to regional haze at the Class I areas;
- The 2018 projected baseline emissions would result in impacts of 1.0 deciview for at least 201 days per year at the Class II areas;
- Discernible impacts at Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area and Dinosaur National Monument were anticipated;
- Less than 1 percent would be contributed to the acid deposition in Class I areas, and 4.3 percent at the Flaming Gorge Class II area;
- Acid deposition impacts at sensitive lakes would be below the USFS screening threshold; and,
- Ozone levels would be below the current ozone standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb) for the fourth highest annual level in the Uinta Basin for the 2018 projected baseline, and the proposed action would be approximately 3.2 percent of the cumulative ozone impact within the Uinta Basin.

Based on the GNB model results, it is anticipated that the impact to ambient air quality and air quality related values associated with the Proposed Action would be indistinguishable from, and dwarfed by, the margin of uncertainty associated with the model and Uinta Basin emission inventory. The No Action alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

Soils/Vegetation

The cumulative impact area is the Vernal Field Office planning area. Oil and gas development are major resource development activities within the planning area. Approximately 2,800 oil and gas wells are active within the cumulative impact area. It is estimated that approximately 2,055 new oil wells, 4,345 new gas wells, and 130 new coal bed natural gas wells would be drilled during the 5 years following publication of the VFO RMP ROD. Assuming approximately 5 acres of disturbance per well; past, present, and reasonably foreseeable impacts would result in 47,000 acres of disturbance to soils

and vegetation. Cumulative impacts to soils and vegetation typical of oil and gas field development include: removal of native vegetation and disturbance to soils which are generally very thin, slow to develop, and difficult to reclaim due to arid climate and low organic content. The proposed action would result in 25.9 acres of disturbance to soils and vegetation.

CHAPTER 5 TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED

Table 5-1: Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted		
<i>Name/Agency</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Result</i>
Newfield RMI	Owner of the surface	Surface use agreement received on 8/12/2013
Murray Sheep Ranch, LLC	Owner of the surface	Surface use agreement received on 8/5/2013
E. Leon Sprouse	Owner of the surface	Surface use agreement received on 8/5/2013
Dart Homestead Ranch, Inc.	Owner of the surface	Surface use agreement received on 8/5/2013

CHAPTER 6 LIST OF PREPARERS

Table 6-1: List of Preparers		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Nicholas Day	NRS	Team Lead