

O-Piñon SPECIAL EDITION - August 27, 2007

Dear CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK supporter:

As you may know, the recent higher prices for energy have lowered the threshold for speculators. What this means is that what were uneconomical potential sources for natural gas or petroleum have suddenly become much more interesting, more potentially lucrative. Some months ago one of these advance exploration companies suddenly appeared on private land near the Galisteo River -- as holder of the mineral rights they were fully within their rights to do exactly that -- at Santa Fe County's only producing oil well. The well is decades old and barely qualifies as such, as it commonly produces less than 10 bbl per year, and in one recent year only 50 gallons total. The company has made known its proposals for more extensive drilling and testing in the greater area, their primary interest being natural gas, they say. The assemblage of trucks, machinery and personnel set up their first camp about 5 miles ESE of the CHHP.

At this time it is not known how this enterprise will all unfold. The Galisteo Basin "field" may prove to be as recalcitrant and uneconomical as it was some decades ago, and except for some nasty surface holding ponds and a damaged regional aquifer, if that, it may amount to not much. On the other hand this enterprise may result over time in a checkerboard of hundreds of well-head sites blanketing the Basin, and the concomitant laundry list of environmental disturbances that come with creating and maintaining them. At this time the impact of this activity on the Park, and even the proximity to the Park, are unknown, but any industrial development at or near the Park will inevitably bring with it many negatives. Local citizens and the Coalition are concerned.

As stewards of the CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK, the Coalition will speak in support of this natural, cultural and recreational treasure, and the time for the exchange of information and for negotiation is now, early in the process.

The CHPC board has approved the distribution of this special edition of the O-Piñon newsletter for the purpose of raising awareness of potential large-scale changes that could impact the CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK. The CHPC itself does not have a policy on this matter, but will likely consider this topic at our next regular meeting, to take place in a month or so. Watch for notice of this meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting and express yourself (public comments), or you may convey your comments and ideas by email (send to [wbaxter@ix.netcom.com](mailto:wbaxter@ix.netcom.com)), which will then be made available to the attendees prior to any action on this matter by the Board.

The message that follows (redacted) was provided to the CHPC by Drilling Santa Fe dot com, the local citizens' group most closely monitoring these developments. As the CHPC does not yet have a policy on this matter, the required disclaimer is that the contents of the Drilling Santa Fe's message and their website do not necessarily reflect the position of the CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK COALITION,

If information and events warrant there may be more CHPC O-Piñon Special Editions.

On behalf of the members of the Coalition and of the Board,  
Bill Baxter  
Vice President

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To remove yourself from the O-Piñon distribution or modify your listing please notify  
wbaxter@ix.netcom.com.

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Have the Drillers Leased the Minerals Under Your Land or your neighbor's ?

Most land in Santa Fe county is split-estate. Most residents only own the surface of their land. The sub-surface rights belong to previous owners or the State or Federal government, and legally, the mineral rights take precedent over your surface rights. Oil & gas interests can lease those mineral rights without your knowledge. As of August 1st, Drilling Santa Fe has documented more than 80,000 acres of mineral rights in the Galisteo Basin and the Ortiz Mountains leased to oil and gas drillers.

Mineral owners should require stringent environmental restrictions in their leases. However, enforcement is difficult and seldom occurs with absentee mineral owners. The surface owners and neighbors are left with the damages.

The new Surface Owners Protection Act became law on July 1st, but it offers little protection for the environment, the water, or the neighbors.

A group, [www.santafedrilling.com](http://www.santafedrilling.com), is organized and has started gathering signatures on a petition to be presented to the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). Santa Fe County is fortunate to already have some regulations in place and are the authority for issuing drilling permits. However, the existing regulations are mainly for hard rock mining and do not address the issues related to oil and gas. Huge amounts of water (one well can use the annual equivalent of 1,000 households!) are needed to drill, toxic chemicals are injected and exploded thousands of feet into the earth and existing provisions do nothing to address these environmental issues and how the toxic waste is dealt with. The water used (about 10 weeks ago) to frac the well on Cash Ranch Road, 55-C was sold to a drilling company, Tecton, by the county. No one at the county questioned who they were or what they were going to do with that much water, a counter clerk simply had them fill out a form and took the payment, no questions asked. This is a just a small example of the type of incompetent decisions we can expect in the years to come that could destroy the lifestyle we enjoy in Santa Fe unless we get some changes made.

The Drilling Santa Fe petition calls for a moratorium on drilling permits until the existing codes are strengthened. Will the County accept the petition? Are more minerals being leased? What is split-estate? What is pooling? Could I find a drilling rig in my backyard? What can I do?

Go to [www.drillingsantafe.com](http://www.drillingsantafe.com).

Read about what is on our doorstep. This isn't just about "not in my backyard" this is about everybody's back yard!

Sign up for the email list so that you can stay informed.

You will find an e-petition on the drillingsantafe.com website. We'll need a show of faces at upcoming BCC meetings. Be involved! Our numbers count but we're up against the biggest industry in the modern world. OIL.

The folks at drillingsantafe.com are willing to hold a meeting with your group or neighborhood. Ask them and they'll be there with the whole story (see contact information on their website).