

NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION

STATE LAND OFFICE BUILDING

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

CASE NO. 10729

IN THE MATTER OF:

The Application of Meridian Oil, Inc.,
for a High Angle/Horizontal Directional
Drilling Pilot Project, Special
Operating Rules Therefor, a Special
Project Gas Allowable, and a
Nonstandard Spacing and Proration
Unit, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico.

BEFORE:

DAVID R. CATANACH

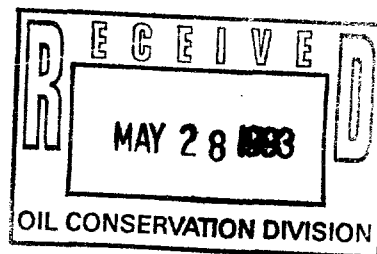
Hearing Examiner

State Land Office Building

May 20, 1993

REPORTED BY:

CARLA DIANE RODRIGUEZ
Certified Court Reporter
for the State of New Mexico

**ORIGINAL**

A P P E A R A N C E S

FOR THE NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION:

ROBERT G. STOVALL, ESQ.

General Counsel
State Land Office Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

FOR THE APPLICANT:

KELLAHIN & KELLAHIN
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BY: **W. THOMAS KELLAHIN, ESQ.**

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1 EXAMINER CATANACH: At this time we'll
2 call Case 10729.

3 MR. STOVALL: Application of Meridian
4 Oil, Inc., for a high angle/horizontal
5 directional drilling pilot project, special
6 operating rules therefor, a special project gas
7 allowable, and a nonstandard spacing and
8 proration unit, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico.

9 EXAMINER CATANACH: Are there
10 appearances in this case?

11 MR. KELLAHIN: Mr. Examiner, I'm Tom
12 Kellahin of the Santa Fe law firm of Kellahin &
13 Kellahin, appearing on behalf of the Applicant,
14 and I have three witnesses to be sworn.

15 EXAMINER CATANACH: Additional
16 appearances?

17 Will the witnesses please stand to be
18 sworn in.

19 [The witnesses were duly sworn.]

20 **ALAN ALEXANDER**

21 Having been first duly sworn upon his oath, was
22 examined and testified as follows:

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY MR. KELLAHIN:

25 Q. Mr. Alexander, for the record, would

1 you please state your name and occupation?

2 A. Yes. My name is Alan Alexander. I am
3 currently employed as a senior land advisor with
4 Meridian Oil, Inc., in their Farmington, New
5 Mexico, office.

6 Q. On prior occasions, have you testified
7 as a petroleum landman and had your
8 qualifications accepted and made a matter of
9 record?

10 A. Yes, I have.

11 Q. Pursuant to your employment by Meridian
12 as a landman, have you studied the land title
13 information surrounding this application?

14 A. Yes, I have.

15 Q. Are you familiar with the Canyon Largo
16 Unit?

17 A. Yes, I am.

18 Q. Are you also familiar with what your
19 company seeks to accomplish with this
20 application?

21 A. Yes, I am.

22 MR. KELLAHIN: We tender Mr. Alexander
23 as an expert petroleum landman.

24 EXAMINER CATANACH: He is so qualified.

25 Q. To orient the Examiner on how you've

1 organized the exhibit book, Mr. Alexander, would
2 you identify for us what's contained behind
3 Exhibit tab No. 1?

4 A. Behind Exhibit tab No. 1 we have a copy
5 of the application whereby we're requesting that
6 the Canyon Largo #388 well, the special operating
7 rules for the directional drilling of this.

8 Attached to that application are
9 Exhibits A and B. Exhibit A is a nine-section
10 land plat, and Exhibit B is a vertical
11 cross-section and a plan view cross-section of
12 the wellbore that we're asking to be drilled
13 horizontally. Exhibit C is an offset operator
14 plat showing the owners and operators offsetting
15 Section 3 of of 25 North, 6 West, which is the
16 proposed location for this well.

17 Q. Let's turn now to the information
18 behind Exhibit tab No. 2, and tell me what you've
19 done to determine who are the offsetting
20 operators that are entitled to notification of
21 this case?

22 A. Behind Exhibit tab No. 2 we are showing
23 the offset owner operator plat, and you'll notice
24 that the offset owners or operators have been
25 tabulated numerically. At the bottom of the page

1 we have also given the names and addresses of
2 those owners and operators.

3 Meridian Oil offsets the property in
4 all directions but the southwest quadrant, where
5 Merrion Oil & Gas Corporation owns an interest
6 along with Robert Bayless in that particular
7 tract.

8 Q. If you'll turn now to the last display,
9 which is Exhibit 8, a certificate of mailing of
10 notification to Bayless and to Merrion Oil & Gas
11 Corporation, did you cause that notification to
12 be sent?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Have you received any objection from
15 either Merrion Oil & Gas Corporation, or Robert
16 Bayless, to the application?

17 A. We have not.

18 Q. Let me have you turn now to the display
19 behind Exhibit No. 3, and let's discuss what
20 you're proposing to accomplish. First of all,
21 when you look at Section 3, is this a standard
22 size 640-acre section?

23 A. No, sir. As you'll notice, there are
24 lots across the north half of the section and
25 they're a little larger than the normal 40-acre

1 quarter-quarter tract, so the section is slightly
2 larger than 640 acres.

3 Q. Where are we with Section 3 in relation
4 to the Canyon Largo Unit itself?

5 A. The Canyon Largo Unit, if you'll look
6 on the plat, you'll see a heavier line, a green
7 line. Just to the north of Section 3, that is
8 the unit boundary for the Canyon Largo Unit.
9 You'll notice over in Section 4 where we've
10 listed Merrion and Bayless as owners, that upside
11 down L-shaped tract in 4 and part of Section 9,
12 that acreage is not committed to the Canyon Largo
13 Unit. That's the reason we noticed those
14 particular individuals.

15 Q. What do you propose to do within
16 Section 3 for this project?

17 A. We would like to drill the Canyon Largo
18 #388 well horizontally, starting in the southwest
19 quarter and proceeding on a northeast lateral.
20 It crosses over into the eastern part, the
21 eastern half of Section 3, and ends in the
22 southeast quarter of that section.

23 Q. In what pool are you drilling this
24 well?

25 A. The pool that we believe this well

1 properly belongs in would be the Blanco Mesaverde
2 pool.

3 Q. What is the spacing requirement for
4 wells drilled in that pool?

5 A. It is 320 acres.

6 Q. Do you propose to dedicate the entire
7 section, then, as a nonstandard gas proration
8 spacing unit for this pool?

9 A. That is correct.

10 Q. What do the pool rules require for a
11 well location set back from the boundaries of the
12 spacing unit?

13 A. They require 790-feet setbacks from the
14 outer boundaries of the spacing unit.

15 Q. When we look at Exhibit No. 3, identify
16 for us the other types of wells that have been
17 drilled in this section.

18 A. I do have a legend attached to the map
19 at the bottom of the map. The gas well symbols
20 are Pictured Cliffs wells. The gas well symbol
21 with a half-circle on the top are Chacra
22 formation wells. The gas well symbol for the
23 Mesaverde is a full circle around the gas well,
24 and the well symbol for a Dakota formation is a
25 rectangle around the gas well symbol.

1 Q. Are there existing 320 gas spacing
2 units in this section and, if so, what is their
3 orientation?

4 A. There are the two Dakota wells that are
5 located in this section, one in the northeast
6 quarter and one in the southwest quarter.
7 They're currently dedicated on 320 acres, and
8 they consist of the east half of the section and
9 the west half of the section.

10 Q. Are there any requirements or
11 limitations on the Canyon Largo unit as to the
12 orientation of the spacing unit in Section 3 for
13 production from the Blanco Mesaverde pool?

14 A. Yes, sir. All of the formations, the
15 Canyon Largo Unit requires us to orient all of
16 the drill blocks on an east half and west half
17 basis.

18 Q. What is Meridian's request for a gas
19 allowable for the nonstandard proration unit, if
20 you're successful in obtaining production out of
21 this pool.

22 A. We're requesting two times the
23 allowable that we would normally get for a
24 verticle well drilled in the Blanco Mesaverde gas
25 pool.

1 Q. Blanco Mesaverde gas pool is one of the
2 prorated gas pools in Northwestern New Mexico?

3 A. Yes, sir, that's correct.

4 Q. And it has a two-part formula, one in
5 which there is a component based upon the
6 deliverability of the well and another factor
7 based upon acreage?

8 A. That is correct.

9 Q. How would you recommend the Examiner
10 make the necessary adjustment to provide an
11 appropriate allowable for the nonstandard
12 proration unit?

13 A. We are requesting the deliverability,
14 of course, to be factored in of this well, and
15 then two times the acreage dedication.

16 Q. Okay. Let me have you turn now to the
17 topographic map that's shown behind Exhibit tab
18 No. 7. In attempting to find the starting point
19 of the surface location for the horizontal well,
20 were there any topographic or surface limitations
21 or restrictions in the section?

22 A. Yes, sir, there is. If you'll look at
23 the topographic plat behind Exhibit tab #7,
24 you'll notice there's a canyon located in the
25 western half of the southwest quarter of this

1 section; that is Canyon Largo. It's a very steep
2 and deep canyon, and we did not want to locate
3 too close to the rim of that canyon.

4 There are considerable archaeological
5 findings and sites right on the rim of that
6 canyon, so, we have moved back away from that
7 canyon rim just far enough but, like I said, we
8 did not want to locate too close to that rim.

9 Q. When you look at the ownership within
10 Section 3 and those parties entitled to share in
11 production from this well, is that ownership
12 common?

13 A. Yes, it is. It consists of one federal
14 lease.

15 Q. In addition, it is dedicated to the
16 Canyon Largo Unit?

17 A. That is correct.

18 MR. KELLAHIN: That concludes my
19 examination of Mr. Alexander. We move the
20 introduction of Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8.

21 EXAMINER CATANACH: Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 7
22 and 8 will be admitted as evidence.

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY EXAMINER CATANACH:

25 Q. Mr. Alexander, what is the ownership

1 within Section 3?

2 A. Meridian owns 100 percent of the
3 working interest, and the net revenue interest is
4 82 percent. There's a two-and-a-half-percent
5 override along with the 12-and-a-half percent
6 federal royalty.

7 EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. STOVALL:

9 Q. Is the ownership in the Canyon Largo a
10 participation on a drill block basis?

11 A. Initially that's correct, and
12 subsequently we form participating areas, if the
13 well is commercial.

14 Q. Are there any participating areas in
15 the Mesaverde in this area?

16 A. Yes, there is. In the south half of
17 the unit, there is a single drill block that
18 consists of 320 acres, and that is the only
19 participating area for Mesaverde that's
20 established today. It's removed by some, oh,
21 eight or 10 miles.

22 Q. If this well were successful, would you
23 anticipate expanding the participating area or
24 just leaving it as the section?

25 A. Absent a finding that this formation is

1 not in communication, it is not the same
2 formation that's in the present participating
3 area, we would expand the present participating
4 area to include this drill block.

5 Since the other well that's located
6 down in the south part of the unit produces
7 mainly from--it's classified as a Devil's
8 Fork-Mesaverde completion, we may investigate
9 that further, depending on what we find in the
10 results of this well, and determine that it
11 should be a separate participating area. But,
12 absent that finding, we will enlarge the existing
13 participating area.

14 FURTHER EXAMINATION

15 BY MR. CATANACH:

16 Q. Does your unit agreement provide for
17 formation of nonstandard units?

18 A. No, sir. The unit agreement doesn't
19 specifically address the formation of nonstandard
20 units.

21 Q. So to form this nonstandard unit,
22 Meridian being the only working interest owner,
23 you didn't have to notify or contact anybody else
24 within the unit?

25 A. Oh, yes, sir, we did. We did contact

1 the other working interest owners. We have to
2 file a plan of development with the Bureau of
3 Land Management, and the State of New Mexico
4 agencies. The working interest owners were all
5 notified and that plan of development was filed
6 and approved.

7 Q. And this was included in that plan of
8 development?

9 A. Yes, sir, that's correct.

10 EXAMINER CATANACH: I believe that's
11 all I have.

12 MR. KELLAHIN: Mr. Examiner, I would
13 call, at this time, Mike Dawson.

14 **MIKE DAWSON**

15 Having been first duly sworn upon his oath, was
16 examined and testified as follows:

17 EXAMINATION

18 BY MR. CARR:

19 Q. Would you please state your name and
20 occupation?

21 A. Mike Dawson. I'm a petroleum geologist
22 for Meridian Oil in Farmington.

23 Q. On prior occasions, Mr. Dawson, have
24 you qualified and testified as a petroleum
25 geologist before the Division?

1 A. Yes, I have.

2 Q. Pursuant to your employment in that
3 capacity, have you made a geologic study of the
4 facts surrounding this application?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 MR. KELLAHIN: We tender Mr. Dawson as
7 an expert petroleum geologist.

8 EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Dawson is so
9 qualified.

10 Q. Before we look at the specifics of the
11 well plan as you propose to initiate it in this
12 section, let me ask you to turn to the isopach
13 map that's shown behind Exhibit tab No. 5. Let's
14 use that as a reference point, and have you give
15 us a general overview of what has been the
16 development activity in the Mesaverde and where
17 Section 3 fits into that development.

18 A. If you look at the isopach map, you'll
19 notice orange gas well symbols. These represent
20 the southwest edge of the Blanco Mesaverde
21 field. You'll notice on the south tier of
22 sections, Section 3 is separated from the edge of
23 the Blanco Mesaverde field by about a mile and a
24 half, so this venture represents an extension of
25 considerable length from the existing

1 production.

2 Our concept here is to test the edge of
3 the Blanco Mesaverde field with horizontal
4 technology. I should add that in this part of
5 the field area, the Cliff House and Menafee are
6 not prospective that the sands are water
7 productive, so we have a rather limited interval
8 for reservoir target.

9 In the specific section for this study,
10 the Point Lookout B sandstone, as I've termed it,
11 is the only sandstone with significant reservoir
12 potential. So, that's outlined in yellow. The
13 heart of the net sandstone trend, I've defined
14 that sandstone here using RT, density porosity,
15 shaleyiness, in an attempt to identify the part of
16 the trend that has some significant matrix
17 permeability.

18 What we find in studying similar trends
19 and, to a limited extent along this trend where
20 there is production farther to the northwest, is
21 that in terms of deposition on the landward side
22 of the trend, we have a little greater matrix
23 permeability. We can see this expressed by
24 greater resistivity and more SP deflection,
25 slightly higher porosity.

1 All these things are the result,
2 ultimately, of a little higher energy part of the
3 depositional environment. You might regard this
4 as a beached sandstone and, to the southwest part
5 of this trend, you're up near the high energy
6 part of the beach system.

7 Q. How far do you have to go south and
8 west before you again establish production out of
9 any of the Mesaverde formations?

10 A. The closest production to the southwest
11 is what Alan Alexander referred to, a well down
12 in the south part of the Canyon Largo Unit.
13 It's about eight miles. That sandstone reservoir
14 is not in the Point Lookout. It's a nonmarine
15 sandstone and it's, in fact, a Menafée fluvial
16 channel sandstone. The map that I've presented
17 to you here is a marine sandstone. It's truly a
18 Point Lookout sandstone, and it's quite a
19 different reservoir type.

20 Q. What do you hope to achieve with a
21 horizontal pilot project that you can't obtain
22 with, say, two vertical wells in this portion of
23 the Mesaverde in Section 3?

24 A. One thing that we hope to do with the
25 horizontal lateral is to maximize our opportunity

1 to produce from natural fracturing, which we feel
2 is ubiquitous in the San Juan Basin. We're
3 confident that we'll encounter at least some
4 natural fracturing along this lateral.

5 We've designed the azimuth of the
6 lateral to maximize the number of those
7 encounters, otherwise, basically, you're drilling
8 in an orthogonal direction to what we know to be
9 the north/northeast trend of that natural
10 fracturing. That natural fracturing is seen on
11 the exhibit on the wall, expressed by a Rose
12 diagram.

13 That Rose diagram is the trend of open,
14 natural fractures. We got that from a well about
15 a mile-and-three-quarters north of the #388
16 location, the Vaughn #13E. It's one of the
17 Mesaverde wells shown in the southeast of Section
18 27 on the isopach map.

19 Not only do we have that data from an
20 FMS log, but we have a regional map that we're
21 trying to develop of open, natural fracture
22 trends, using a variety of data, and that
23 north/northeast interpretation fits in very well
24 with our regional view of fracturing.

25 Q. You made a reference to a display on

1 the hearing room wall. That display is also
2 found in the exhibit book behind Exhibit tab No.
3 4. And on a smaller scale it shows that natural
4 fractures strike histogram, does it not?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Before we leave Exhibit No. 5, let me
7 ask you to use that display and tell us why
8 you're proposing to locate the well at this
9 particular surface location.

10 A. One immediate concern, of course, is
11 the canyon edge. We had to work around that. A
12 second concern is, we want to minimize the risk
13 involved with locating our target reservoir;
14 finding the zone, in other words, and penetrating
15 it at a higher angle and saying in zone. By
16 drilling close to the #287, which has a Mesaverde
17 wire line log, we have excellent initial control
18 and we can greatly minimize that risk.

19 The other consideration is that we
20 would like our lateral to run through the part of
21 the net sandstone trend in which we feel we have
22 our best chance of decent matrix permeability.
23 We expect this to be fairly low permeability, as
24 is typical in the Mesaverde, but we want to give
25 it our best shot. We want to explore for the

1 best possible permeability in the trend, in terms
2 of matrix permeability.

3 Q. Let me have you turn now to Exhibit tab
4 No. 6 and look at the structure map behind that
5 tab. Is this a structure map you prepared, Mr.
6 Dawson?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. What does this show you?

9 A. This is the structure on top of the B
10 sandstone, which is our reservoir target. In
11 general, we have a very gentle, homoclinal,
12 northeast dip. We're looking at no more than 65
13 to 70 feet of total dip along the track of our
14 lateral.

15 Q. Illustrate for us the relationship
16 between the lateral and the structural
17 orientation through Section 3.

18 A. We'll be starting at an updip position
19 and we'll be proceeding to the east/northeast in
20 a downdip direction. This is exaggerated by the
21 vertical exaggeration that you see on the exhibit
22 on the wall. That's about a 10 times
23 exaggeration, so you get a better sense of the
24 well track proceeding downdip through the
25 reservoir from the wall exhibit, and also Exhibit

1 No. 4.

2 Q. Let's turn now to Exhibit No. 4. Using
3 this display as an illustration, describe again
4 for us what you hope to achieve.

5 A. We'll start at our surface location and
6 drill to a kickoff point, build angle through the
7 Menafée, the Menafée formation of the Mesaverde
8 group, and arrive at a high-angle before the top
9 of our target reservoir, and proceed to drill
10 through the reservoir in a horizontal fashion.

11 Q. The entire project, from the location
12 of the well in the surface to the endpoint of the
13 lateral, is to be contained within a
14 drilling/producing window as shown on this
15 display, that you see just to the left of the
16 circle?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. And that would be a limitation of 790
19 feet from the outer boundaries of the section?

20 A. Right.

21 Q. Would that provide you sufficient
22 flexibility, as the operator, in order to adjust
23 the surface location, if required for the well,
24 to change directions on your azimuth, and to
25 attempt to execute this well in the most

1 efficient way?

2 A. Yes, indeed.

3 MR. KELLAHIN: That concludes my
4 examination of Mr. Dawson. Mr. Examiner, we
5 would move the introduction of his Exhibits 4, 5
6 and 6.

7 EXAMINER CATANACH: Exhibits 4, 5 and 6
8 will be admitted as evidence.

9 EXAMINATION

10 BY EXAMINER CATANACH:

11 Q. Mr. Dawson, how were the fracture
12 orientations determined?

13 A. We used a formation microscanner log,
14 and the well that I referred to just to the
15 northeast, this is a log that measures micro
16 resistivity, much like a micro log, and it has--I
17 think this was a six-arm tool.

18 It can orient very small, natural
19 fractures as long as they're open, by measuring
20 differences in conductivity. The drilling fluid
21 penetrates those fractures and gives you a
22 conductivity high.

23 So, we interpret the natural fractures
24 from that. That's done with a computer assist.
25 We figure out statistically what the dominant

1 direction is, and that's what's exhibited there
2 in the Rose diagram. You can see some subsets of
3 a direction, but it's predominantly
4 north/northeast.

5 We have similar data from elsewhere in
6 the Basin, and throughout this area of the Basin
7 we get a very consistent north/northeast trend of
8 the open, natural fractures. This corresponds to
9 other data available in the literature from
10 interpretations from oriented cores, where
11 they've noted the direction of the natural
12 fracturing in other cretaceous rock, so we're
13 fairly confident that this is, indeed, the
14 natural fracture direction that we'll encounter
15 in our wellbore.

16 Q. How thick is the B interval?

17 A. At our surface location it's about 15
18 feet, and I believe by the time we get to the
19 bottom hole location it will be 19 to 20 feet
20 thick.

21 Q. Mr. Dawson, do you know why the well
22 was placed where it was, and why, maybe, it
23 wasn't placed in the north half of that section?

24 A. Yes. In fact, I had quite a bit of
25 input into that decision. One of the prime

1 considerations for the surface location is that
2 we wanted to stay close to one of the two Dakota
3 tests.

4 In order to minimize that initial risk
5 of finding the zone, getting in it, getting
6 horizontal and staying in zone, there's much less
7 risk if you have some wire line control. So that
8 gave us either the northwest or the southwest to
9 choose from.

10 The second consideration is, we wanted
11 to set up an azimuth that would intersect the
12 maximum number of natural fractures, so we
13 basically went ahead in an east/west direction.

14 And the third consideration is that we
15 want to be on the landward side of this trend.
16 Although this map, by using these log cutoffs, we
17 could see slightly greater thickness to the north
18 of our well tract, I don't believe that we'll
19 have as great a permeability. The sand is
20 thicker, but it's not--it's a little bit more
21 shaley. The grain size will be just slightly
22 smaller. The sorting won't be quite as good and,
23 in short, those things will result in a little
24 less reservoir permeability.

25 So, according to that depositional

1 model, we're actually better off being on the
2 southwest 15-foot contour than we would be in the
3 axial part of this trend, because we expect
4 greater matrix permeability there. So that led
5 us to the present azimuth, as planned.

6 Q. Would you expect all of the acreage in
7 Section 3 to contribute gas reserves to this
8 well?

9 A. I expect most of the acreage to. I'm
10 not confident that the acreage all the way in the
11 southwest quarter, for instance, would contribute
12 much or very much. But I would certainly expect
13 everything, from the 10-foot contour in the
14 southwest quarter or maybe even slightly to the
15 southwest of that, to contribute.

16 We really do expect enhanced drainage,
17 and we really do expect to at least simulate the
18 drainage that would be provided by two vertical
19 wells. What our hope is is that we will drain,
20 perhaps more efficiently than those two vertical
21 wells, and perhaps have a greater recovery
22 factor, given this same drill block acreage.

23 Q. In your opinion, then, you believe that
24 this well will drain most of the section?

25 A. Yes, sir, I do.

1 EXAMINER CATANACH: I don't have
2 anything else, Mr. Kellahin.

3 MR. KELLAHIN: Call, at this time, Mr.
4 Paul Allen.

5 PAUL ALLEN

6 Having been first duly sworn upon his oath, was
7 examined and testified as follows:

8 EXAMINATION

9 BY MR. KELLAHIN:

10 Q. Mr. Allen, would you please state your
11 name and occupation?

12 A. My name is Paul Allen. I'm a drilling
13 engineer with Meridian Oil in Farmington, New
14 Mexico.

15 Q. On prior occasions, Mr. Allen, have you
16 testified and been qualified as a drilling
17 engineer for your company?

18 A. Yes, I have.

19 Q. And you've testified on numerous
20 occasions before the Division on the
21 high-angle/horizontal wells, have you not?

22 A. Yes, I have.

23 Q. Pursuant to your employment with
24 Meridian, have you performed drilling functions
25 for this particular well?

1 A. Yes, I have.

2 MR. KELLAHIN: We would tender Mr.
3 Allen as an expert drilling engineer.

4 EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Allen is so
5 qualified.

6 Q. Before we talk about the specifics of
7 the drilling and completion plan that are
8 illustrated on Exhibit No. 4, give me your
9 perspective, as an engineer, of what the concept
10 is that you're trying to test with this pilot
11 project in this section?

12 A. There's more than one thing we're
13 trying to test. Obviously the rock, horizontal
14 drilling in this rock, whether that's a feasible
15 to do. The other thing, it's one horizontal well
16 versus two vertical wells, and there is a
17 definite cost advantage in doing it that way.

18 Q. Can you give us a general range of what
19 the potential difference is in cost, between one
20 horizontal well and then the two vertical wells?

21 A. A vertical well in this area would need
22 to be frac'd and completed with fracture
23 stimulation, and you're looking at \$500 to \$600,
24 upwards of even \$700, and in some cases \$1,000,
25 for a vertical well. So, let's say, 1.2 million

1 for two vertical wells.

2 We believe that we can drill and
3 complete the horizontal well, complete it open
4 hole, no fracture stimulations, for less than
5 \$700,000.

6 Q. In addition to testing the potential to
7 save substantial dollars in the drilling and
8 completion phase of this project, will it also
9 afford the opportunity to Meridian to test the
10 drainage potential of horizontal wells in the
11 Mesaverde formation in this particular portion of
12 the pool?

13 A. Yes, it will.

14 Q. Let's turn to Exhibit No. 4 and have
15 you use that as an illustration. Show us what
16 your drilling procedure and plan is, and then
17 lead us into your completion plan.

18 A. Okay. We'll spud the well, and drill a
19 12-1/4 hole to 200 feet. We'll then run 9-5/8"
20 pipe to 200 feet. We'll drill 8-3/4" hole to the
21 kickoff point at 4707, and begin directional
22 drilling operations.

23 We'll then build angle to approximately
24 84 to 86 degrees, with mud drilling. We'll then
25 run casing to this point. That's seven-inch

1 casing to this point. We'll unload the hole with
2 a gas system, an air-mist-gas system, primarily
3 nitrogen gas, and drill out using this gas into
4 the lateral, building angle at approximately six
5 degrees to the 88-1/2 degree approximate
6 inclination there. And drill to TD, as shown on
7 Exhibit 4, of 5166 TVD and 7927 measured depth.

8 We'll be using a couple of different
9 methods to stay in the zone. One is a gamma
10 directional tool, which provides real time gamma
11 ray information. The other is a standard survey
12 instrument which will tell us where we are in
13 relation to our starting point.

14 We'll then go into the hole 4-1/2"
15 perforated and plugged liner, and run this
16 perforated and plugged liner to TD, spacing the
17 perforations over the shows as we've seen them,
18 or over the entire interval, if we see that the
19 entire interval is perspective.

20 We'll then go back in and mill off the
21 plugs, and begin producing the well.

22 Q. Is there any stimulation aspect to the
23 completion of the well?

24 A. No, there isn't.

25 Q. What determines the ultimate length of

1 the lateral or the endpoint of the lateral?

2 A. Well, there's a couple of different
3 factors there. In this case the stands, as Mike
4 referred to earlier, had a lot to do with
5 maximizing or optimizing the lateral length on
6 the well. Economics play a big role in that as
7 well.

8 Q. The approximate horizontal distance of
9 the lateral, to stay within the drilling window,
10 the 790 setback is about 3,000 feet, I think?

11 A. Yes, it is.

12 Q. And you have the technology and the
13 capability to drill a lateral of that distance?

14 A. Yes, we do.

15 Q. If the Examiner approves the
16 application and provides a drilling producing
17 window, any point within the section, so long as
18 you stay no closer than 790 to the outer boundary
19 of the section, will that provide you the
20 necessary operating and drilling flexibility to
21 execute the project?

22 A. Yes, it will.

23 MR. KELLAHIN: That concludes my
24 examination of Mr. Allen.

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EXAMINATION

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BY EXAMINER CATANACH:

Q. Mr. Allen, is Meridian getting pretty good at drilling these things?

A. We would like to believe so.

Q. How many have you drilled so far?

A. I, myself, have drilled five; the company has drilled eight in this area; I believe eight. Those were different formations. Those include both Gallup and Mesaverde wells.

Q. What's the longest distance you've taken it out?

A. As a company, we've drilled one upwards of 3200 feet vertical section outwards of that. I have plans right now, in fact, for two wells that we'll be beginning within the month, for 3500-foot laterals.

MR. STOVALL: You said "vertical section." You mean "horizontal," right?

THE WITNESS: The industry term tends to call that "vertical section." It's the distance a straight point down from the wellbore and out from that point. "Departure" is another word that they use.

MR. STOVALL: Lateral. Gotcha.

1 EXAMINER CATANACH: All right. Anybody
2 else? The witness may be excused.

3 MR. KELLAHIN: That concludes our
4 presentation in this case, Mr. Examiner.

5 EXAMINER CATANACH: All right. There
6 being nothing further in this case, Case 10729
7 will be taken under advisement.

8 (And the proceedings concluded.)
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17 I do hereby certify that the foregoing is
18 a complete record of the proceedings in
the Examiner hearing of Case No. 10729,
heard by me on May 20 1983.

19 David R. Catanch, Examiner
20 Oil Conservation Division
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF NEW MEXICO)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SANTA FE)

I, Carla Diane Rodriguez, Certified
Court Reporter and Notary Public, HEREBY CERTIFY
that the foregoing transcript of proceedings
before the Oil Conservation Division was reported
by me; that I caused my notes to be transcribed
under my personal supervision; and that the
foregoing is a true and accurate record of the
proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a
relative or employee of any of the parties or
attorneys involved in this matter and that I have
no personal interest in the final disposition of
this matter.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL May 24, 1993.


CARLA DIANE RODRIGUEZ, RPR
CCR No. 4