

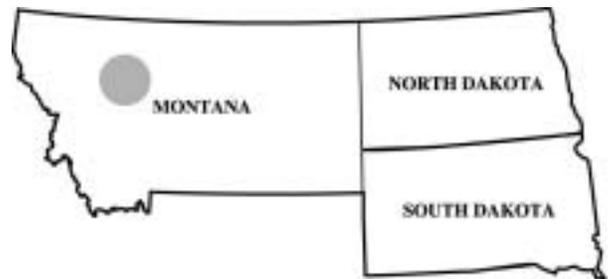


May 2002

# Blackleaf Gas Field

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- In 1992, BLM prepared a final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for development of the Blackleaf Gas Field but decided not to issue a record of decision until receiving a drilling application.
- BLM received several notices of staking and drilling applications following completion of the FEIS, but did not complete a record of decision due to changes in lease ownership, changes in the unit operator, incomplete drilling applications, withdrawal of some staking notices, and fluctuating natural gas prices.
- Encouraged by the recent rise in natural gas prices, three companies recently staked a total of three wells.
- The proposed Startech Well is in the Blindhorse Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) about 3 miles from three shut-in gas wells. The Startech lease predates the ONA designation.
- The proposed Dorothy Tripp Rutter Estate well is located on federal minerals/private surface owned by the Boone and Crockett Club. The proposed well is about 4 miles from the shut-in wells.
- The proposed Grizzly Resources, Inc. well is located in the Lewis and Clark National Forest. It is about 2.5 miles from the shut-in wells.



## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- The Blackleaf Study Area is located along the Rocky Mountain Front 75 miles northwest of Great Falls.
- It contains about 40,327 federal and 18,176 state and private mineral acres.
- The Blackleaf area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, including several threatened and endangered species; contains outstanding scenic qualities; provides a variety of recreational opportunities; is important to the tourist industry; is near the Bob Marshall Wilderness; contains an ONA; includes part of the Teton Roadless Area on the Lewis and Clark National Forest; and contains a significant amount of natural gas reserves.
- The area has shut-in gas wells, but analysis indicates that substantial reserves remain and there is a high potential for more gas discoveries and production.
- From 1982 through 1991, total production from four wells in the Blackleaf area was 7 billion cubic feet of natural gas and 33,400 barrels of oil.



## **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

- An appropriate NEPA document is needed to update the cumulative impacts assessed in the 1992 EIS, evaluate the current drilling proposals, and consider new information on cultural resources and sensitive/threatened and endangered species.
- This will require coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.
- Funding is needed to start the new NEPA document.

## **WHO ELSE IS CONCERNED?**

- National and local environmental groups (i.e., Montana Wilderness Association) are strongly opposed to any development on the Rocky Mountain Front.
- The Blackfeet and Salish-Kootenai tribes have asked to be notified of any developments in the area.
- Industry interest in the area is increasing.
- The Montana Congressional delegation is divided on development of the area.
- The Lewis and Clark National Forest issued a decision August 28, 1997, not to allow any future oil and gas leasing on the Rocky Mountain Front; however, an APD has been submitted on an existing Lewis and Clark Forest lease.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Contact Don Judice, (406) 791-7700; or Chun Wong, (406) 896-5099.

