

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION**

**APPLICATIONS OF MEWBOURNE OIL COMPANY
FOR COMPULSORY POOLING,
LEA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

Case No. 23365

Case No. 23366

**APPLICATION OF EARTHSTONE OPERATING, LLC,
FOR A HORIZONTAL SPACING UNIT AND
COMPULSORY POOLING, LEA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

Case No. 23475

Case No. 23477

EARTHSTONE OPERATING, LLC'S AMENDED PRE-HEARING STATEMENT¹

Earthstone Operating, LLC, OGRID No. 331165 ("Earthstone"), provides this consolidated Pre-Hearing Statement in the above referenced cases as required by the Division's Rules.

APPEARANCES

APPLICANT

Earthstone Operating, LLC

ATTORNEYS

Matthew M. Beck
Peifer, Hanson, Mullins & Baker,
P.A.
P.O. Box 25245
Albuquerque, NM 87125-5245
(505) 247-4800
mbeck@peiferlaw.com

¹ This Amended Pre-hearing Statement is virtually identical to the pre-hearing statement filed yesterday, September 15, 2023. There are only the two following typographical revisions: (1) the typo in the spelling of Amanda Redfearn's name is corrected on page 6; and (2) the final undisputed material fact on page 5 corrects the typo that Mewbourne has no interest in the E/2 of Section 18.

OPPONENT

Mewbourne Oil Company

ATTORNEYS

James Bruce
P.O. Box 1056
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 982-2043
jamesbruc@aol.com

INTERESTED PARTIES

MRC Permian Company &
Devon Energy Production Company, L.P.

Michael H. Feldewert
Adam G. Rankin
Julia Broggi
Kaitlyn A. Luck
Holland & Hart, LLP
P.O. Box 2208
Santa Fe, NM 87504
mfeldewert@hollandhart.com
agrarkin@hollandhart.com
jbroggi@hollandhart.com
kaluck@hollandhart.com

Northern Oil and Gas, Inc.

Blake C. Jones
Steptoe & Johnson PLLC
1780 Hughes Landing Blvd., Suite
750
The Woodlands, TX 77380
Blake.jones@steptoe-johnson.com

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

These cases concern competing proposals for compulsory pooling to develop the Bone Spring formation in the E/2 E/2 of Sections 7 and 18, and the W/2 E/2 of Sections 7 and 18, all in Township 21 South, Range 35 East, NMPM, Lea County, New Mexico. Earthstone has applied for standard 320.00-acre, more or less, horizontal spacing and proration units (“HSUs”).

Earthstone requests that the Division grant its applications and deny Mewbourne’s, because Earthstone’s development plan is superior under the factors that the Division uses to determine which competing applications to grant. *See, e.g.*, Order No. R-21834.

Earthstone owns working interests in the E/2 E/2 of Sections 7 and 18 and the W/2 E/2 of Sections 7 and 18. Mewbourne, on the other hand, owns no working interest in the E/2 E/2 of Section 18 or the W/2 E/2 of Section 18. In 2020, when Mewbourne applied to the OCD to increase the North Wilson Deep Unit ("State EU"), Mewbourne explicitly agreed to exclude Section 18, which exclusion was based on an agreement with Earthstone's predecessor-in-interest, Chisholm Energy, LLC ("Chisholm") on which agreement Mewbourne now improperly seeks to go back on. *Cf.* Dec. 3, 2020 Tr. at 5:20-23. Earthstone's development plan includes four wells in these two applications, targeting both the 1st and 2nd Bone Spring, whereas Mewbourne plans for two wells only, and targeting the 2nd Bone Spring formation only.

Earthstone also has been granted a compulsory pooling order by the Division for the adjacent W/2 of Sections 7 and 18, which exhibits that the wells that Earthstone proposes here are part of Earthstone's larger development plan, which is already in progress. Earthstone, therefore, has superior ability to timely locate well sites and operate on the surface for these proposed wells.

Thus, as will be established at the Hearing, Earthstone has the better development plans and is better situated for development of the HSUs.

As will be further established at the hearing, Mewbourne's proposed development of the HSUs is inferior for a number of reasons. Mewbourne owns no working interest in the E/2 E/2 of Section 18 or the W/2 E/2 of Section 18. Mewbourne agreed with Earthstone's predecessor-in-interest, Chisholm, not to include these units in the expansion it applied for in August of 2020 in Case No. 21418. *Cf.* Dec. 3, 2020 Tr. at 5:20-23. Whereas this Division takes into consideration the good-faith negotiations between the parties, Mewbourne is backtracking on its agreement less than three years after making it is not evidence of good faith negotiating. Thus, awarding the

compulsory pooling order to Mewbourne solely because it is the State EU operator, given its lack of any interest in the E/2 E/2 of Section 18 or the W/2 E/2 of Section 18 and its previous agreement not to apply to operate this spacing unit, sets dangerous precedent and provides a windfall to Mewbourne.

Finally, Mewbourne has asserted in these cases that the location of a portion of the lands within the North Wilson Deep Unit Area, for which Mewbourne previously received approval from the State Land Office is reason to grant Mewbourne's proposal. As was evidenced in Earthstone's response, and as the Division knows when it considered and denied Mewbourne's motion to dismiss Earthstone's applications, the State Land Office has agreed not to take a position on either of these applications until after the Division makes its decision here at this hearing, at which time it will grant the operator's request to approve the drilling. Thus, the previous approval of the State Land Office for Mewbourne's previous wells is inapposite to the Division's consideration whose development plan is superior here.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WELLS

In Case No. 23475, *Application of Earthstone Operating, LLC, for a Horizontal Spacing Unit and Compulsory Pooling, Lea County, New Mexico*, Earthstone proposes to drill the following two wells in the HSU:

1. **Outland 18-7 State Com 114H Well**, to be horizontally drilled from a surface location in the SW/4 SE/4 (Unit O) of Section 18 to a bottom hole location in the NE/4 NE/4 (Unit A) of Section 7.
2. **Outland 18-7 State Com 214H Well**, to be horizontally drilled from a surface location in the SW/4 SE/4 (Unit O) of Section 18 to a bottom hole location in the NE/4 NE/4 (Unit A) of Section 7.

In Case No. 23477, *Application of Earthstone Operating, LLC, for a Horizontal Spacing Unit and Compulsory Pooling, Lea County, New Mexico*, Earthstone proposes to drill the following two wells in the HSU:

1. **Outland 18-7 State Com 113H Well**, to be horizontally drilled from a surface location in the SW/4 SE/4 (Unit O) of Section 18 to a bottom hole location in the NW/4 NE/4 (Unit B) of Section 7.
2. **Outland 18-7 State Com 223H Well**, to be horizontally drilled from a surface location in the SW/4 SE/4 (Unit O) of Section 18 to a bottom hole location in the NW/4 NE/4 (Unit B) of Section 7.

In Case Nos. 23365, *Application of Mewbourne Oil Company for Compulsory Pooling, Lea County, New Mexico*, Mewbourne proposes to drill the following well: **North Wilson Deep Unit Well No. 8H**, from a first take point in the SW/4 SE/4 of Section 18 to a last take point in the NW/4 NE/4 of Section 7. In Case No. 23366, *Application of Mewbourne Oil Company for Compulsory Pooling, Lea County, New Mexico*, Mewbourne proposes to drill the following well: **North Wilson Deep Unit Well No. 9H**, from a first take point in the SE/4 SE/4 of Section 18 to a last take point in the NE/4 NE/4 of Section 7.

MATERIAL FACTS

Proposed Undisputed Facts:

- The parties propose horizontal wells to be drilled in the same HSU.
- The parties agree that a 200% risk charge is appropriate in these cases.
- The parties agree that Mewbourne is the designated operator for units contained wholly within the State EU.
- The parties agree that Mewbourne has no interest in the E/2 of Section 18.

Proposed Disputed Facts:

- The parties dispute the number of wells necessary for maximum recovery of hydrocarbons in the proposed HSU.
- The parties dispute their respective percentages of working interest in the proposed spacing unit.
- The parties dispute, given the factor that the Division considers in its prior orders, which proposal is the superior proposal, as more specifically stated in their respective pre-hearing statements and pre-filed written testimony.

PROPOSED EVIDENCE**Applicant:**

WITNESSES	EST. TIME	EXHIBITS
Landman Amanda Redfearn	Direct Written Testimony	4-8
Geologist Jason Asmus	Direct Written Testimony	5-12
Petroleum Engineer Nicholas Goree	Direct Written Testimony	4-8

Opposing Party:

WITNESSES	EST. TIME	EXHIBITS
TBD	TBD	TBD

Interested Party(ies):

WITNESSES	EST. TIME	EXHIBITS
TBD	TBD	TBD

Respectfully submitted,

PEIFER, HANSON, MULLINS & BAKER, P.A.

By: /s/ Matthew M. Beck

Matthew M. Beck

P.O. Box 25245

Albuquerque, NM 87125-5245

Tel: (505) 247-4800

Fax: (505) 243-6458

Email: mbeck@peiferlaw.com

Attorneys for Earthstone Operating, LLC

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was filed with the New Mexico Oil Conservation Division and was served on counsel of record via electronic mail on September 15, 2023:

James Bruce
P.O. Box 1056
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 982-2043
jamesbruc@aol.com

Attorneys for Mewbourne Oil Company

Blake C. Jones
Steptoe & Johnson PLLC
1780 Hughes Landing Blvd., Suite 750
The Woodlands, TX 77380
(281) 203-5730
Blake.jones@steptoe-johnson.com

Attorneys for Northern Oil and Gas, Inc.

Michael H. Feldewert
Adam G. Rankin
Julia Broggi
Kaitlyn A. Luck
Holland & Hart, LLP
P.O. Box 2208
Santa Fe, NM 87504-2208
(505) 988-4421
Mfeldewert@hollandhart.com
agrarkin@hollandhart.com
jbroggi@hollandhart.com
kaluck@hollandhart.com

*Attorneys for MRC Permian Company and
Devon Energy Production Company, L.P.*

PEIFER, HANSON, MULLINS & BAKER, P.A.

By: /s/ Matthew M. Beck
Matthew M. Beck

District I
1625 N. French Dr., Hobbs, NM 88240
Phone:(575) 393-6161 Fax:(575) 393-0720
District II
811 S. First St., Artesia, NM 88210
Phone:(575) 748-1283 Fax:(575) 748-9720
District III
1000 Rio Brazos Rd., Aztec, NM 87410
Phone:(505) 334-6178 Fax:(505) 334-6170
District IV
1220 S. St Francis Dr., Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone:(505) 476-3470 Fax:(505) 476-3462

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources
Oil Conservation Division
1220 S. St Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505

QUESTIONS

Action 265782

QUESTIONS

Operator: Earthstone Operating, LLC 1400 Woodloch Forest; Ste 300 The Woodlands, TX 77380	OGRID: 331165
	Action Number: 265782
	Action Type: [HEAR] Prehearing Statement (PREHEARING)

QUESTIONS

Testimony	
Please assist us by provide the following information about your testimony.	
Number of witnesses	Not answered.
Testimony time (in minutes)	Not answered.