

**PUBLIC SCOPING STATEMENT  
WIND DANCER NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE**

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation (Cabot) and GMT Energy Corporation (GMT) have notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rawlins Field Office that Cabot/GMT are proposing to explore and develop the Wind Dancer Unit, located within the administrative boundaries of the BLM's Rawlins Field Office. The project area encompasses approximately 6,400 acres of BLM-administered federal surface and mineral estate located in Township 24 North, Range 96 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, in Sweetwater County, Wyoming (Figure 1). Access to the project area is provided by the Tipton Road (Sweetwater County Road 4-67) and Luman Road (Sweetwater County Road 4-20), and BLM Road 3219 (Red Creek Road). The project is located approximately 30 miles northwest of Wamsutter, Wyoming.

The project entails the construction, drilling, completing, and producing of up to a maximum of 12 natural gas wells within the project area and the construction, utilization, and maintenance of appurtenant access roads, pipelines, and production facilities. It is expected that the exploration and development phase would be completed in less than 2 years. The projected total life of the proposed project is approximately 30 years (production phase), dependent upon the economic life of the wells.

A total of five exploratory natural gas wells (and associated access roads and pipelines) have already been permitted within the project area. These wells are in various stages of drilling, completion, or production.

It is anticipated that initial drilling operations would begin as soon as practicable in 2004.

Approximately 10-20 days would be required to drill each well, including logging and setting production casing. Completion operations would require 15-30 days, including stimulation operations and the construction of surface facilities and gas pipeline. Production operations would require the use and maintenance of roads on a year-round basis.

The approximate size of each well pad for drilling would be 385 feet by 245 feet. A reserve pit would be excavated on the well pad to hold drilling fluids and cuttings. It is anticipated that total maximum surface disturbance for each well pad will be approximately 2.2 acres, not including stockpiles and cut/fill slopes. Once completed, the well pad would be reduced to that area necessary for production operations, the remainder being reclaimed and revegetated for the duration of production operations. The approximate size of each well pad for production operations would be 385 feet by 210 feet (1.9 acres).

Each producing well will require a gas gathering line. All pipeline corridors would be located, where feasible, adjacent to access roads.

The proposed project area would be accessed by the use of existing public roads, and by the construction of new access roads. All roads associated with this project would be upgraded/constructed to BLM standards for resource roads.

At the end of the project, all remaining disturbances would be reclaimed to their original topography and revegetated.

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## **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Great Divide Resource Management Plan (GDRMP)** - The GDRMP (November 8, 1990) directs the management of BLM-administered lands within the analysis area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources, as stated in the GDRMP, is “to provide opportunity for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values.” The development of natural gas reserves within the Wind Dancer Natural Gas Development Project area would be in conformance with the GDRMP. The Environmental Assessment (EA) that will be prepared for the Cabot/GMT proposal will incorporate the appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the GDRMP.

**Use Authorizations** - Use authorizations (i.e., rights-of-way, permits) for well pads, roads, pipelines, and well site facilities will be processed through the BLM Application for Permit to Drill (APD) and Sundry Notice when located on-lease. Any activity located off-lease would require an approve right-of-way.

## **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

On reviewing the Cabot/GMT proposal, the BLM has determined that an EA will be prepared. The impact analysis presented in the EA will allow for one of two outcomes as determined by the BLM, either: 1) the proposed project would not result in significant impacts and a Decision Record with a Finding of No Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) could be signed (which would allow the project to be implemented), or 2) the project, as proposed, would result in significant impacts and would require the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

One element of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is scoping. Scoping activities are conducted prior to the preparation of an EA:

- € to determine reasonable development alternatives to be considered in the document
- € to identify environmental and socioeconomic issues of concern related to the proposed project
- € to determine the depth and range of analyses for issues addressed in the document

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in, and contribute to, the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **IDENTIFIED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The following issues and concerns have been identified to-date. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a starting point for public input. Once all issues and concerns have been gathered through scoping and BLM consideration of the project, corresponding resource disciplines will be identified to conduct analysis for individual issues and concerns.

- € potential effects upon wildlife and their habitats within the analysis area
- € increased traffic and associated impacts upon county, state, and BLM roads and highways
- € social and economic impacts to local communities
- € impacts to ground water resources
- € potential impacts to sensitive soils within the project area
- € impacts from emissions resulting from drilling and production activities associated with the project
- € reclamation of disturbed areas and control of nonnative plants
- € potential impacts to cultural and historical resources within the analysis area
- € cumulative effects of natural gas development activities when combined with other ongoing and proposed developments on lands within the BLM Rawlins Field Office area
- € potential conflicts between mineral development activities and recreational activities

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM**

Based upon current understanding of issues, concerns, and opportunities, an interdisciplinary team (IDT) made up of the following specialists within the BLM Rawlins Field Office has been identified:

- € Archaeologist
- € Realty Specialist
- € NEPA Specialist
- € Civil Engineer (roads and surface activities)
- € Petroleum Engineer
- € Wildlife Biologist
- € Natural Resource Specialist (surface protection)
- € Hydrologist
- € Recreation Planner
- € Soil Scientist
- € Geologist
- € Range Management Specialist

## **TIMING NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Government agencies, the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to be considered, issues or concerns that should be assessed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure that the analysis process is comprehensive.

After a 30-day scoping period is completed and the EA is prepared, the EA will be released to the public for review and comment.

The scoping period for this project ends on March 17, 2004. Please submit your comments to:

Travis Bargsten, Natural Resource Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
1300 North Third Street  
P.O. Box 2407  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301  
e-mail: rawlins\_wymail@blm.gov

Please refer to the Wind Dancer Natural Gas Development Project in your response.

## **REFERENCE CITED**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 1990. Great Divide Resource Area Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan. Prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Rawlins Field Office, Rawlins, Wyoming. BLM-WY-PT-91-010-4410. 74 pp.