



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
Great Plains Regional Office  
115 Fourth Avenue S.E.  
Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
DESCRM  
MC-208

DEC 21 2010

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendent, Fort Berthold Agency

FROM: Regional Director, Great Plains Region

SUBJECT: Supplemental to Environmental Assessment

In compliance with the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, for the proposed Supplemental for information tiering off of an existing Environmental Assessment for Questar Exploration and Production Company, to add two additional wells to one of the proposed well pads addressed in the previous EA to accommodate the drilling of up to four wells from the same location. The well pad addressed in this document is currently named MHA-1-04-03H-149-91/MHA 1-32-29H-150-91 dual well pad. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued September 2010, no new surface disturbances will be associated with the spacing change, and a Categorical Exclusion has been completed.

All the necessary requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act have been completed. Attached for your files is a copy of the Categorical Exclusion.

If you have any questions, please call Marilyn Bercier, Regional Environmental Scientist, Division of Environment, Safety and Cultural Resources Management, at (605) 226-7656.

Attachment

cc: Tex Hall, Three Affiliated Tribes (with attachment)  
Elgin Crows Breast, THPO (with attachment)  
Derek Enderud, BLM, Dickenson, ND (with attachment)  
Jeffrey Hunt, Virtual One Stop Shop



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS  
Great Plains Regional Office  
115 Fourth Avenue S.E.  
Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
DESCRM  
MC-208

## EXCEPTION CHECKLIST FOR BIA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

Date: 12/20/2010

Project: Supplemental to Environmental Assessment for Questar Exploration and Production Company (QEP); MHA 1-33-34H-150-91, MHA 1-04-03H-149-91/ MHA1-32-29H-150-91(Dual pad) and MHA 1-35-36H-149-91, September 2010, to Authorize the drilling of the MHA 3-04-03H-149-91 and MHA 3-32-29H-150-91 wells atop the MHA 1-04-03H-149-91/ MHA1-32-29H-150-91(Dual pad).

Nature of Proposed Action: The purpose of the proposed action is to authorize QEP to drill two additional wells atop an approved well pad. No new surface disturbances will be associated with the spacing change.

Exclusion category and number: 516 DM 10.5G(3)

Evaluation of Exceptions to use of Categorical Exclusion:

1. This action would have significant adverse effects on public health or safety. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. This action would have an adverse effect on unique geographical features, such as wetlands, wild or scenic rivers, refuges, floodplains, rivers placed on nationwide river inventory, or prime or unique farmlands. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
3. The action will have highly controversial environmental effects. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
4. The action will have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
5. This action will establish a precedent for future actions. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
6. This action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant environmental effects. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
7. This action will affect properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_

- 8. This action will affect a species listed, or proposed to be listed as endangered or threatened. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. This action threatens to violate federal, state, local or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. This action will have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. This action will limit access to, and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners, or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. This action will contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area, or may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species. No X Yes \_\_\_\_\_

A "yes" to any of the above exceptions will require that an EA be prepared.

NEPA Action - - - CE X EA \_\_\_\_\_

Preparer's Name and Title: Kadmas, Lee & Jackson  
Jerry D. Reinisch, Environmental Planner

Regional Archeologist Concurrence with Item 7 *Carena M. ...*

Concur: *Manlyp ...* Date: 12/20/10  
Regional Office/Agency Environmental Coordinator

Concur: *[Signature]* Date: 12/21/10  
*Acting* Regional Director/Superintendent

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

## *Addendum*

United States Bureau of Indian Affairs

Great Plains Regional Office  
Aberdeen, South Dakota



Questar Exploration and Production Company

**Addendum to:**

Questar Exploration and Production Company June 2010 Environmental Assessment  
Four Bakken Formation Exploratory Wells at Three Locations

Fort Berthold Indian Reservation

December 2010

*For information contact:*

*Bureau of Indian Affairs, Great Plains Regional Office  
Division of Environment, Safety and Cultural Resources  
115 4th Avenue SE  
Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401  
605-226-7656*

## CONTENTS

---

1	Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action.....	1
2	Authorities.....	5
3	Legal Land Description of Proposed Action.....	5
4	Scope of Work for Proposed Action.....	5
5	Applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents.....	8
6	Assessment of Environmental Impacts.....	8
	A. Cultural Resources.....	8
	B. Piping Plover Critical Habitat.....	8
7	NEPA Adequacy Criteria.....	9

## EXHIBITS

---

Figure 1	Well Pad Vegetation.....	1
Figure 2	Project Overview Map.....	2
Figure 3	Well Pad Location Map.....	3
Figure 4	Well Spacing Units Map.....	4
Figure 5	Original Well Pad Layout.....	6
Figure 6	Four Well Pad Layout.....	7

# 1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

---

Questar Exploration and Production Company (QEP) proposes to authorize the drilling of two additional wells on one of the three well pads covered by the previously authorized EA dated June 2010, for which a FONSI was issued. The well pad is located in the SE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 32, Township 150 North, Range 91 West. The two proposed wells would be located atop the well pad previously approved in the original EA/FONSI and would impact the same general native rangeland land use. Please refer to *Figure 1 Well Pad Vegetation*. The access road location remained as previously proposed and authorized. Please refer to *Figure 2 Project Overview Map*.



*Figure 1 Well Pad Vegetation*

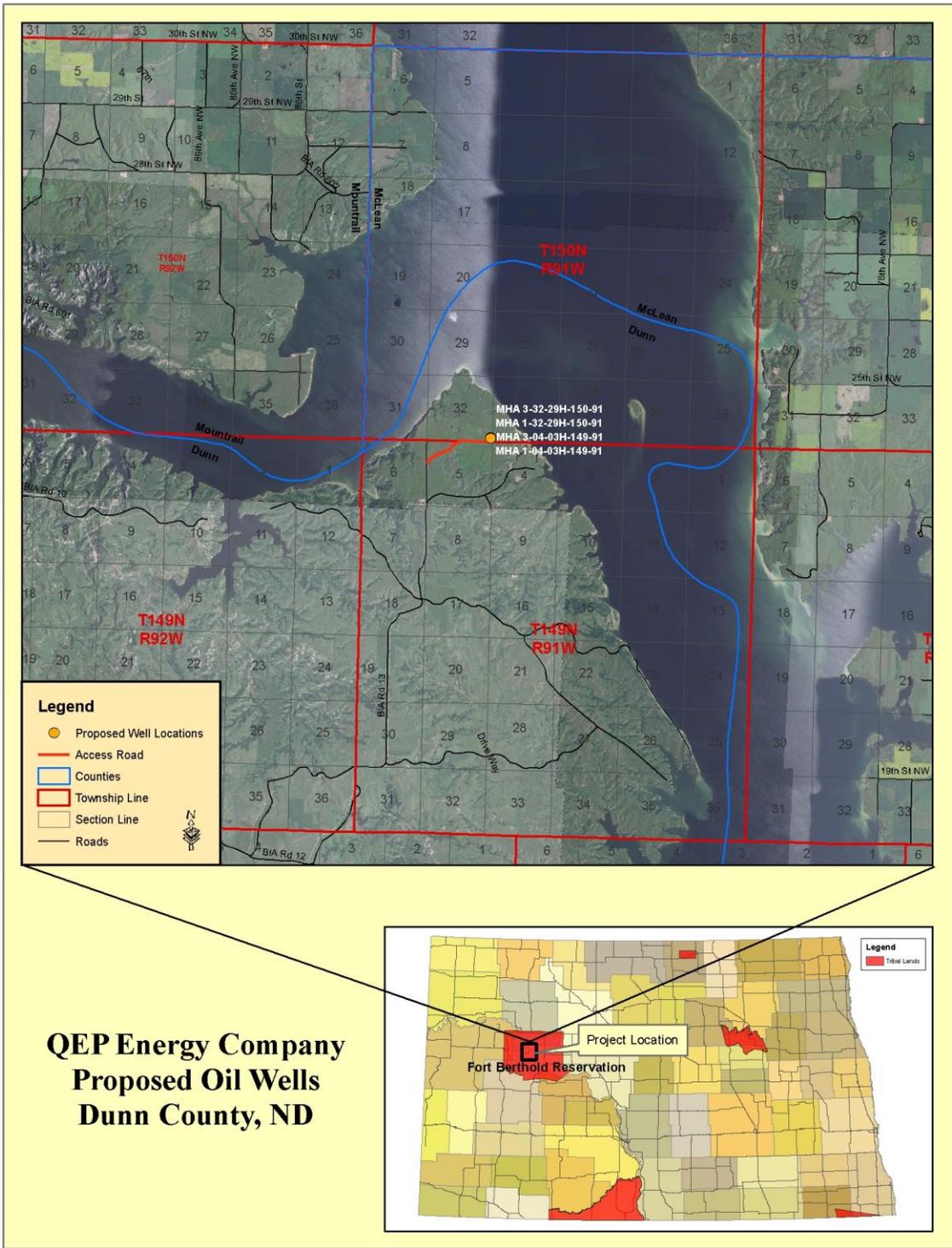
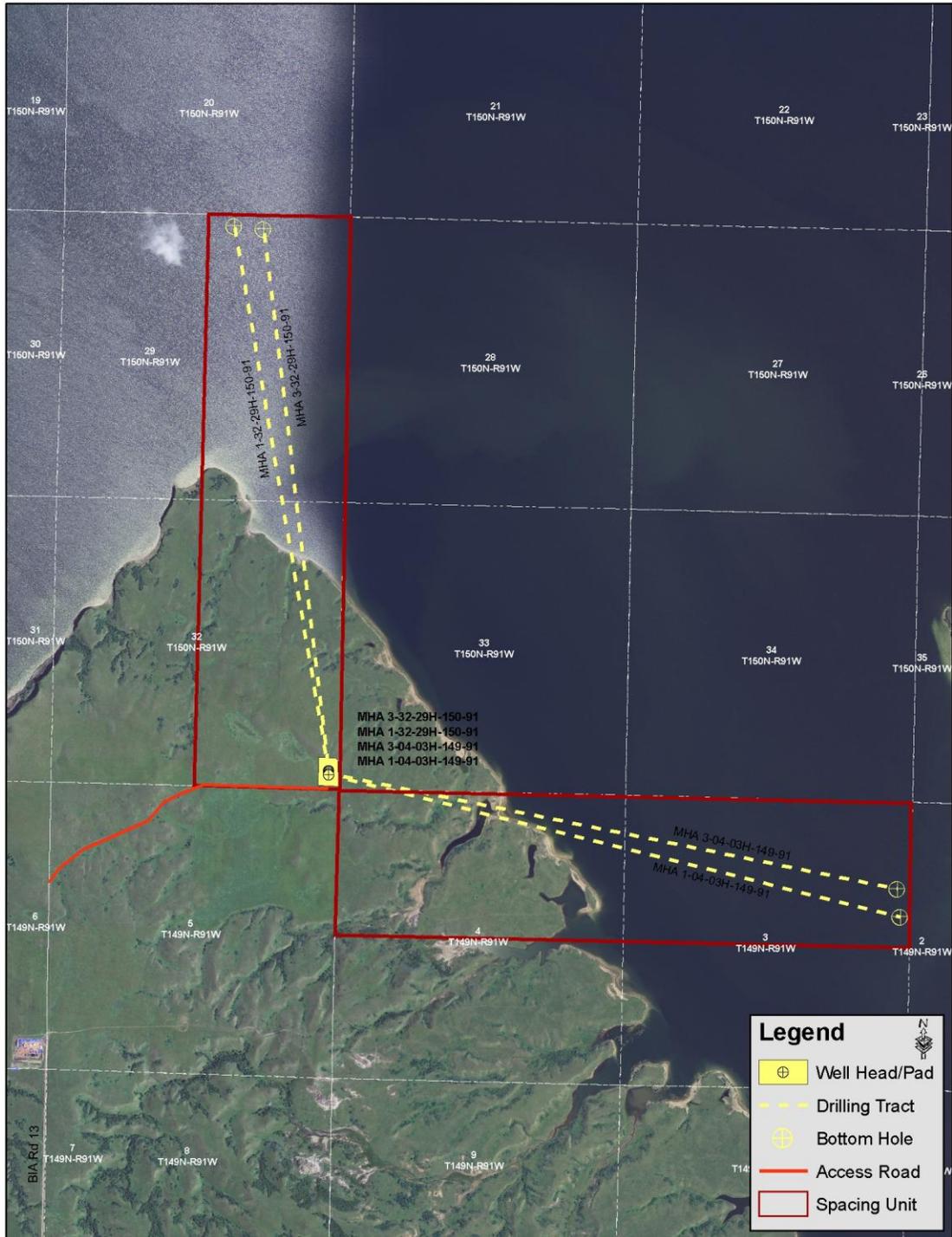


Figure 2 Project Overview Map

The well pad would remain the same size as previously surveyed and approved. Please refer to **Figure 2 Project Overview Map** for the well pad location, **Figure 3 Well Pad Location Map** and **Figure 4 Well Spacing Units Map**. Construction activities for the new well locations would take place atop areas that have achieved a FONSI under the NEPA by the BIA. By adding additional wells to the approved well pad, the area of disturbance would remain the same (13.89 acres) for the well pad and access road. The spacing units for the four wells would be located in Sections 3, 4, T149N, R91W and Sections 29, 32, T150N, R91W. These will be further defined in the APD. The area of disturbance per well would be minimized from 6.95 acres/well to 3.47 acre/well. No re-evaluation of the survey area was completed for the addition of the two proposed wells because there would be no additional disturbance.



**Figure 3 Well Pad Location Map**



**Figure 4 Well Spacing Units Map**

## 2 AUTHORITIES

---

Oil and gas exploration and development activities are conducted under authority of the Indian Mineral Leasing Act of 1938 (25 United States Code [USC] 396a, et seq.), the Indian Mineral Development Act of 1982 (25 USC 2101, et seq.), and the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 USC 15801, et seq.).

## 3 LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

---

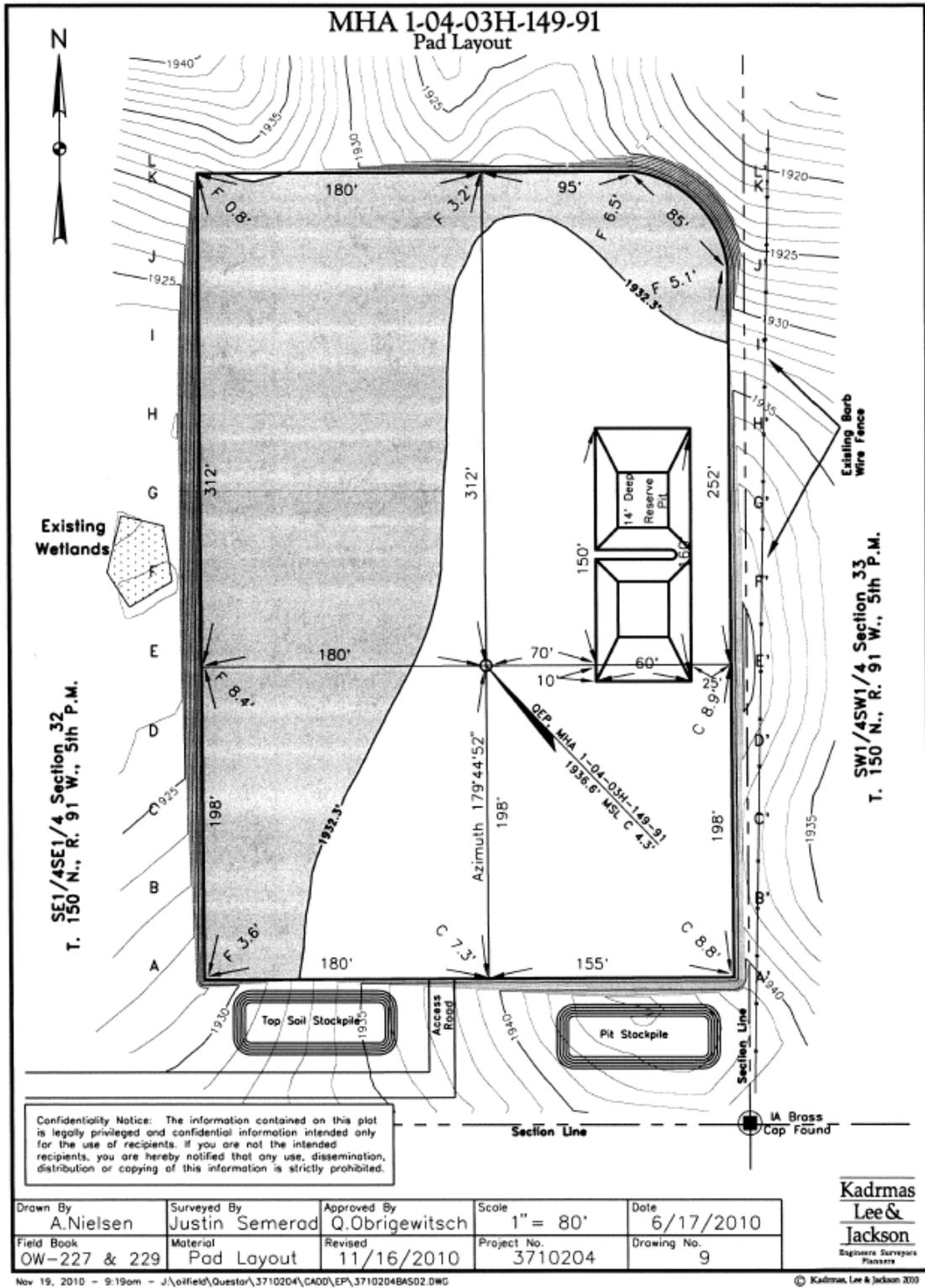
The proposed drilling of two additional wells on the approved well pad would be constructed in the SE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 32, T150N, R91W within the ten acre survey area of the previously authorized well pad to further minimize cut and fill disturbances. The access road would follow the same road alignment as was previously proposed and authorized for the proposed well pads.

## 4 SCOPE OF WORK FOR PROPOSED ACTION

---

The proposed drilling of two additional wells would be constructed atop the previously approved well pad and within the previously surveyed ten acre survey area. The access road would remain in the previously approved location. Please refer to **Figure 6 Four Well Pad Layout**. The dimensions of the well pad would remain the same as previously reported and approved. As such, no additional environmental impacts aside from those disclosed in the previously referenced NEPA document is anticipated from construction of the proposed two additional wells to be drilled.

Should the wells be determined to be producing wells, construction of ancillary facilities, including pipelines and electrical lines, would be preceded by all necessary agency approvals and guidelines for the installation of these utilities. Any additional ROW corridors would follow the constructed well site access road.



**Figure 5 Original Well Pad Layout**

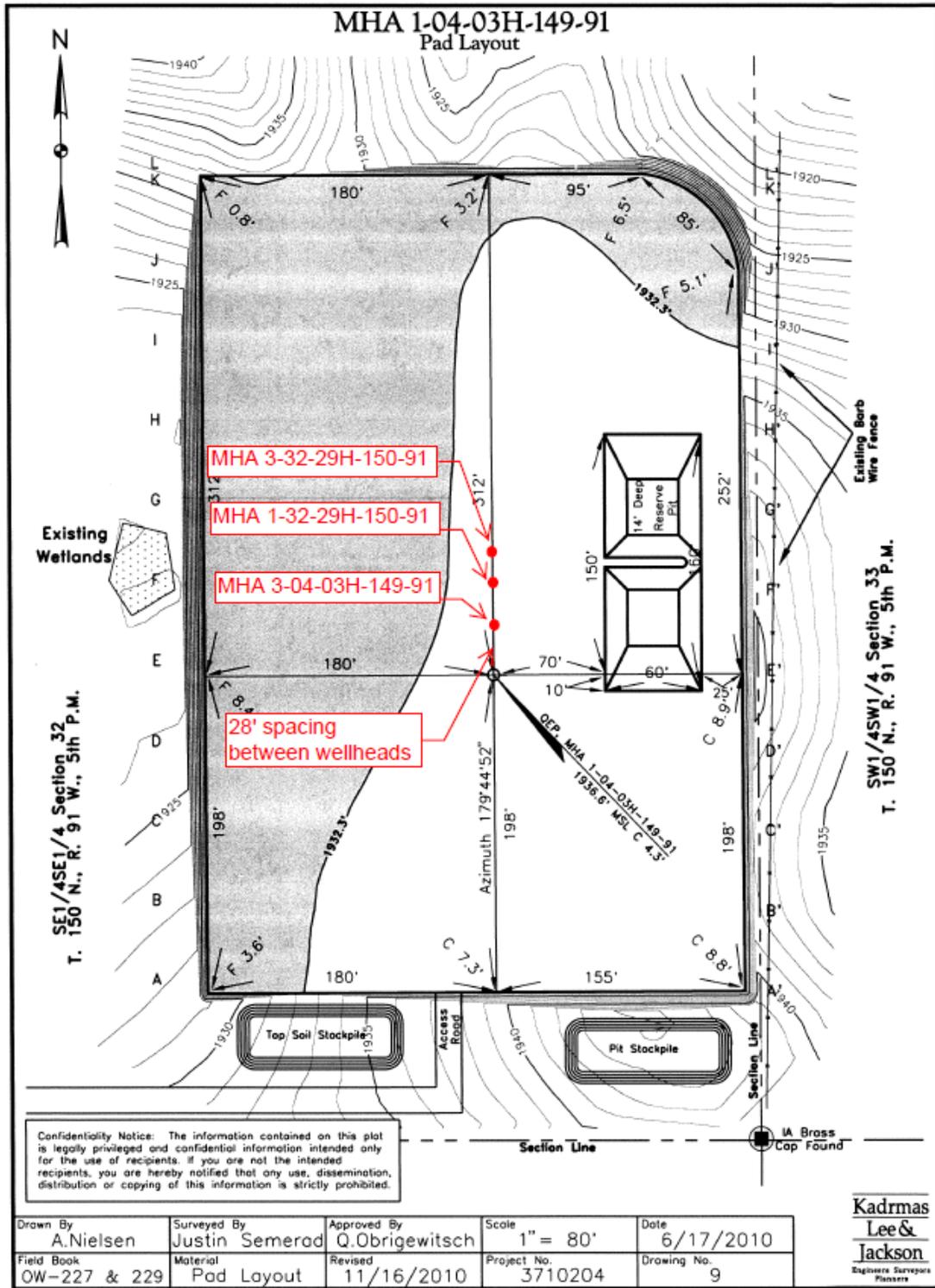


Figure 6 Four Well Pad Layout

## 5 APPLICABLE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) DOCUMENTS

---

The following NEPA documents have been previously approved by BIA for the proposed action:

- Environmental Assessment, QEP, MHA 1-33-34H-150-91, MHA 1-04-03H-149-91/MHA 1-32-29H-150-91 (dual pad) and MHA 35-36H-149-91 Bakken Exploratory Oil Wells, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, June 2010. The EA FONSI was issued September 2010.

## 6 ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

---

The following discussion addresses environmental and social impacts as a result of the well pad expansion. Impacts are only discussed if the well pad expansion has changed the impact assessment reflected in the June 2010 EA, or to note why the impact assessment has not changed.

### A. Cultural Resources

The proposed project area has been surveyed for cultural resources as part of the NEPA processes discussed above. There was a finding of *No Historic Properties Affected* for a ten acre survey area included in the original EA document. As construction activities associated with the proposed well pad expansion would utilize areas that have achieved cultural resource clearance, it is anticipated that the proposed project would not impact cultural resources.

### B. Piping Plover Critical Habitat

Lake Sakakawea shoreline has been designated critical habitat for the piping plover by the USFWS. During the April 30, 2010 on-site, BIA recommended that additional spring surveys be conducted for migratory birds. QEP has committed to completing additional surveys during the spring of 2011 for migratory birds if this location is constructed after February 1, 2011. Well pad design included a receptor trench per the USACE guidance, and placing the spoil stock piles in locations to act as a secondary containment for the well pad (south edge) and to improve visual esthetics of the landscape.

## 7 NEPA ADEQUACY CRITERIA

---

This document has identified one previously prepared NEPA document: Environmental Assessment, Questar Exploration and Production Company, MHA 1-33-34H-150-91, MHA 1-04-03H-149-91/MHA 1-32-29H-150-91 (dual well pad) and MHA 1-35-36H-149-91 Bakken Exploratory Oil Wells, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, June 2010 which adequately describes the environmental consequences of the newly proposed actions described herein, and meets the following NEPA Adequacy Criteria:

1. The proposed actions are substantially the same actions and at the sites specifically analyzed in the existing NEPA documents.
2. The range of alternatives is reasonable with respect to the current proposed actions in the existing NEPA documents, which appropriately considers and analyzes current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values.
3. The existing analysis and conclusions are adequate in the existing NEPA documents. The analysis is still valid in light of new studies and/or resource assessment information.
4. The methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA documents continues to be appropriate for the proposed actions.
5. The direct and indirect impacts of the proposed actions are unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA documents.
6. The cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed actions are unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA documents.
7. A 30-day comment period involving public input and interagency review was used in the development of the existing NEPA documents.