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Montana DEQ to issue general discharge permit for CBM wells

THE MONTANA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) announced that it intends to issue a general discharge permit authorizing discharges of coalbed methane produced water to impoundments for the specific beneficial use of livestock or wildlife watering.

The permit would be issued under the authority of 75-5-402, MCA, and ARM 17.30.1301 et seq. (Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit) and Sections 402 and 303 of the Federal Clean Water Act. The Water Protection Bureau has prepared a draft permit and fact sheet for the issuance of this permit. Copies of the draft permit and fact sheet are available upon request from the Water Protection Bureau in Helena or on the DEQ's Website, www.deq.state.mt.us.

Applicants for the permit will be required to apply to the DEQ for written authorization to discharge. Before an authorization can be issued, the applicant shall document that the adjacent

landowner will use the discharged water for livestock or wildlife watering purposes.

The permit will authorize

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Bonneville recovers oil at remote central Montana wildcat

DENVER-BASED BONNEVILLE Fuels Corp has completed a wildcat on the Cat Creek Anticline nine miles west-northwest of Winnett, Montana, initially pumping seven bbls of oil and 20 bbls of water per day.

The 6-27-15-25 McDonald Creek, ne sw 27-15n-25e, western Petroleum County, was tested in Swift through perfora-

tions at 970-980 ft. It was drilled and cased by Elenburg Exploration's Rig #11 to a total depth of 1924 ft. Drillstem tests of First Cat Creek/Kootenai between 285 and 457 ft and Amsden/Tyler between 1264 and 1314 ft recovered no shows of oil or gas.

Log tops, measured from a kelly bushing elevation of 3148

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discharges only to impoundments specially constructed to receive produced water for a specified beneficial use; discharges to state surface waters will not be authorized. The DEQ has determined that the effluent limitations and other requirements of the Coal Bed Methane Produced Water General Discharge Permit will ensure compliance with the Montana Surface Water Quality Standards and the intended beneficial use of wildlife or livestock watering. It's to expire five years after the date of issuance.

In its public notice, the DEQ noted that a U.S. District Judge on September 21, 2000, issued an order stating that until all necessary total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act are established for a particular water quality limited segment (WQLS), the state is not to issue any new permits or increase permitted discharges under the Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (MPDES) program. The order was issued in the lawsuit *Friends of the Wild Swan v. U.S. EPA, et al.*, CV 97-35-M-DWM, District of Montana, Missoula Division. The DEQ said it finds that the issuance of this proposed

general permit does not conflict with the order because it does not allow a discharge of coalbed methane produced water.

The general permit requires effluent self-monitoring for total dissolved solids and oil and grease and in-stream (impoundment) self-monitoring for total dissolved solids, sodium, calcium, magnesium, sodium adsorption ratio (SAR), specific electrical conductivity (EC), oil and grease, iron, barium, chloride and sulfate.

The department has prepared a draft environmental impact statement (EIS), which is available for public review. Copies of the draft EIS may be obtained from the department by contacting Greg Hallsten, Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901, or ghallsten@state.mt.us.

These documents are also available on the department's Website, www.deq.state.mt.us.

Public hearings will be held on the draft wastewater discharge permit, the draft EIS and the department's tentative determination at the following locations:

- Broadus, Monday, April 1, Community Center, 7:00-9:00 pm;

- Billings, Tuesday, April 2, MSU Library Building, Room 148, 7:00-9:00 pm;

- Crow Agency, Wednesday, April 3, Multi-Purpose Building, 11:00 am-1:00 pm;

- Lame Deer, Wednesday, April 3, Blessed Sacrament Church, 7:00-9:00 pm;

- Helena, Thursday, April 4, Thursday, DEQ Director's Conference Room #111, Metcalf Building, 7:00-9:00 pm.

If no objections are received within the specified comment period, the DEQ will issue final determinations within 60 days of the date of the notice or as soon as possible thereafter.

Public comments are invited anytime prior to close of business May 15, 2002. Comments may be directed to the DEQ Permitting & Compliance Division, Water Protection Bureau, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620. All comments received or postmarked prior to close of business on May 15, 2002, will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits.

To comment electronically, e-mail Dianne McKittrick at dmckittrick@state.mt.us.

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