Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-MT-040–2016–0001EA
Somont Oil Company Inc.
McBride and Engleking Leases
Pipeline and Comingling

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Great Falls, MT

November 13, 2015

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Table of Contents

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Chapter 1. Introduction

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1.1. Identifying Information:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Great Falls Oil and Gas Field Office is considering authorizing the installation of a pipeline and comingling of production from two federal oil leases. These actions are located in Section 20, T35N R2W on BLM administered surface estate and Section 19, T35N R2W on Fee surface, Federal mineral estate. The two leases involved are Lease MTGF077453 and MTGF 052363A. The applicant is Somont Oil Company Inc (Somont).

1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project:

Somont Oil Company, Inc

Pipeline and Comingling

Engleking and McBride Leases

DOI-BLM-MT-040–2016–0001–EA

1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:

Section 20, T. 35 N., R. 2 W. on BLM administered surface estate and Section 19, T35N R2W on Fee surface, Federal Mineral estate.

1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Lead Office - and number

Great Falls Oil and Gas Field Office

1101 15th Street North

Great Falls, MT 59401

1.1.4. Identify the subject function code, lease, serial, or case file number:

Lease MTGF 077453

Lease MTGF052363A

1.1.5. Applicant Name:

Somont Oil Company, Inc.

1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:

The purpose for the action is to install a pipeline, and commingle oil production on BLM administered minerals as provided for in 43 CFR §3162.3-1. The need for this action is BLM has

a responsibility to respond to requests from oil operators to improve their production efficiency and to be issued right-of-way grants under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 185), 43 CFR 3100, and 43 CFR 2880 regulations.

1.3. Background:

Lease MTGF 052363A contains 40 acres and 3 non-plugged wells. Lease MTGF 077453 contains 320 acres and 3 non-plugged wells. The average daily production of lease MTGF 052363A is 0.337 bopd with 29.6 bwpd and MTGF 0077453 is 0.937 bopd and 59.2 bwpd water based on the past years production for each lease.

1.4. The Decision to be Made

The BLM Great Falls Oil and Gas Field Manager must decide whether or not to approve the actions. If the requests are approved, the field manager must also decide what conditions of approval would be included in the authorization.

The BLM Havre Field Manager must decide whether or not to issue a right-of-way grant for the portion of the pipeline which is off-lease. If the right-of-way grant is issued, the field manager must also decide what terms and conditions would be included in the grant.

This EA will only analyze the effects of pipeline installation as that action is a new surface disturbance. The commingling of production is a paperwork action that does not, in and of itself, disturb new ground. Commingling approvals are similar to, for instance, communitization agreements – both of these types of decisions and/or documents are designed to assist in bettering production efficiency and/or improve royalty revenue returns. Neither of these types of decisions, in a standalone capacity, affects the physical environment.

1.5. Scoping

Internal scoping requests were sent to the wildlife, cultural, soils, recreation, hydrology, realty and vegetation specialists on May 5, 2014. Copies of the scoping request and the specialists' responses are filed in the administrative record for this environmental assessment (EA). Resources that could potentially be affected by installation of the pipeline were identified from the scoping responses and are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.5.1. Issues identified for Analysis (Resource issues)

The following issues were identified during scoping:

- How would the proposed action and the alternatives affect soil resources?
  - Resource Impact Indicator:
    - Acres of surface disturbance and associated effects

1.5.2. Issues Considered by eliminated from Further Analysis

The following issues were identified during scoping but were eliminated from further study for the reason outlined below.

- **Cultural Resources** – Cultural Resource Report 15-MT-066-007 inventoried the surveyed pipeline area. No cultural resources were found within the project corridor. Standard cultural resource mitigation would be included in the conditions of approval for any project that disturbs new ground, specifically shut down operations if buried resources are uncovered. The BLM Havre FO Archaeologist determined that removal of the facilities did not violate cultural resource policy or regulation.

- **Paleontological Resources** - The pipeline is not located in a PFYC (Potential Fossil Yield Classification System) Class IV or V area. The probability of significant vertebrate or invertebrate fossils occurring in the location of the proposed project is highly unlikely.

- **Recreation, Visual Resources, Special Designations** – The proposed action is located in a Class IV VRM designation. The proposed action conforms to the goals and objectives of this classification. The proposed action is located within the Havre ERMA. Public use and access is low, limited and dispersed. There are no developed recreation sites and the action is located outside the Kevin Rim ACEC.

- **Wildlife** – In the area of the proposed action: there are no known Threatened or Endangered species, no fisheries, no big game winter range and no known raptor nests. This is marginal habitat for Sprague's pipit nesting habitat and other grassland birds. Impacts can be mitigated with timing restrictions included within the design features of the proposed action.

- **Noxious weed infestations** – There is no documentation of state listed noxious weeds on the proposed development site. Activities in the proposed action could contribute to the introduction and spread of invasive and noxious plant species. Mitigation proposed by the BLM specialist and Operator will reduce or eliminate any noxious weed introductions.

- **Hydrology** – The National Hydrography Dataset indicates that there are no surface water flow paths that will be crossed or altered by the proposed action. The National Wetland Inventory indicates that there are no wetlands present in the area where the action has been proposed. The mitigation and stipulations that would serve to uphold the integrity of surface soil stability would minimize the effects of the erosive forces of water that could otherwise become an issue during runoff and storm events.

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Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

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2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Great Falls Oil and Gas Field Office is considering authorizing the installation of a pipeline and comingling of production from two federal oil leases. These actions are located in Section 20, T35N R2W on BLM administered surface estate and Section 19, T35N R2W on Fee surface, Federal mineral estate. The two leases involved are Lease MTGF077453 and MTGF 052363A. The applicant is Somont Oil Company Inc (Somont).

2.2. Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail:

Alternative A — No Action

The no action alternative would be to deny the proposed pipeline installation.

Alternative B — Proposed Action

The proposed action is to authorize installation of a pipeline between Alexander #11 (MTGF 051863A) and Federal #12 (MTM 158). Operator proposes to dig the flowline with a backhoe, bury it 6'6" deep, re-contour the trench and seed. The pipeline length is 292.08', width of 30' for a total of .20 acres, more or less, disturbed. The oil would flow from the McBride existing pipeline in a northwesterly direction to the Engleking #1.

2.3. Conformance with Land Use Plan

The public lands in the project area are managed according to decisions in the HiLine Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved in 2015. The HiLine RMPcan be accessed using the internet at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/prog/planning.1.html The proposed pipeline installation is not specifically addressed in the West HiLine RMP; however, the developments of oil and gas mineral resources are in conformance with the Final West HiLine RMP and its guidance for reasonably foreseeable development in appendix 1.3.

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Chapter 3. Affected Environment:

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3.1. Introduction

The affected environment section describes the existing condition and trend of issue-related elements of the human environment that may be affected by implementing the proposed action or an alternative. This discussion is organized by the resource issues that were identified in Chapter 1 and provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in Chapter 4.

3.2. General Setting

The environmental setting is short grass prairie that generally slopes to the east as it is in the foothills of the Kevin Rim. The area bounded by the Kevin Rim on the west and the Sweet Grass Hills to the east contains meaningful sacred sites for many tribes such as the Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Chippewa-Cree, Kootenai, and Salish. The Kevin Rim was a bison kill site and remnants of encampments can be found throughout the area. In the early 20th century oil and natural gas were discovered in this area and is still producing oil and gas resources. The BLM is the surface and mineral owner for both of these leases. The primary surface use is cattle grazing.

3.3. Relevant Past and Ongoing Actions

Oil and gas operations, farming and cattle grazing are the predominant uses in this area. Oil and gas development has slowed since the 1970's and current oil producers are generally smaller companies, i.e. mom and pop businesses with less than a dozen employees. The decline in production of oil and gas since the 1970's has triggered the need for commingling, thus making oil and gas production more efficient.

3.4. Resource Issues Brought Forward for Analysis

Soil Resources

Soils were identified from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) dataset and the Soil Data Mart (SDM) website (http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/). Soil surveys were performed by the NRCS according to National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) standards. Pertinent information for review and analysis is from the SDM and the National Soils Information System (NASIS) database for the area.

Soils in the project area formed in continental glacial till. Rounded and sub-angular surface and subsurface gravels, cobbles and stones are common. The primary soil map units the proposed action would occur on are the: Map unit: 721E – Zahill-Zahl complex, 15 to 25 percent slopes; and, Map unit: 695D – Vida-Williams-Zahill clay loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes.

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Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:

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4.1. Introduction

Potential effects include direct, indirect and cumulative effects. Direct effects are those which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect effects are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Cumulative effects result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

How would the proposed action and the alternatives affect soil resources?

Alternative A — No Action

Since the pipeline would not be built, effects associated with the pipeline and the associated construction activities would not occur on public land

Alternative B — Proposed Action

Direct impacts to soils would include removal of vegetation, exposure of the soil, mixing of the soil horizons, loss of topsoil productivity, soil compaction and rutting, and increased susceptibility to wind and water erosion. Water erosion could result during high intensity rainfall, snowmelt, or runoff events. Soils are most susceptible to wind erosion when soil aggregates are broken up, dry conditions exist, and soils are bare. Impact are both short-term (well pad and pipeline) and long —term (access road and production area). After successful reclamation and vegetation is reestablished, there are minimal or no residual effects.

There would be approximately 0.13 acres of new soil disturbance associated with the pipeline install. Interim reclamation of the areas not needed for production and operations would be initiated immediately after construction of the well and pipeline. All acres would be reclaimed.

Soil productivity would continue to be severely restricted within the traveled-way of the access road between the two wells. Vehicle/equipment disturbance would alter soil physical characteristics (aggregates), subjecting soils to water and wind erosion. Travel during moist/wet soil conditions would lead to rutted soils in and adjacent to the traveled-way.

Construction equipment and vehicular traffic associated with the pipeline installation would cause soil compaction; severity would be directly related to soil type, frequency, and weight (lbs./sq. inch). Compaction alters soil structure decreasing porosity, infiltration rate, air space, and available water holding capacity. A combination of these factors would decrease the vegetative capacity and reestablishment, and increase the potential for water and wind erosion of affected areas.

4.2. Description of Residual Impacts and Cumulative Effects

Proliferation of surface disturbance associated with well development and its infrastructure affects the quality and quantity of vegetation, soils, wildlife habitat, and rangeland through fragmentation by creating new roads and pipelines, disturbance of livestock and wildlife species by traffic to well sites, loss of forage and habitat to well structures and associated roads, and the potential loss of forage and habitat from the possible introduction of invasive species on equipment and by providing bare ground for invasive species establishment. Erosion potential is increased by the proliferation of roads which may affect water quality by increasing sediment, particularly if roads crossing coulees, drainages, and ephemeral potholes are used during wet periods.

Water quality may also be affected should water from producing wells seep from containment. Wildlife, particularly migratory birds, might also be affected by interacting with water from producing wells. Most of these impacts are temporary in that they will last only for the life of the wells in the area.

Chapter 5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

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Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

None

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Chapter 6. List of Preparers

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The BLM Interdisciplinary (ID) Team prepared this environmental analysis. ID Team membership is detailed below:

Tessa Wallace, Natural Resource Specialist, Lead

Andrea Parrott, Natural Resource Specialist

Craig Miller, Wildlife Biologist

Josh Sorlie, Soil Scientist

Josh Chase, Archeologist

Kathy Tribby, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Kenneth Keever, Invasives

Steve Zellmer, Range

Thomas Probert, Hydrologist

Other BLM personnel briefed and/or consulted during the preparation of this analysis:

Brian Hockett, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Stanley Jaynes, Havre Field Manager

Kirsten Boyle, Natural Resource Specialist

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References

"National Hydrography Dataset: Flowlines." Geospatial Data Presentation Form: vector digital data. U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. U.S. Geological Survey. Reston, Virginia. 1999. <http://mapping.usgs.gov/esic/esic_index.html>U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 1987.

Lewistown District Office. Draft West HiLine Resource management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement., U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 1988. .

Lewistown district Office, Final West HiLine Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. .

U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory. Geospatial Data Presentation form: map. 1979–1994. National Wetlands Inventory website, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington D.C. http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/.

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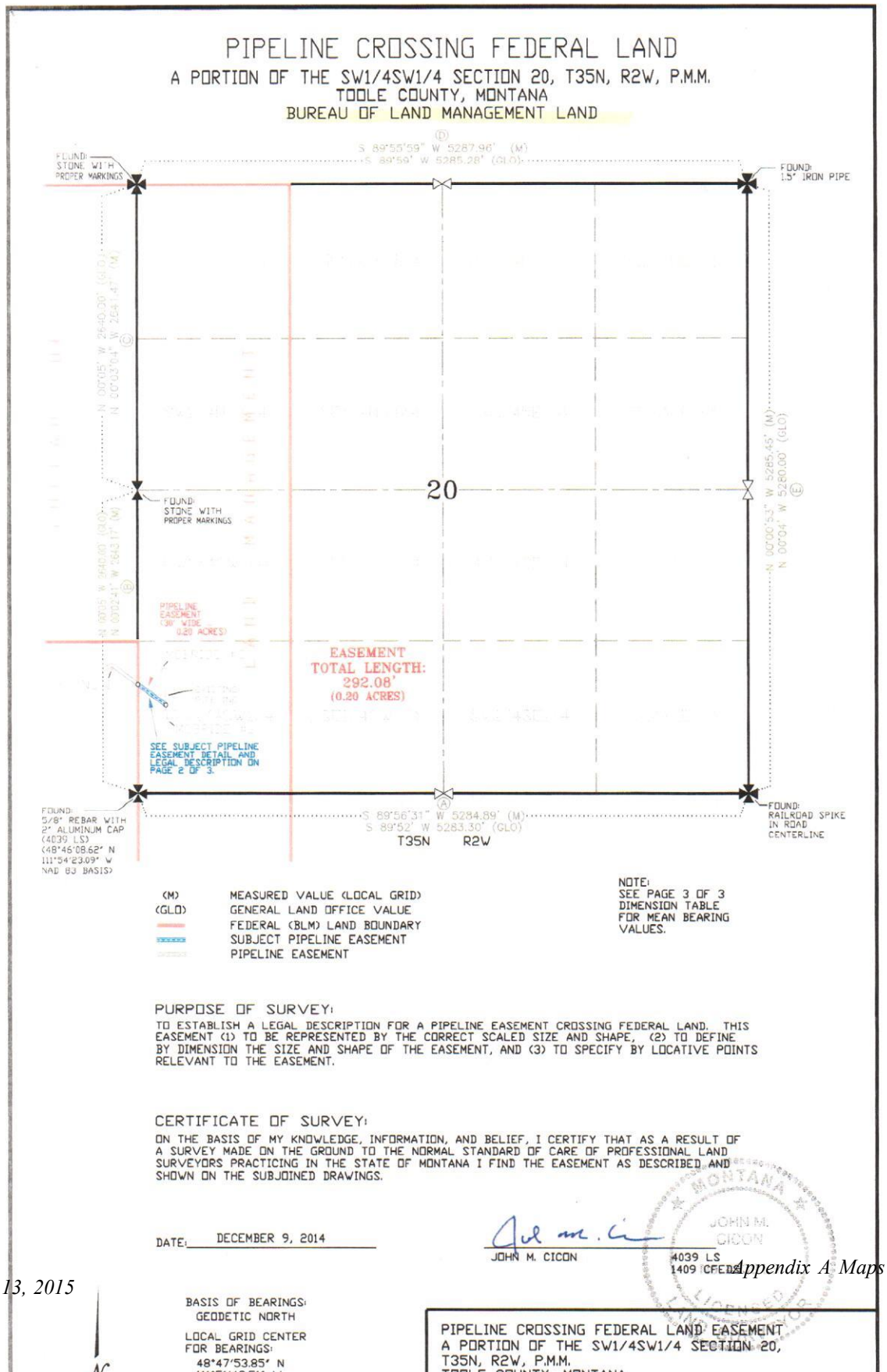
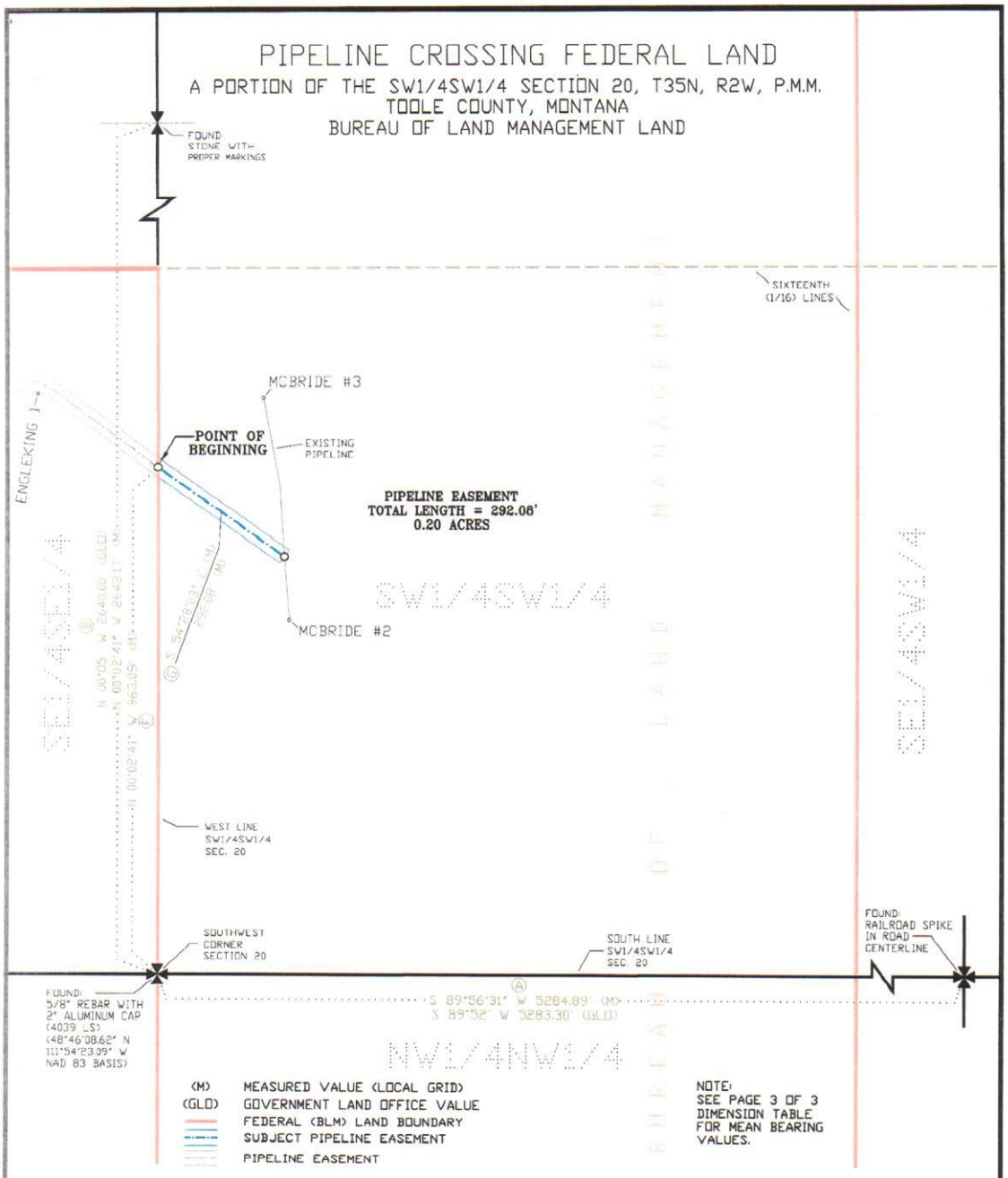
Appendix A. Maps





PIPELINE EASEMENT CROSSING FEDERAL LAND LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

A TRACT OR STRIP OF LAND FOR PIPELINE EASEMENT PURPOSES CROSSING FEDERAL LAND ON A PORTION OF THE SW1/4SW1/4 SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 35 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST, PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, COUNTY OF TOOLE, STATE OF MONTANA, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL PLAT OF SAID LAND FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, MONTANA STATE OFFICE, BEING 30 FEET IN WIDTH, 15 FEET ON EACH SIDE OF THE CENTERLINE, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 20; THENCE N 00°02'41" W 963.09 FEET ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID SW1/4SW1/4 SECTION 20 TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE PIPELINE EASEMENT TO BE DESCRIBED; THENCE S 54°28'03" E 292.08 FEET TO AN EXISTING PIPELINE AND THE END OF THE PIPELINE EASEMENT.

SAID PIPELINE EASEMENT IS 292.08 FEET IN LENGTH AND CONTAINS 0.20 ACRES MORE OR LESS, SUBJECT TO ALL OTHER EXISTING EASEMENTS.

N

SCALE 1"=250'

BASIS OF BEARINGS:
GEODETIC NORTH

LOCAL GRID CENTER FOR BEARINGS:
48°47'53.85" N
111°51'48.51" W
(NAD 83 BASIS)

BASE POSITION FOR GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES:

PIPELINE CROSSING FEDERAL LAND EASEMENT
A PORTION OF THE SW1/4SW1/4 SECTION 20,
T35N, R2W, P.M.M.
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

DRAWING NO. 14130SOMBLMSEC.20_p2.DWG PAGE 2 OF 3

CIGON AND ASSOCIATES

DIMENSION TABLE

PIPELINE CROSSING FEDERAL LAND
A PORTION OF THE SW1/4SW1/4 SECTION 20, T35N, R2W, P.M.M
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

SEGMENT	LOCAL GRID BEARING	GLO BEARING	MEAN BEARING	GRID DISTANCE	GLO DISTANCE
Ⓐ	S 89°56'31" W	S 89°52' W (1895)	S 89°54'33" W	5284.89'	5283.30' (1895)
Ⓑ	N 00°02'41" W	N 00°05' W (1895)	N 00°04'38" W	2643.17'	2640.00' (1895)
Ⓒ	N 00°03'04" W	N 00°05' W (1895)	N 00°05'01" W	2641.47'	2640.00' (1895)
Ⓓ	S 89°55'59" W	S 89°59' W (1895)	S 89°55'04" W	5287.96'	5285.28' (1895)
Ⓔ	N 00°00'53" W	N 00°04' W (1895)	N 00°01'50" W	5285.45'	5280.00' (1895)
Ⓕ	N 00°02'41" W		N 00°04'37" W	963.09'	
Ⓖ	S 54°28'03" E		S 54°29'59" E	292.08'	

* - CALCULATED VALUE

PIPELINE CROSSING FEDERAL LAND EASEMENT
A PORTION OF THE SW1/4SW1/4 SECTION 20,
T35N, R2W, P.M.M.
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

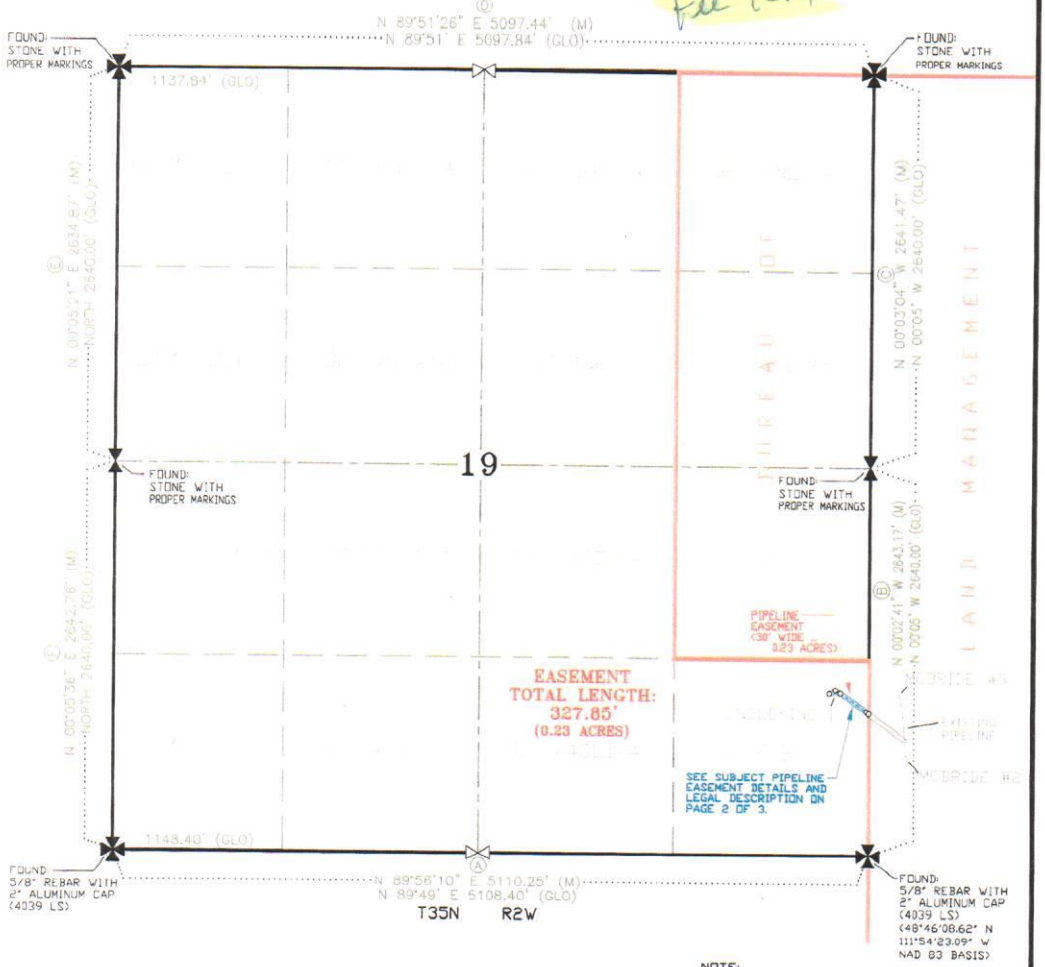
DRAWING NO. 14130SOMBLMSEC.20_p3.DWG PAGE 3 OF 3

CIGON AND ASSOCIATES

PIPELINE CROSSING FEE LAND

A PORTION OF THE SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19, T35N, R2W, P.M.M.
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA
WAYNE A. GILLESPIE

fee land



(M) MEASURED VALUE (LOCAL GRID)
(GLO) GENERAL LAND OFFICE VALUE
FEDERAL (BLM) LAND BOUNDARY
SUBJECT PIPELINE EASEMENT
PIPELINE EASEMENT

NOTE:
SEE PAGE 3 OF 3 DIMENSION TABLE FOR MEAN BEARING VALUES.

PURPOSE OF SURVEY:

TO ESTABLISH A LEGAL DESCRIPTION FOR A PIPELINE EASEMENT CROSSING FEE LAND. THIS EASEMENT (1) TO BE REPRESENTED BY THE CORRECT SCALED SIZE AND SHAPE, (2) TO DEFINE BY DIMENSION THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE EASEMENT, AND (3) TO SPECIFY BY LOCATIVE POINTS RELEVANT TO THE EASEMENT.

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY:

ON THE BASIS OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, AND BELIEF, I CERTIFY THAT AS A RESULT OF A SURVEY MADE ON THE GROUND TO THE NORMAL STANDARD OF CARE OF PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS PRACTICING IN THE STATE OF MONTANA I FIND THE EASEMENT AS DESCRIBED AND SHOWN ON THE SUBJOINED DRAWINGS.

DATE: DECEMBER 9, 2014

JOHN M. CICON
4039 LS
14139 CREEDS

MONTANA
JOHN M. CICON
No. 4039 LS
LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR

BASIS OF BEARINGS:
GEODETIC NORTH

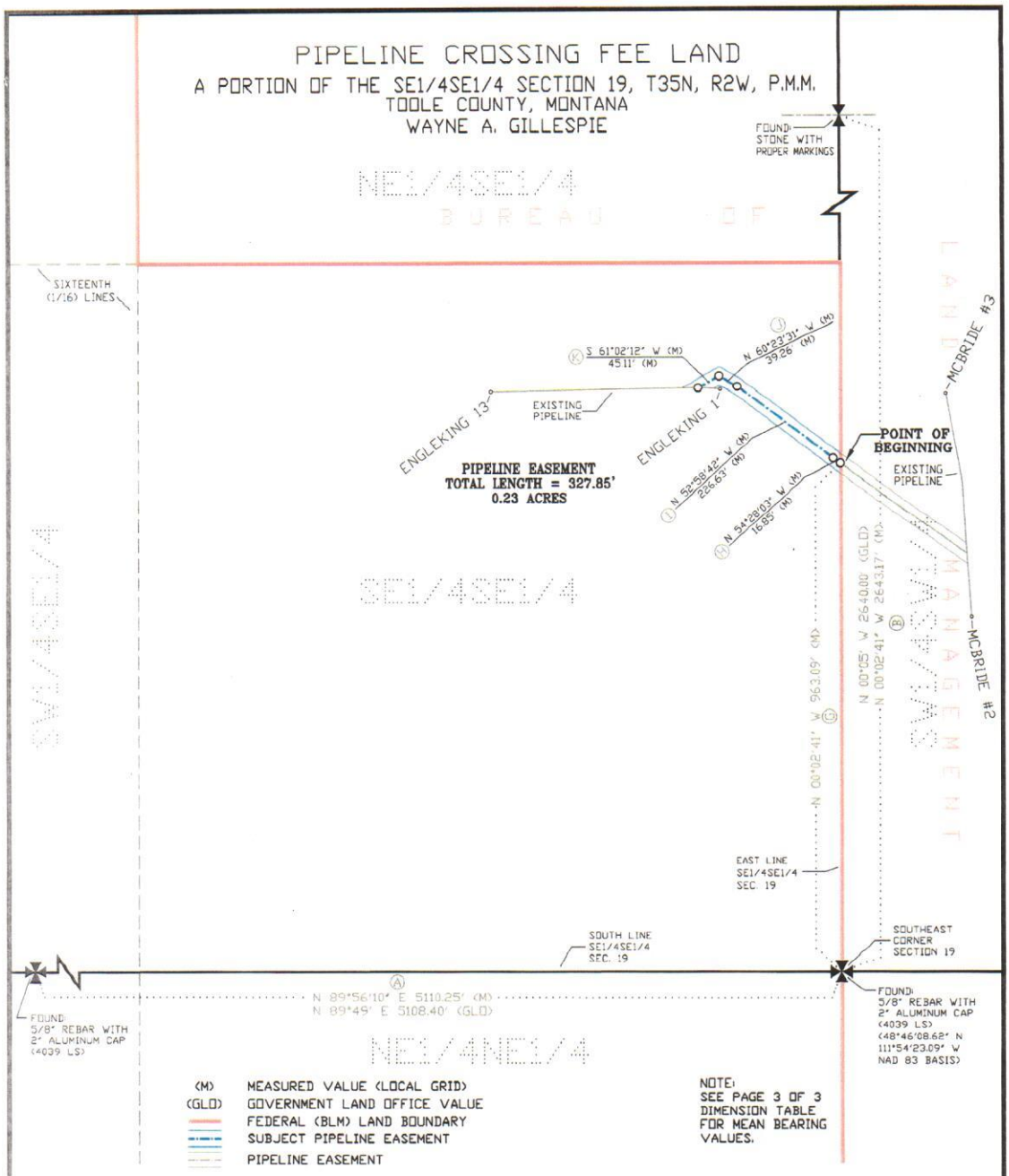
LOCAL GRID CENTER FOR BEARINGS:
48°47'53.85" N
111°51'48.51" W
(NAD 83 BASIS)

BASE POSITION FOR GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES:

PIPELINE CROSSING FEE LAND EASEMENT
A PORTION OF THE SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19
T35N, R2W, P.M.M.
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

DRAWING NO. 14131SOMBLMSEC.19_p1.DWG PAGE 1 OF 3

CICON AND ASSOCIATES



PIPELINE EASEMENT CROSSING FEE LAND LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

A TRACT OR STRIP OF LAND FOR PIPELINE EASEMENT PURPOSES CROSSING FEE LAND ON A PORTION OF THE SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 35 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST, PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, COUNTY OF TOOLE, STATE OF MONTANA, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL PLAT OF SAID LAND FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, MONTANA STATE OFFICE, BEING 30 FEET IN WIDTH, 15 FEET ON EACH SIDE OF THE CENTERLINE, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 19; THENCE N 00°02'41" W 963.09 FEET ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19 TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE PIPELINE EASEMENT TO BE DESCRIBED; THENCE N 54°28'03" W 16.85 FEET; THENCE N 52°58'42" W 226.63 FEET; THENCE N 60°23'31" W 39.26 FEET; THENCE S 61°02'12" W 45.11 FEET TO AN EXISTING PIPELINE AND THE END OF THE PIPELINE EASEMENT.

SAID PIPELINE EASEMENT IS 327.85 FEET IN LENGTH AND CONTAINS 0.23 ACRES MORE OR LESS, SUBJECT TO ALL OTHER EXISTING EASEMENTS.

N

SCALE 1"=250'

BASIS OF BEARINGS:
GEODETIC NORTH

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A PORTION OF THE SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19,
T35N, R2W, P.M.M.
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

DRAWING NO. 14131SOMBLMSEC.19_p2.DWG PAGE 2 OF 3

SIGON AND ASSOCIATES

DIMENSION TABLE

PIPELINE CROSSING FEE LAND
A PORTION OF THE SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19, T35N, R2W, P.M.M
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

SEGMENT	LOCAL GRID BEARING	GLO BEARING	MEAN BEARING	GRID DISTANCE	GLO DISTANCE
Ⓐ	N 89°56'10" E	N 89°49' E (1895)	N 89°53'45" E	5110.25'	5108.40' (1895)
Ⓑ	N 00°02'41" W	N 00°05' W (1895)	N 00°04'38" W	2643.17'	2640.00' (1895)
Ⓒ	N 00°03'04" W	N 00°05' W (1895)	N 00°05'01" W	2641.47'	2640.00' (1895)
Ⓓ	N 89°51'26" E	N 89°51' E (1895)	N 89°51'26" E	5097.44'	5097.84' (1895)
Ⓔ	N 00°05'21" E	NORTH (1895)	N 00°02'27" E	2634.87'	2640.00' (1895)
Ⓕ	N 00°05'36" E	NORTH (1895)	N 00°02'43" E	2642.76'	2640.00' (1895)
Ⓖ	N 00°02'41" W		N 00°04'37" W	963.09'	
Ⓗ	N 54°28'03" W		N 54°29'59" W	16.85'	
Ⓘ	N 52°58'42" W		N 53°00'40" W	226.63'	
Ⓙ	N 60°23'31" W		N 60°25'31" W	39.26'	
Ⓚ	S 61°02'12" W		S 61°00'13" W	45.11'	

* - CALCULATED VALUE

PIPELINE CROSSING FEE LAND EASEMENT
A PORTION OF THE SE1/4SE1/4 SECTION 19,
T35N, R2W, P.M.M.
TOOLE COUNTY, MONTANA

DRAWING NO. 14131SOMBLMSEC.19_p3.DWG PAGE 3 OF 3