

WHY THE “FRACKING OR NO FRACKING” ISSUE IS A SMOKE-SCREEN



The gas industry definition of hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”) is: “A method of stimulating or increasing the recovery of hydrocarbons by perforating the production casing and injecting fluids or gels into the potential target reservoir at pressures greater than the existing fracture gradient in the target reservoir.” [From Idaho’s oil & gas Rules: IDAPA 20.07.02 – <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/20/0702.pdf>]

In other words, fracking is the term that *industry* uses specifically for the high-pressure, high-water-volume, horizontally-drilled procedure commonly used in shale formations.

“Well treatment” (or “well stimulation”) = “Actions performed on a well to acidize, fracture, or stimulate the target reservoir.” This is the industry term that covers *multiple* situations involving injection of water, chemicals, sand, gels, etc. **Whether at high or lower pressure (treatment type depends on the local geology and usually involves toxic agents), well stimulation is now the norm in gas fields.** (The term “*mini-fracking*” generally refers to any low-pressure well treatments such as matrix acidizing, which *dissolves* earthen material in target areas. Industry people use the term specifically for low-pressure testing of wells prior to full-blown fracking.)

Whether it is additives (many of those customarily used are *mildly toxic to downright deadly*) or naturally occurring methane or radioactive ions that are released by the drilling and/or fracturing... **All treatments are designed to create *further* pathways through which gas can move – in *any* direction, into the well *and* perhaps out/upward through existing or new fissures. In a naturally fissure-strewn area such as in southern Idaho, with historic seismic activity, this is a potential threat that industry is quiet about.**

The current target in our geology is reportedly *pockets* of gas in a gravelly matrix, *not* big reservoirs of gas that can be easily drained via one well per 640-acre section (which is what we’ve repeatedly been told would be the practice). **Exceptions have been requested – and granted every time – for far tighter well spacing (more wells per section). Each extra hole (well) means *more* opportunities for associated toxins to enter our lives.** Ultimately, this could use as much water and chemicals and produce as much pollution (and risk) as the major hydro-fracturing we’re given to believe they’re not going to do. *In any case...*

[Payette County gas well data from the precursor to Alta Mesa, Bridge Resources:]

APPLICANT (PROPERTY OWNER)	WELL NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	PARCEL	APPROVED	STATUS	Sec	Twn	Rng
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	ML 1-10 (Willow)	4640 Little Willow Rd.	Payette	1341	12/10/2009	DRILLED	10	8	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Espino 1-2 (Plymouth)	5429 Hwy 52	N.Plymouth	8912	12/10/2009	DRILLED-Intend to Frack	2	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Island Capitol 1-19 (Bolton)	NE of 6447 Little Willow Rd.	Payette	2479	12/10/2009	DRILLED	19	9	3
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	State 1-17 (Hamilton)	3737 SW 3 Ave.	N.Plymouth	7001 & 694	1/14/2010	DRILLED	17	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Schwarz 1-10 (Raymer)	East of 10775 Sucker Creek Road	Payette	1201	12/10/2009	PLUGGED	10	8	2
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Veatch 1-2	N 5015 NW 1st Ave.	N.Plymouth	375	7/8/2010	DRILL POSTPONED	16	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Tracy Trust 3-2	N and W of 6100 Blaine Rd.	N.Plymouth	6289 & 6290	7/8/2010	DRILLED-Intend to Frack	2	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	White 1-10	5866 Hwy 30 S.	N.Plymouth	568	7/8/2010	DRILLED-Intend to Frack	10	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Korn 1-22 (State 1-22)	4571 SE 2nd Ave.	N.Plymouth	728	7/8/2010	DRILLED-Intend to Frack	22	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)		N. 5386 Adams Rd.	N.Plymouth	688-2		ABANDONMENT PENDING	16	7	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	Kneifel 1-29	N. of 7248 Butte Rd.	N.Plymouth	1424	8/19/2010	DRILL POSTPONED	29	8	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (M...)	May 1-13	N & E of 8400 Dutch Ln. on Killebrew	Payette	1699	8/19/2010	PLUGGED	13	8	5
Bridge Energy Inc. (DJS) 1-13	DJS 1-13	SE of 4640 Little Willow Rd.	Payette	1346	10/14/2010	DRILL POSTPONED	13	8	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (DJS) 1-14	DJS 1-14	SE of 4640 Little Willow Rd.	Payette	1348	10/14/2010	PLUGGED	14	8	4
Bridge Energy Inc. (DJS) 1-15	DJS 1-15	SE of 4640 Little Willow Rd.	Payette	1350	10/14/2010	DRILLED	15	8	4

And we *do* have shale here, as historic drilling data shows...

Data on historic oil and gas well exploration in Idaho from 1903-1988 is maintained by the Idaho Geological Survey (<http://www.idahogeology.org/services/Oilandgas/>). It's interesting that **only now, with new drilling techniques like fracking and acidizing in full swing, do any development companies think Idaho's long-known-of natural gas deposits warrant attention.**

Gas industry lawyers have been careful to avoid *promising* they're definitely *not* going to frack, though this *impression* has been cultivated for years. In fact, **these companies have spent thousands of dollars writing legislation and getting laws passed that allow them to frack.** [See <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/20/0702.pdf>, p.24-25] **Should we believe that they went through all this effort and expense not to frack?**

Alta Mesa is *known* for its stimulation treatments of flagging wells... **Can we credit that any wells with disappointing production will simply be abandoned, or will the company do whatever it takes to maximize output?** Fracking is a big part of AM's gas and oil "plays" elsewhere. They purchased wells that bankrupt Bridge Resources stated *they* intended to frack. Analogous G&O company Snake River Oil & Gas' president has stated in public that **they will be fracking here.**

The Idaho Petroleum Council, an industry lobbying group, obviously plans for there to be fracking in Idaho, as evidenced by this graphic in their Spring 2015 newsletter:

The fact is, however, that in gas development, there are many harmful pathways to water, air, and soil contamination, fracking or no: open pits, spills, "flaring" (open-air burning of excess gas), equipment emissions and leaks, failed well casings (a chronic industry problem – industry-reported data shows that risk of failure is present in some wells *at the outset* and grows *continually* to maturity).

Will there be injection wells used to dispose of all the water? Injection wells have been linked to induced earthquake activity around the world. While they are *currently* not authorized under the IDAPA rules, negotiations are underway with EPA to allow them. [See <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/37/0303.pdf>] **(Where will they dispose of all the contaminated fluids associated with drilling of any kind? Where have they disposed of them? – no data is available.)**

We need to make sure industry will pay for any damages – not taxpayers – by having sufficient bonding to cover whatever might occur. As it stands now, industry is only required to have a \$150,000 bond regardless of the number of wells drilled... Does this make sense?

To learn more about the OGCC, click [here](#).

Idaho's Energy Future



Idaho's new laws have laid the necessary foundation for Idaho to successfully enter into the Energy Revolution.