



Samson Lone Star LLC Proposal to Drill and Produce the Mil-Vid Properties A-3 #1 Well from a Surface Location Outside Big Thicket National Preserve Using a Previously Existing Access Road through the Preserve, Orange County, Texas

Project Scoping for Environmental Analysis

Dear Friend of Big Thicket National Preserve,

Samson Lone Star LLC (Samson) proposes to directionally drill and produce privately held minerals at a surface location outside Big Thicket National Preserve (Preserve), with a bottom hole target beneath the Preserve. The Mil-Vid Properties A-3 #1 well would be located on a well pad site on private surface approximately 50 feet south of the Beaumont Unit in Orange County, with a bottom hole location approximately 14,600 feet beneath the unit.

In order to access the drilling location, Samson proposes to cross 1,100 feet of preexisting dirt road within the Preserve. Samson also proposes to install and maintain flowlines immediately adjacent to the existing access road in the event that the well enters production.

The proposed operation falls under two separate regulations found at 36 CFR 9B. The use of the access road and placement and maintenance of flowlines will be addressed with a Plan of Operations. The proposal to directionally drill and produce of private minerals from private surface outside the Preserve boundary will be analyzed for its qualification for an exemption under NPS regulation 36 CFR 9.32e. An exemption may be issued if the NPS determines that the operations pose "no significant threat of damage to park resources..." The scope of the 9.32e analysis is limited to the scope of the regulations which include only those activities occurring within the Preserve boundary.

The NPS is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide the decision-making framework that 1) explores a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives, 2) evaluates potential impacts to park resources and values, and 3) identifies mitigation measures to minimize those impacts.

At this time, the Preserve is announcing a 30-day public scoping period to solicit public comments on this proposal prior to completing the EA. As the Superintendent of Big Thicket National Preserve, I invite you to participate in this scoping process.

Sincerely,

Douglas S. Neighbor

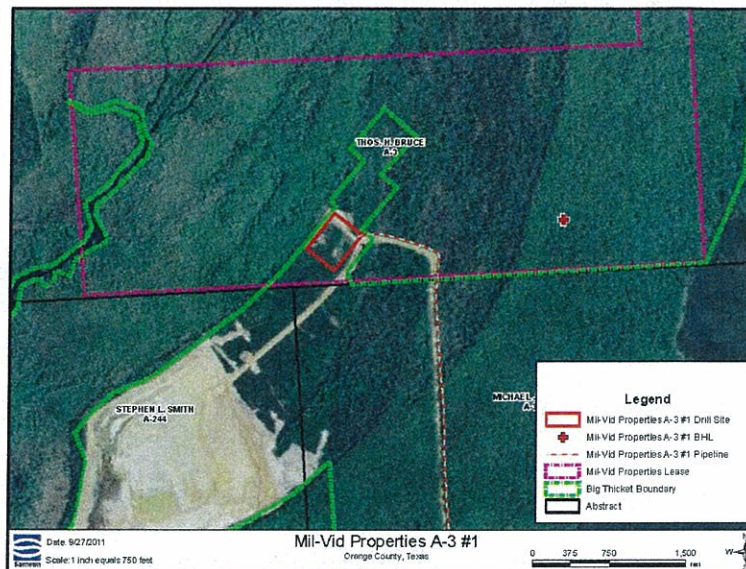


Figure 1: Map of the proposed well pad location (red square), the proposed access road (red dotted line), and the proposed bottomhole location (red dot) in relation to the Beaumont Unit of Big Thicket National Preserve (green dotted boundary). The Mil-Vid lease is pictured in magenta.

Alternatives Considered

Alternative 1: No Action- This alternative represents the baseline or benchmark from which to compare the impacts of the action alternatives. In this case, "No-Action" means the proposed project would not take place;

Alternative 2: Proposed Action- Samson would construct a surface location on private property outside the Preserve and drill a well beneath the Preserve to produce the privately held (reserve) mineral rights held by Samson, while using a preexisting dirt road in the Preserve for access and flowlines ;

Alternative 3: Acquire the Mineral Estate- Acquire the mineral rights that are part of the proposal;

Alternative 4: Drill and Produce without Access through the Preserve- Samson would directionally drill from private surface with private access;

Alternative 5: Drill and Produce the from Within the Preserve- Samson would develop a surface location within Preserve boundaries.

Overview of the Process

Project Milestones Include:

- **Public Scoping Period (Closes October 28th)***
- Preparation of environmental assessment
- Public review of environmental assessment*
- Analysis of public comment
- Preparation of decision document
- Announcement of decision on proposal

Bold indicates where we are now; * indicates opportunities for public comment

Resources and Concerns

Initial internal project scoping identified the following resources and other concerns for consideration in the environmental assessment (EA).

- Air Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Water Resources
- Floodplains/Wetlands
- Vegetation
- Fish and Wildlife
- Species of Management Concern
- Cultural Resources
- Environmental Justice
- Visitor Use
- Natural Soundscapes
- Adjacent Landowners
- Socioeconomics

Ideas to Consider

Following are a few ideas to keep in mind as you develop your comments on this proposal:

1. Do you have any ideas to share about the alternatives and resources/concerns listed in the scoping brochure, or are there any other issues/concerns about the project that you think we should consider?
2. Are there any other alternatives that you think should be considered?
3. Do you have other comments and suggestions for us to consider in the EA?

How Do I Comment on This Project?

Please submit your comments online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bith>

Please provide all comments by October 28th. If you wish to be added to or removed from the Preserve's mailing list for future correspondence, please indicate that in your response.

If you are unable to submit comments electronically through this website, then you may also submit written comments to:

**Superintendent
Big Thicket National Preserve
Attn: Stephanie Burgess
6044 FM 420
Kountze, TX 77625**

You may also hand-deliver written comments to the visitor center at Big Thicket National Preserve.