



Proposal to drill and produce three wells from two surface locations outside of the Lower Neches River Corridor Unit and Beaumont Unit and install a flowline beneath the Lower Neches River Corridor Unit in Hardin, Jasper, and Orange counties, Texas

Project Scoping for Environmental Analysis

May 24, 2013

Dear Friend of Big Thicket National Preserve,

The National Park Service (NPS) is reviewing a proposal by Century Exploration Houston, LLC (Century) to directionally drill and produce privately held minerals at two surface locations outside of Big Thicket National Preserve (Preserve), each having bottomhole targets beneath the Preserve. Century also proposes to install a flowline via horizontal directional drill beneath the Lower Neches River Corridor Unit in Hardin and Jasper counties, Texas to transport the extracted minerals. The DC Montgomery #1 well would be directionally drilled from an existing well pad located approximately 1,406 feet west (at the nearest point) of the Lower Neches River Corridor Unit in Hardin County, Texas, with the bottomhole location being approximately 8,800 feet beneath the unit. The Phineas #3 and Wile E. Coyote wells would be directionally drilled from an existing well pad located approximately 1,301 feet east of the Beaumont Unit in Orange County, Texas, with both bottomholes approximately 11,100 feet below the unit.

The proposed operation falls under two separate regulations found at 36 CFR 9B. Century must submit a Plan of Operations to the NPS for the installation of the flowline. Century must submit an application for exemption under NPS regulation 36 CFR 9.32e for the proposal to directionally drill and produce privately held minerals at two surface locations outside the Preserve. 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). The purpose of an EA is to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project on the natural environment, consider reasonable alternatives to meet the project objectives, and identify appropriate mitigation measures to minimize potential impacts.

As the Superintendent of Big Thicket National Preserve, I invite you to participate in this scoping process.

Sincerely,

Douglas S. Neighbor
Superintendent

***Please see page 3 and 4 for location maps of each of the proposed project components.**

Overview of the Process

Project Milestones Include:

- **Public Scoping Period (Closes June 24th)***
- 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

Following is the preliminary range of alternatives to be evaluated in the EA:

Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative This alternative represents the baseline for comparison of the proposed action and other alternatives. In this case, "No Action" means the proposed project would not take place;

Alternative 2: Proposed Action Century would directionally drill three wells from two existing surface locations to produce privately held mineral rights beneath the Preserve and install the flowline beneath the Lower Neches River Corridor Unit.

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 Beaumont Unit. Century would develop two new surface locations within the BTNP to drill and produce these minerals and install a flowline beneath the Lower Neches River Corridor Unit.

Alternative 5: Alternative Flowline Locations NPS may consider alternative flowline locations based on input from Century.

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 Lands |
| ♦Fish and Wildlife | ♦Socioeconomics |
| ♦Park Operations | ♦Lightscapes |
| ♦Catastrophic Incidences | ♦Visitor Use |
| ♦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 June 24th. 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:

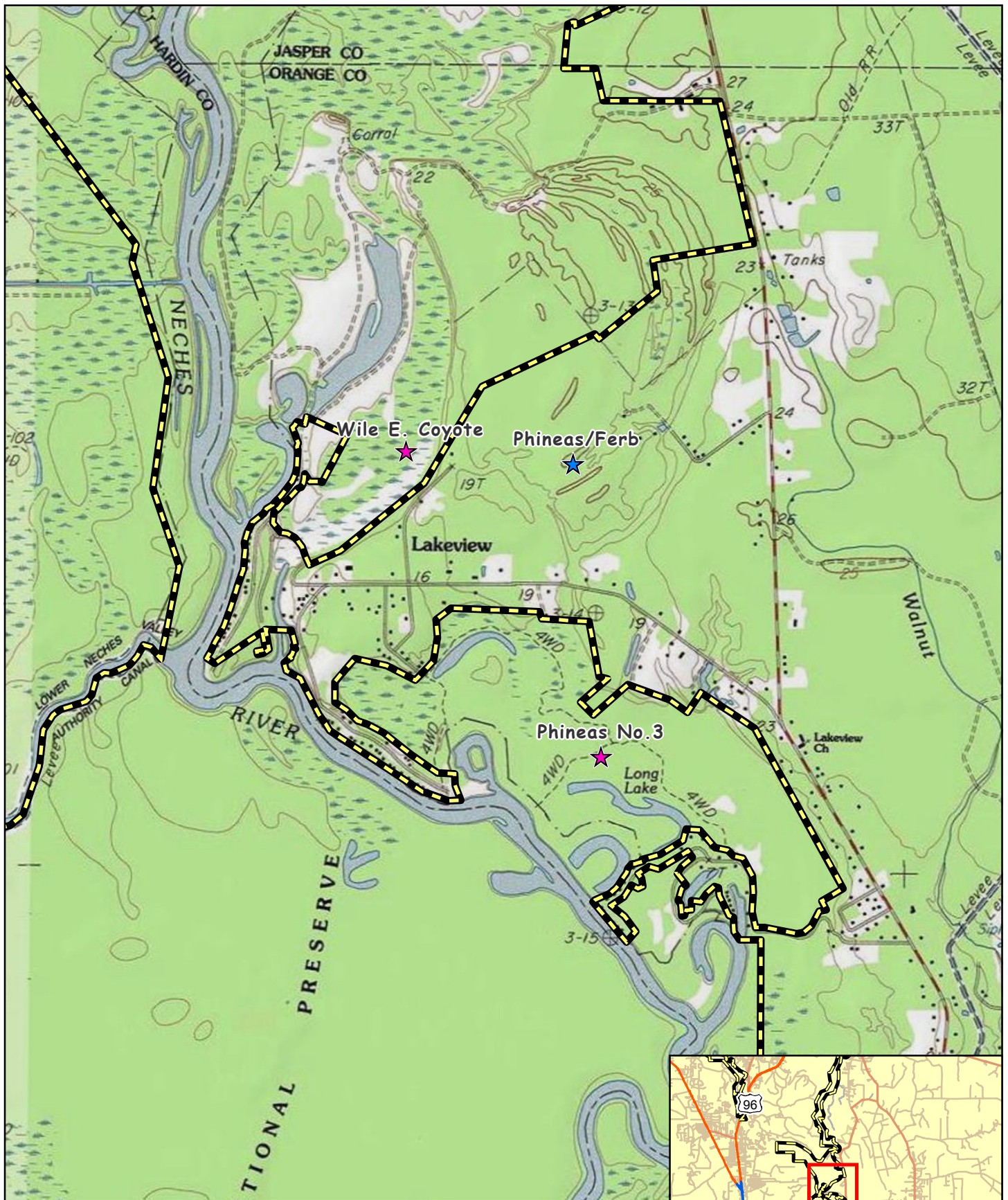
**Superintendent
Big Thicket National Preserve
Attn: Stephanie Burgess
6044 FM 420
Kountze, TX 77625**

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




Big Thicket National Preserve
Texas

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



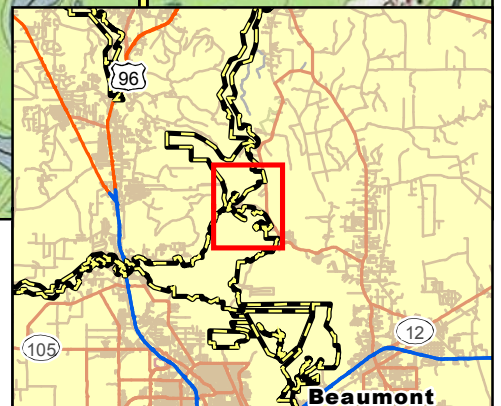


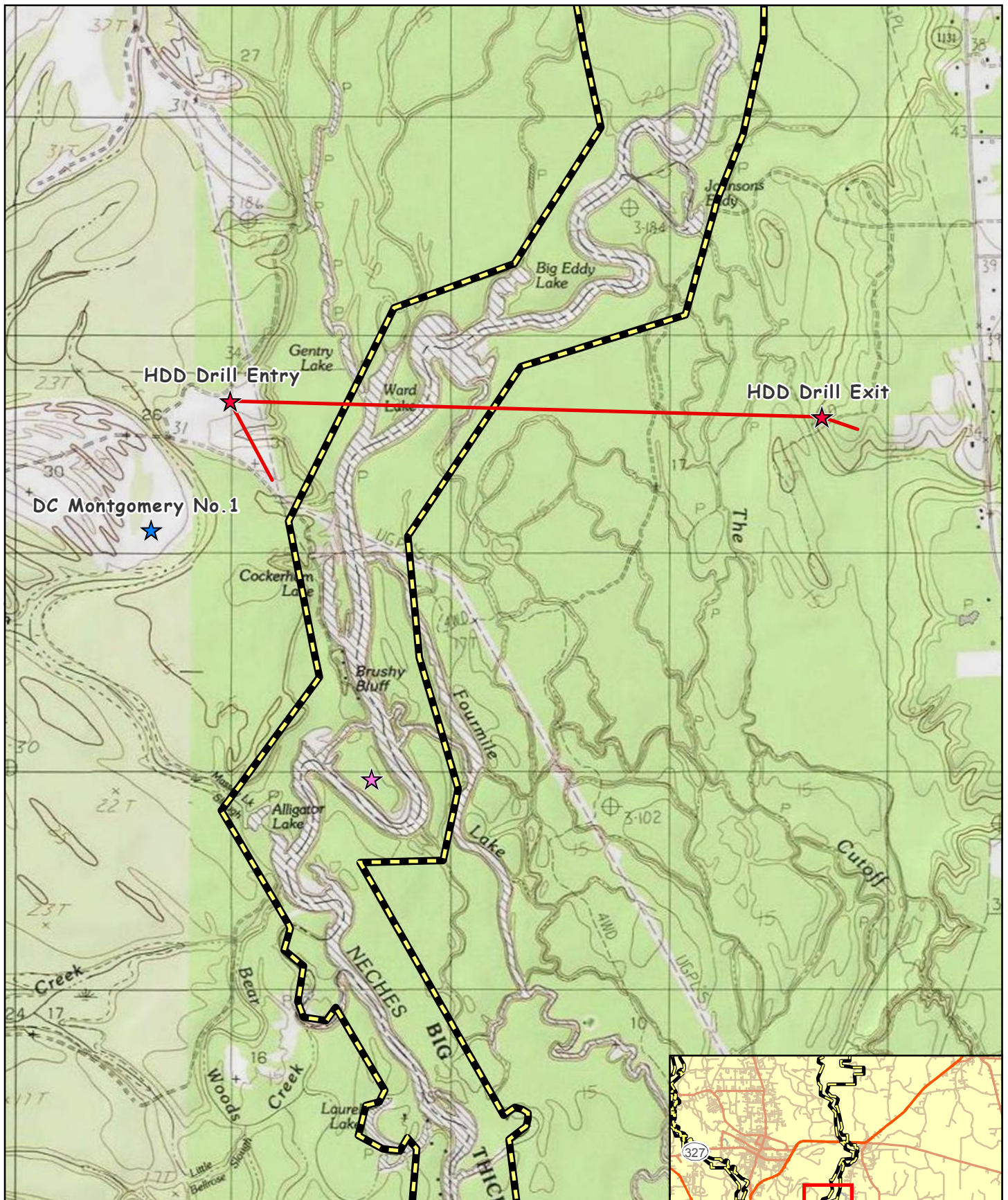
Legend

-  Surface Location
-  Bottomhole
-  Big Thicket National Preserve



0 1,000 2,000
Feet





Legend

- ★ HDD Drill Entry/Exit
- ★ Surface Location
- ★ Bottomhole
- Flowline
- Big Thicket National Preserve



0 1,000 2,000 Feet

