

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

**IN THE MATTER OF THE HEARING
CALLED BY THE OIL CONSERVATION
DIVISION FOR THE PURPOSE OF
CONSIDERING:**

**CASE NO. 15242
ORDER NO. R-13967**

**APPLICATION OF APACHE CORPORATION FOR COMPULSORY
POOLING, EDDY COUNTY, NEW MEXICO.**

ORDER OF THE DIVISION

BY THE DIVISION:

This case came on for hearing at 8:15 a.m. on December 18, 2014, at Santa Fe, New Mexico, before Examiner Phillip R. Goetze.

NOW, on this 11th day of March, 2015, the Division Director, having considered the testimony, the record and the recommendations of the Examiner,

FINDS THAT:

(1) Due public notice has been given, and the Division has jurisdiction of this case and of the subject matter.

(2) Apache Corporation ("Applicant"), seeks an order pooling all uncommitted interests from the surface to the base of the Yeso formation in the NW/4 NE/4 of Section 31, Township 17 South, Range 28 East, NMPM, Eddy County, New Mexico, to form a standard 40-acre oil spacing and proration unit for all formations or pools spaced on 40 acres within this vertical extent, which presently include, but are not necessarily limited to the Artesia-Glorieta-Yeso Pool (Pool code 96830).

(3) Applicant requests the Unit be dedicated to the following three proposed vertical wells:

T-Rex State No. 1 (API No. 30-015-41770) to be drilled at a surface location 330 feet from the North line and 2270 feet from the East line (Unit letter B) of Section 31.

- (a) T-Rex State No. 2 (API No. 30-015-41771) to be drilled at a surface location 375 feet from the North line and 1650 feet from the East line (Unit letter B) of Section 31 and completed with a bottomhole location 330 feet from the North line and 1650 feet from the East line (Unit letter B) of Section 31.
- (b) T-Rex State No. 4 (API No. 30-015-41774) to be drilled at a location 890 feet from the North line and 1750 feet from the East line (Unit letter B) of Section 31.

(4) Any pooled working interest owner who does not pay its share of estimated well costs should have withheld from production its share of reasonable well costs plus an additional 200% thereof as a reasonable charge for the risk involved in drilling the well.

(5) Two or more separately owned tracts are embraced within the Unit, and/or there are royalty interests and/or undivided interests in oil and gas minerals in one or more tracts included in the Unit that are separately owned.

(6) Applicant is owner of an oil and gas working interest within the Unit. Applicant has the right to drill and proposes to drill the proposed wells to a common source of supply within the Unit at the proposed location.

(7) There are interest owners in the Unit that have not agreed to pool their interests.

(8) To avoid the drilling of unnecessary wells, protect correlative rights, prevent waste and afford to the owner of each interest in the Unit the opportunity to recover or receive without unnecessary expense its just and fair share of hydrocarbons, this application should be approved by pooling all uncommitted interests, whatever they may be, in the oil and gas within the Unit.

(9) Apache Corporation should be designated the operator of the subject well and the Unit.

(10) Applicant's request to include three proposed wells under one compulsory pooling order requires the review of Division's authority under Rule 19.15.13 NMAC. Division Rules 19.15.13.7A. NMAC and 19.15.13.10B. NMAC are as follows, respectively:

- (a) an infill well *"means a well in a compulsory pooled proration or spacing unit to be completed in a pool in which an existing well drilled pursuant to the compulsory pooling order has been completed and not plugged and abandoned"* and;

- (b) *"Each pooled working interest owner may elect to participate in the proposed infill well by notice in writing to the operator within 30 days after the owner receives the proposal, provided that the election to participate shall not be effective unless the owner so electing pays to the operator the amount of the owner's share of estimated well cost within 30 days after the date of transmission of the notice of election to participate."*

Accordingly, only one of the three proposed wells qualifies as a development well or "initial well" for the 40-acre oil spacing and proration unit proposed in the application for compulsory pooling. As such, the remaining two wells are considered infill wells. The application for a single compulsory pooling order to include multiple infill wells is not in compliance with Division Rule 19.15.13 NMAC and, therefore, this portion of Applicant's request should be denied.

(11) Any pooled working interest owner who does not pay its share of estimated well costs should have withheld from production its share of reasonable well costs plus an additional 200% thereof as a reasonable charge for the risk involved in drilling the well.

(12) Reasonable charges for supervision (combined fixed rates) should be fixed at \$7,500 per month while drilling and \$750 per month while producing, provided that these rates should be adjusted annually pursuant to Section III.1.A.3. of the COPAS form titled *"Accounting Procedure-Joint Operations."*

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

(1) Pursuant to the application of Apache Corporation, all uncommitted interests, whatever they may be, in the oil and gas from the surface to the base of the Yeso formation in the NW/4 NE/4 of Section 31, Township 17 South, Range 28 East, NMPM, Eddy County, New Mexico, are hereby pooled to form a standard 40-acre oil spacing and proration unit (the "Unit") for all formations or pools developed on 40 acres within this vertical extent, which presently include but are not necessarily limited to, the Artesia-Glorieta-Yeso Pool (Pool code 96830).

(2) The Unit shall be dedicated to Applicant's proposed T-Rex State No. 1 (API No. 30-015-41770; the "proposed well") to be drilled at a surface location 330 feet from the North line and 2270 feet from the East line (Unit letter B) of Section 31.

(3) Applicant's request for the inclusion of the two remaining wells in this compulsory pooling order is hereby **denied**.

(4) The operator of the Unit shall commence drilling the proposed well on or before March 31, 2016, and shall thereafter continue drilling the well with due diligence to test the Yeso formation.

(5) With regards to any proposed infill wells within the Unit, the operator shall comply with all provisions of Division Rules 19.15.13.9 through 19.15.13.13 NMAC.

(6) In the event the operator does not commence drilling the proposed well on or before March 31, 2016, Ordering Paragraph (1) shall be of no effect, unless the operator obtains a time extension from the Division Director for good cause demonstrated by satisfactory evidence.

(7) Should the proposed well not be drilled and completed within 120 days after commencement thereof, then Ordering Paragraph (1) shall be of no further effect, and the Unit created by this Order shall terminate, unless operator appears before the Division Director and obtains an extension of the time for completion of the proposed well for good cause shown by satisfactory evidence.

(8) Upon final plugging and abandonment of the proposed well and any other well drilled on the Unit pursuant to Division Rule 19.15.13.9 NMAC, the pooled unit created by this Order shall terminate, unless this Order has been amended to authorize further operations.

(9) Apache Corporation (OGRID 873) is hereby designated the operator of the proposed well and of the Unit.

(10) After pooling, uncommitted working interest owners are referred to as pooled working interest owners. ("Pooled working interest owners" are owners of working interests in the Unit, including unleased mineral interests, who are not parties to an operating agreement governing the Unit.) After the effective date of this Order, the operator shall furnish the Division and each known pooled working interest owner in the Unit an itemized schedule of estimated costs of drilling, completing and equipping the proposed well ("well costs").

(11) Within 30 days from the date the schedule of estimated well costs is furnished, any pooled working interest owner shall have the right to pay its share of estimated well costs to the operator in lieu of paying its share of reasonable well costs out of production as hereinafter provided, and any such owner who pays its share of estimated well costs as provided above shall remain liable for operating costs but shall not be liable for risk charges. Pooled working interest owners who elect not to pay their share of estimated well costs as provided in this paragraph shall thereafter be referred to as "non-consenting working interest owners."

(12) The operator shall furnish the Division and each known pooled working interest owner (including non-consenting working interest owners) an itemized schedule of actual well costs within 90 days following completion of the proposed well. If no objection to the actual well costs is received by the Division, and the Division has not objected, within 45 days following receipt of the schedule, the actual well costs shall be deemed to be the reasonable well costs. If there is an objection to actual well costs within

the 45-day period, the Division will determine reasonable well costs after public notice and hearing.

(13) Within 60 days following determination of reasonable well costs, any pooled working interest owner who has paid its share of estimated costs in advance as provided above shall pay to the operator its share of the amount that reasonable well costs exceed estimated well costs, and shall receive from the operator the amount of estimated well costs it has paid that exceed its share of reasonable well costs.

(14) The operator is hereby authorized to withhold the following costs and charges from production:

- (a) the proportionate share of reasonable well costs attributable to each non-consenting working interest owner; and
- (b) as a charge for the risk involved in drilling the well, 200% of the above costs.

(15) The operator shall distribute the costs and charges withheld from production, proportionately, to the parties who advanced the well costs.

(16) Reasonable charges for supervision (combined fixed rates) are hereby fixed at \$7,500 per month while drilling and \$750 per month while producing, provided that these rates shall be adjusted annually pursuant to Section III.1.A.3. of the COPAS form titled "*Accounting Procedure-Joint Operations*." The operator is authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of both the supervision charges and the actual expenditures required for operating the well, not in excess of what are reasonable, attributable to pooled working interest owners.

(17) Except as provided in Paragraphs (14) and (16) above, all proceeds from production from the proposed well that are not disbursed for any reason shall be held for the account of the person or persons entitled thereto pursuant to the Oil and Gas Proceeds Payment Act (NMSA 1978 Sections 70-10-1 through 70-10-6, as amended). If not disbursed, such proceeds shall be turned over to the appropriate authority as and when required by the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act (NMSA 1978 Sections 7-8A-1 through 70-8A7-8A-28, as amended).

(18) Any unleased mineral interest shall be considered a seven-eighths (7/8) working interest and a one-eighth (1/8) royalty interest for the purpose of allocating costs and charges under this order. Any well costs or charges that are to be paid out of production shall be withheld only from the working interests' share of production, and no costs or charges shall be withheld from production attributable to royalty interests.

(19) Should all the parties to this compulsory pooling order reach voluntary agreement subsequent to entry of this Order, this Order shall thereafter be of no further effect.

(20) The operator of the well and Unit shall notify the Division in writing of the subsequent voluntary agreement of all parties subject to the forced pooling provisions of this Order.

(21) Jurisdiction of this case is retained for the entry of such further orders as the Division may deem necessary.

DONE at Santa Fe, New Mexico, on the day and year hereinabove designated.



SEAL

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION

David R. Catanach

DAVID R. CATANACH
Director