

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Bakersfield Field Office**

**Environmental Assessment  
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

**Vintage Production LLC.  
Mount Poso; Six APDs for Wells Sarrett Fee 1113LVH, 1114TVH, 1115LVH & 1116FVH and  
Matthew Fee 1107LVH & 1108LVH  
DOI-BLM-CA-C060-2016-0004-EA  
Programmatic Project #828**

**BACKGROUND**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to approve six (6) Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs) submitted by Vintage Production California LLC. (Vintage) to drill 6 new oil wells: Sarrett Fee 1113LVH, 1114TVH, 1115LVH & 1116FVH and Matthew Fee 1107LVH & 1108LVH on Vintage's federal mineral lease (CAS019301C) in Section 4, T27S, R28E, MDBM. This project is sited on private land owned by Vintage, containing BLM administered subsurface minerals within the Mount Poso Oil Field. The proposed project is located northeast of Bakersfield, California, in Kern County. The proposed well pad sites are accessed by a series of unpaved roads off Famoso Road. The drilling of 6 new wells would require the expansion of current well pads onto previously disturbed and undisturbed locations. Vintage would also install fourteen (14) power poles, eleven (11) anchors, and six (6) new flowlines that total 4,900 feet. In addition, the project would require construction of permanent access roads. Estimated surface disturbance for the proposed project is 2.993 acres, which would total 6.144 acres of compensation as required by the BLM Bakersfield Field Office 2001 Oil and Gas Programmatic Biological Opinion.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide Vintage with the authority to drill 6 new oil wells and associated facilities to produce its federal mineral lease (CAS019301C) and to supply energy resources to the American public. The need for the proposed action is to respond to the 6 APDs submitted by the applicant to conduct operations on lands containing BLM administered subsurface minerals.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. The purpose of this document is to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences that are anticipated from the drilling of 6 new oil wells and the expansion of 6 well pads, installation of 14 power poles, 11 anchors, 6 flowlines, and construction of permanent access roads in the Mount Poso Oil Field.

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the Bakersfield Resource Management Plan, approved in December 2014; (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared. This finding is based on the following discussion:

**Context:** The proposed project is located on private land with BLM administered subsurface minerals in Section 4, T27S, R28E, MDBM on Vintage's federal mineral lease (CAS019301C). The proposed project area is surrounded by oil and gas development. The discretionary action is to approve the APDs submitted by Vintage for the drilling of six new wells and associated facilities necessary for production.

The proposed activity is a site-specific action with minor localized effects on air quality, soil disturbance, and special status plant and animal species in the immediate area. The EA details the effects of the action alternatives. None of the effects identified, including cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and do not exceed those effects described in the Resource Management Plan.

**Intensity:** I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the Vintage proposed action for the drilling of four oil wells and the associated temporary disturbance. The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27. The discussions below apply to all project elements contained within the EA:

**1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects.** Potential impacts include the emission of air pollutants, the degradation of soil resources, and the destruction of habitat for federally listed species. However, none of these impacts would be significant at the local scale or cumulatively because of the small scale of the project and design features that would reduce impacts to immeasurable levels. The air emissions are below *de minimis* levels, soil resources will be preserved and restored to the extent possible following project implementation, and listed species habitat destruction will be minimized and compensated for in-kind.

**2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** The proposed project is comparable to other similar activities and projects already undertaken on BLM-administered lands within the Bakersfield Field Office and nationwide with no unusual health or safety concerns. All operators are subject to the standards outlined in the California Occupation Safety and Health Plan, and the State must conduct inspections to enforce its standards and must operate occupational safety and health training and education programs. Also, operators must comply with federal safety regulations outlined in 43 CFR 3160 and the Onshore Oil and Gas Orders. Implementation of measures to meet these standards and regulations will minimize risks to public health and safety; therefore, any impacts to public health and safety are not considered significant.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** No park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas would be adversely affected by the proposed development. The project area has been surveyed and analyzed for biological, historical, paleontological and cultural resources. The project will not significantly affect biological, historical, or cultural resources. Biological resources would not be significantly affected because Vintage would implement the USFWS-approved Project Specific Provisions to mitigate for impacts to threatened and endangered species. Vintage would compensate for unavoidable impacts to listed species habitat by dedicating lands for the permanent conservation of in-kind habitat. No cultural resources were identified within the area of potential effect.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** It is highly unlikely that any portion of the analyzed action would be controversial.

Similar actions are commonplace in the area and draw little controversy. Oil development has occurred within the San Joaquin Valley region for over 100 years.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The proposed project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar projects in similar areas and have found effects to be reasonably predictable. The effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment which are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The proposed project does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects. The proposed project is limited to the drilling of six oil wells, construction of well pads, construction of flowlines, piping, and powerpoles, and construction of permanent access roads. Any future proposals submitted within the project area would be considered independently and be subject to site specific NEPA analysis and documentation.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The project is consistent with the actions and impacts anticipated in the Bakersfield RMP. No significant cumulative effects have been identified. A complete disclosure of the effects of the proposed action and no action alternative is contained in the EA.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** Cultural resource field surveys (BLM Cultural Resource Inventory # 6000-2016-10) were conducted for the proposed project location and any other areas which may be indirectly impacted by project construction activities. The results of this survey indicate that there are no cultural resources located within the area of potential effect for the proposed project. As a result there will be no adverse effect to districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and there will be no loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts to listed species, or critical habitat. Implementation of measures prescribed in the Oil and Gas Programmatic Biological Opinion Project Specific Provisions and the Design Features will minimize the potential for unintended or undue impacts to San Joaquin kit fox. Vintage's dedication of their private, conserved lands for the permanent conservation of listed species habitat will compensate for unavoidable impacts to listed species. There is no designated critical habitat in the project area.

**10. Whether the action threatens to violate; Federal, State, or local law or requirements for the protection of the environment.** This action would not violate federal, state, or local laws or requirements. The proposed action is fully consistent with the 2014 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan. The EA is in full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and is consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended. The proposed action will not result in undue or unnecessary resource degradation due to operator compliance with State and Federal

regulations, the Lease Terms, the Design Features, spill prevention and control plans, and the Oil and Gas Programmatic Biological Opinion Project Specific Provisions. All approved resource impacts are necessary to develop the federal mineral estate and supply energy resources to the American public.

Prepared by: /s/Tiera Arbogast 26 April 2016  
Project Lead Date

Approved by: /s/John Hodge 4/26/16  
Assistant Field Manager-Minerals Date