

# Questar production could triple

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**PINEDALE** — Questar, a leading natural gas operator on the Pinedale Anticline, plans to triple its production on its leases within the lucrative Anticline gas field in southwestern Wyoming by 2008, company officials say.

To achieve that goal, the company is proposing a series of nine small, winter-long drilling projects within crucial mule deer winter range on the Pinedale Mesa, company officials said.

The company will seek seasonal exceptions to the Bureau of Land Management's winter drilling restrictions on the nine proposed well pads. Seasonal restrictions are rules that prohibit development activity in certain areas at certain times in order to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

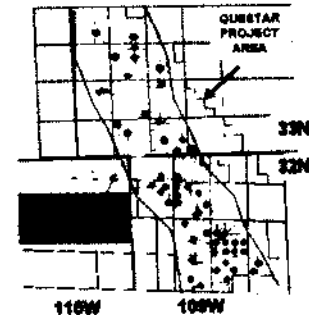
Each proposed pad would include from eight to 16 directionally drilled wells aimed at tapping into natural gas reserves located from 10,000 feet to about 14,000 feet underground in tight-gas sand formations.

Company officials said employing directional drilling within the Anticline will cost from \$100-\$150 million above normal drilling costs, but will better minimize surface disturbances than conventional drilling.

Questar plans to drill about 225 new wells on its

## Pinedale Anticline Project

- Existing Pads
- Existing Directional Wells
- New Pads 2003 Program
- Directional Wells 2003 Program
- Future Wells from Existing Pads
- Future Wells from New Pads



QUESTAR/Courtesy

Questar is proposing additional directional drilling as a way to lessen impacts on wildlife.

leases within the Anticline over the next decade based on 40-acre spacing recommendations outlined in the Anticline EIS. Questar General Manager of Production Ron Hogan said in a recent interview.

Hogan said Questar would like to drill a substantial number of those wells from the nine well

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pads the company has identified as having the most potential for gas recovery.

Hogan said in order to accommodate that number of wells while minimizing the surface disturbance, it is necessary for the company to drill the wells throughout the winter.

The approximately 197,000-acre Pinedale Anticline stretches from just northwest of Pinedale for about 30 miles to the southwest.

A host of natural gas operators, including Questar, were given permission under the agency's Pinedale Anticline Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to drill over 900 new wells to achieve 700 producing wells over the next decade.

The Anticline EIS approved in 2000 prohibits drilling in deer, elk and moose winter range from Nov. 15 through April 30. The document provides, however, for possible short-term exceptions.

Hogan said Questar has leases on approximately 14,800 acres, or a little less than 10 percent of the Anticline project area. "Of that, we think about 8,600 acres will be productive for us," he said.

"And we figure with 40-acre spacing, we'll end up with about 225 wells," Hogan said. "If we drilled on 20-acre spacing, we would double that number of wells. But our plan is to drill with no more disturbance than necessary, so we'll drill 225 with 40-acre spacing."

Hogan said at the end of the current drilling season, the company will have drilled 75 wells within the Anticline. He noted it is cheaper to drill traditional vertical wells than to directionally drill for natural gas.

based production taxes will triple by 2008 based on our increased production. We're part of the boom for Sublette County."

### Neighbor-2-Neighbor

Questar began operating in the Pinedale Anticline nearly 40 years ago and drilled its first well in the field in 1965. The activity in the Anticline has been slow until recently, when high gas prices and new federal energy policies brought the field into play again.

The renewed activity has brought with it increased scrutiny of development plans for the area, Hogan said.

Last week, the company announced a new program aimed at providing its neighbors throughout Sublette County with timely information about its operations in the Anticline.

Hogan said the company's first ever Neighbor-2-Neighbor initiative allows community members to meet with Questar representatives in order to ask questions, offer ideas and hear about steps the company is taking concerning the environment and its work force.

"Our corporation has always been open ... and this is another mechanism that allows for one-on-one discussions with citizens," Hogan said. "The community deserves a voice in the critical decisions we make ... and they have every right to make those comments."

Hogan said the company anticipates that many Pinedale and Sublette County residents will be interested in the company's current plans for worker safety, air quality, viewshed protections, community economic stability and sustainable development in the Anticline.

"It certainly adds more time because you're not drilling the shortest distance between two points," Hogan said. "The additional drilling time and the longer rental of equipment ... we figure it adds up to about \$500,000 per well, or at 225 wells, about \$125 million."

The directional drilling acts like a "spider web covering the whole field," he said.

"All we need to do is go where we've been before and drill some more without any new roads or new pipelines or new distribution facilities," Hogan said.

"If we don't have those year-round locations, we'll have to come out with a flock of rigs and drill a lot of wells and we'll start having wells where we don't want to put locations," he said. "We feel the sooner we get the year-round drilling approved, then the less disturbance we ultimately will have."

Hogan also noted that tripling the number of wells will increase local and state taxes.

"The (increased) activity will certainly bring economic benefit to the area," he said. "We estimate that our county-

"We know that good business here means being a good neighbor ... and that the community is interested in preserving its quality of life," he said. "We share that commitment ... and we are taking great steps in that direction and we want to hear from them on how we can do even better."

Hogan said the program is flexible and community members can call either toll-free (877) 442-1387 or send an e-mail to (QuestarN2N@aol.com) to schedule a meeting with a member of the Pinedale Project team.

He said the meetings can be formal presentations for large groups or organizations or informal conversations over a cup of coffee.

Questar is an integrated natural gas company headquartered in Salt Lake City that got its start in southwestern Wyoming in 1922. Questar has 227 employees who live and work in Wyoming.