Big Thicket National Preserve
Texas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Proposal to Drill and Produce the Fort Apache Energy, Inc. Baptist Foundation #1 and Nordin #1 Wells from Surface Locations Outside Big Thicket National Preserve Tyler County, Texas

Project Scoping for Environmental Analysis

May 21, 2012

Dear Friend of Big Thicket National Preserve,

The National Park Service (NPS) is reviewing a proposal from Fort Apache Energy, Inc. (Fort Apache) to directionally drill and produce privately held minerals at two surface locations outside Big Thicket National Preserve (Preserve) with bottomhole targets beneath the Preserve. The Baptist Foundation #1 well would be located on a well pad sited on private surface with a well bore approximately 200 feet south of the Turkey Creek Unit, and the Nordin #1 well would be located on a well pad sited on private surface with a well bore approximately 135 feet east of the Turkey Creek Unit in Tyler County. Both bottomholes locations would be approximately 10,000 feet beneath the unit. All infrastructure and access for the wells would be located entirely on private property with no use of Preserve surface.

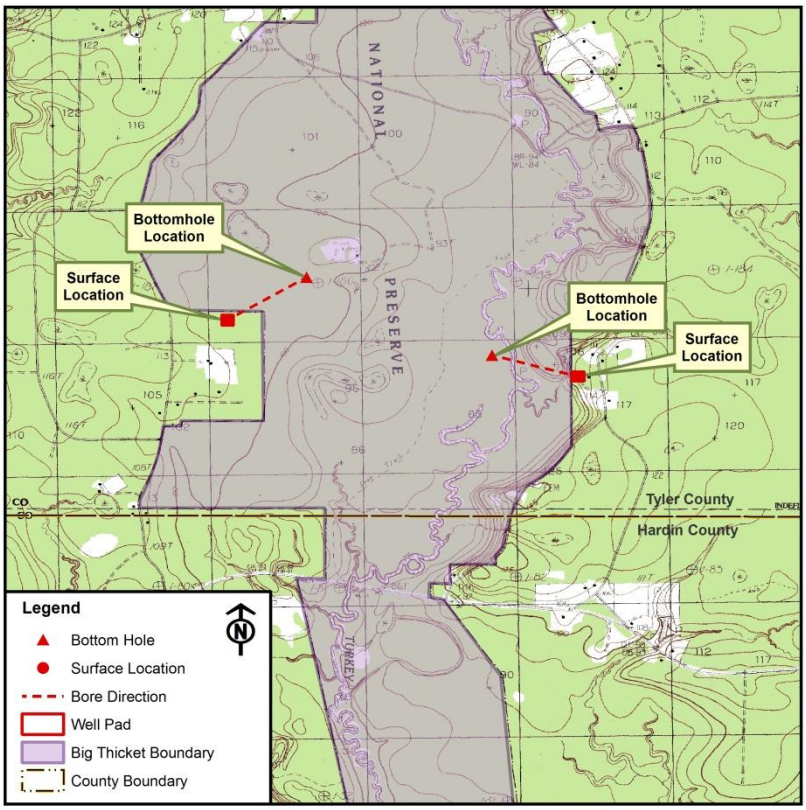
The purpose of the analysis is twofold: 1) carry out compliance responsibilities under various statutes including the National Environmental Policy Act, and 2.) determine whether the directional wells qualify for an exemption under NPS regulation 36 CFR 9.32(e). An exemption may be issued if the NPS determines that the operations pose "no significant threat of damage to park resources…" The scope of the latter inquiry is limited to the scope of the regulations which include only those activities occurring within the BTNP 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.

The NPS encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process during which the public has two opportunities to comment on this project; once during initial project scoping and again following release of the EA. We are currently in the scoping phase of this project, and as Superintendent I invite you to voice your ideas, comments, or concerns about this effort. Your comments will be considered during preparation of the EA.

Sincerely,

Douglas S. Neighbor
Superintendent



BIO-WEST, Inc.

VICINITY MAP
HICKSBAUGH 7.5' USGS QUADRANGLE

David Graves, April 29, 2013

Overview of the Process

Project Milestones Include:

- **Public Scoping Period (Closes June 21, 2012)***
- 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

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 – Drill and Produce the Wells as Proposed* Fort Apache would construct surface locations on private property outside the Preserve and drill lateral wells beneath the Preserve to produce the privately held (reserve) mineral rights held by Fort Apache;

Alternative 3 – *Acquire the Mineral Estate* The NPS would acquire the mineral rights which are part of the proposal;

Alternative 4 – *Drill and Produce the Reserve Minerals from Surface Locations Within the Turkey Creek Unit* Fort Apache would develop two new surface locations within the Preserve to drill and produce these minerals.

Resources and Concerns

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

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

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 <u>June 21st</u>. 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.