

Identifying and Remediating High Water Production Problems in Basin-Centered Formations

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Abstract

Through geochemical analyses of produced waters, petrophysics, and reservoir simulation we developed concepts and approaches for mitigating unwanted water production in tight gas reservoirs and for increasing recovery of gas resources presently considered noncommercial. Only new completion research (outside the scope of this study) will validate our hypothesis.

The first task was assembling and interpreting a robust regional database of historical produced-water analyses to address the production of excessive water in basin-centered tight gas fields in the Greater Green (GGRB) and Wind River basins (WRB), Wyoming. The database is supplemented with a sampling program in currently active areas. Interpretation of the regional water chemistry data indicates most produced waters reflect their original depositional environments and helps identify local anomalies related to basement faulting.

After the assembly and evaluation phases of this project, we generated a working model of tight formation reservoir development, *based on the regional nature and occurrence of the formation waters*. Through an integrative approach to numerous existing reservoir concepts, we synthesized a generalized development scheme organized around reservoir confining stress cycles. This single overarching scheme accommodates a spectrum of outcomes from the GGRB and Wind River basins.

Burial and tectonic processes destroy much of the depositional intergranular fabric of the reservoir, generate gas, and create a rock volume marked by extremely low permeabilities to gas and fluids. Stress release associated with uplift regenerates reservoir permeability through the development of a penetrative grain bounding natural fracture fabric. Reservoir mineral composition, magnitude of the stress cycle and local tectonics govern the degree, scale and exact mechanism of permeability development.

We applied the reservoir working model to an area of perceived anomalous water production. Detailed water analyses, seismic mapping, petrophysics, and reservoir simulation indicate a lithologic and structural component to excessive in situ water permeability. Higher formation water salinity was found to be a good pay indicator. Thus spontaneous potential (SP) and resistivity ratio approaches combined with accurate formation water resistivity (R_w) information may be underutilized tools. Reservoir simulation indicates significant infill potential in the demonstration area. Macro natural fracture permeability was determined to be a key element affecting both gas and water production.

Using the reservoir characterization results, we generated strategies for avoidance and mitigation of unwanted water production in the field. These strategies include (1) more selective perforation by improved pay determination, (2) using seismic attributes to avoid small-scale fault zones, and (3) utilizing detailed subsurface information to deliberately target optimally located small scale fault zones high in the reservoir gas column. Tapping into the existing natural fracture network represents opportunity for generating dynamic value.

Recognizing the crucial role of stress release in the *natural generation* of permeability within tight reservoirs raises the possibility of *manmade generation* of permeability through local confining stress release. To the extent that relative permeabilities prevent gas and water movement in the deep subsurface a reduction in stress around a wellbore has the potential to increase the relative permeability conditions, allowing gas to flow. For this reason, future research into cavitation completion methods for deep geopressured reservoirs is recommended.

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INTRODUCTION

Advanced Resources International Inc. (ARI), with support from the U.S. Department of Energy, conducted a research program (DE-FC-02NT41437) to characterize the nature, distribution and flow paths of moveable fluids in the subsurface of the Greater Green River basin (GGRB) and Wind River basin (WRB). The project goals were to improve resource characterization, develop water remediation strategies and enhance gas recoveries in these resource-rich basins.

Specific project objectives include the following tasks:

- Build a digital water chemistry database and construct key maps using the data.
- Compile a digital atlas of maps that increases the usability of the database.
- Conduct an in-depth evaluation of produced water geochemistry that includes interpretation as well as application to the practical aspects of the project objectives
- Develop a working model for movement of water and gas through low permeability basins (based on the geochemical evaluation).
- Conduct a field demonstration for an area with known water production problems (to test the working model).
- Transfer the technology to industry through a demonstrated conceptual model

The results and discussion summarize the project. The bulk of the text, figures and data are included as appendices. This report is organized as follows:

- I. Digital Database ([Appendix A](#))
- II. Digital Map Atlas ([Appendix B](#))
- III. Produced Water Geochemistry Evaluation ([Appendix C](#))
- IV. Working Model for Reservoir Development ([Appendix D](#))
- V. Wild Rose Field Demonstration ([Appendix E](#): Petrophysics) and ([Appendix F](#): Simulation)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Advanced Resources International Inc. (ARI), with support from the U.S. Department of Energy, conducted a research program (DE-FC-02NT41437) to characterize the nature, distribution and flow paths of moveable fluids in the subsurface of the Greater Green River basin (GGRB) and Wind River basin (WRB). The project goals were to improve resource characterization, develop water remediation strategies and boost gas recoveries in these resource-rich basins.

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- Develop a working model for movement of water and gas through low permeability basins (based on the geochemical evaluation).
- Conduct a field demonstration in an area with known water production problems.
- Transfer the technology to industry.

The results of this project provide the produced water chemistry backdrop, together with concepts and tools to reduce unwanted water production in tight gas reservoirs. The concepts and approaches generated also offer potential for the development of completion technologies to enhance permeability within tight reservoirs and achieve commercial production rates.

A large database of historical produced water analyses, supplemented with a targeted sampling program, was assembled and interpreted to address the production of excessive water in basin-centered tight formation gas fields of the Greater Green and Wind River Basins, Wyoming. In excess of 16,000 historical chemical component and isotopic analyses from government, academic and industry sources were winnowed to produce a geographically referenced database of nearly 3,700 discrete formation tests. The analyses were screened for analytical validity and merged with perforation data and other support information (as available) to create a composite georeferenced water chemistry resource to support exploration and production activities across the GGRB and WRB.

A digital atlas showing the distribution of the data and some specific analyses has been constructed using [Arc Reader](#) and is contained in Appendix B. The digital atlas has query and limited mapping capability for users without ready access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. GIS techniques were used extensively in the project.

Regional evaluation of chemical and isotopic analyses indicates little mass movement of waters in the subsurface. Depositional environment is the chief influence on the composition of intra formation waters. Localized vertical movement of water along basement fault zones appears as more restricted anomalies in contrast to regional compositional variability. Both regional and local knowledge is required to successfully utilize water chemistry as an exploration or development tool. Public availability of the extensive database constructed as a result of this project will supplement the use of water chemistry at the field scale to increase gas production.

A working model of tight formation reservoir development was synthesized using the results of the assembly and evaluation phases. An integrative approach was used to assemble numerous existing reservoir concepts into a generalized development scheme organized around reservoir confining stress cycles. Within this scheme, burial and tectonic processes destroy much of the depositional intergranular fabric of the reservoir, generate gas and create a rock volume marked by low permeabilities to gas and fluids.

Stress release associated with uplift regenerates reservoir permeability through the development of a penetrative grain bounding natural fracture fabric. Reservoir mineral composition, magnitude of the stress cycle and local tectonics govern the degree, scale and exact mechanism of permeability development. Recognition of the primary role of stress release in generation of naturally occurring reservoir permeability creates the opportunity to replicate the process artificially. Local permeability enhancement induced by some alternative stress reducing completion methodology could change the local gas-water relative permeability conditions and potentially allow gas to flow into the well.

The working reservoir model was demonstrated in an area of anomalous water production. Detailed water analyses, seismic mapping, petrophysics and reservoir simulation indicate a lithologic and structural component to excessive in situ water permeability. Reservoir simulation indicates significant infill potential in the demonstration area. We found higher formation water salinity to be a pay indicator. Spontaneous potential (SP) and resistivity ratio approaches combined with accurate formation water resistivity (Rw) information are tools that can be utilized for improved pay recognition. We found macro natural fracture permeability to be a key element affecting both gas and water production. The results of the field study were used to generate strategies for avoidance or mitigation of excessive water production.

Strategies developed to reduce unwanted water production in the field area include 1) more selective perforation through improved pay determination 2) use of seismic attributes to avoid small-scale fault zones and 3) capture of dynamic value through the use of infill drilling information to deliberately target optimally located small scale faults zones high in the reservoir gas column.

EXPERIMENTAL

Work performed during this project conformed to generally accepted principles of petroleum geology and geochemistry. No laboratories were operated directly by ARI during the performance of this project. Laboratories used as part of this study are documented in Appendix C. The analytical vendors in accordance with applicable local and federal standards destroyed all samples collected during this project.

Specific laboratory or interpretation techniques are referenced in the applicable appendices as follows:

GeochemistryAppendix C
PetrophysicsAppendix E
Reservoir SimulationAppendix F

The following specific trademarked commercial software packages were used during the interpretive or documentation phases of this project:

Petra, Petraseis™ (Geoplus Inc.)
ArcCatalog™, ArcMap™, ArcPublisher™, Spatial Analyst™ (ESRI, Inc)
Microsoft Office Suite (Microsoft Corporation)
Surfer 8™, Grapher 5™ (Golden Software, Inc.)
Canvas 8™ and Canvas 9™ (ACD Systems, Inc)
Comet 3™ (Advanced Resources International, Inc.)

The following non-commercial research software programs were used:

NextGen™ (ARI, Inc)
Poly3D™ (1993 Stanford University, Thomas)
FracGen™ (discrete fracture network modeling, NETL)

The majority of the project work was performed at ARI offices in Denver, CO. The reservoir simulation was performed at ARI offices in Arlington, VA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Digital Database

Accurate information regarding the composition of waters trapped in the interstices of petroleum reservoirs is crucial to effective formation evaluation and resource estimation. Eight decades of oil and gas exploration in the Greater Green (GGRB) and Wind River Basins has resulted in a large volume of valuable produced water chemical analyses collected during formation evaluation, workover and water disposal operations. The preponderance of historical water composition data is the result of thousands of non-recurring opportunities and is impossible to recreate.

A primary objective of this project was to make available the abundant resource (spanning decades) of existing analytical data on produced water composition. Thus the first step in this project was to collect data from governmental entities, operators, abandoned files, and previous studies. It was then digitized as necessary and compiled into a [digital database](#).

The result of this collection effort was a comprehensive body of data, but one with considerable overlap and duplication. The next step was to use structured query language (SQL) queries to eliminate duplicate analyses and data with poor quality or otherwise erroneous aspects. Then, the location identification data was screened to

1. Ensure that reported location data and American Petroleum Institute (API) numbers were correct to the fullest extent possible. Some otherwise valid data failed this final screening.
2. Match as much high quality compositional data to valid API and location data as possible. In some cases this required examining the original location surveys.

The final database was spot checked against randomly selected raw input data to ensure the integrity of the compilation process.

The final product is a highly usable digital database of nearly 8,000 water analysis results from over 3,200 wells (fig. I-1). It spans nearly eight decades of exploration and production activity across two states (Wyoming and Colorado) and numerous productive basins including the strategically important Greater Green and Wind River Basin areas. *Compilation of this data into a single database, with removal of duplicate and invalid analyses, opens the data to access by a broad audience of users with interests in resource assessment, formation evaluation, prospect generation and exploitation of tight formation gas.*

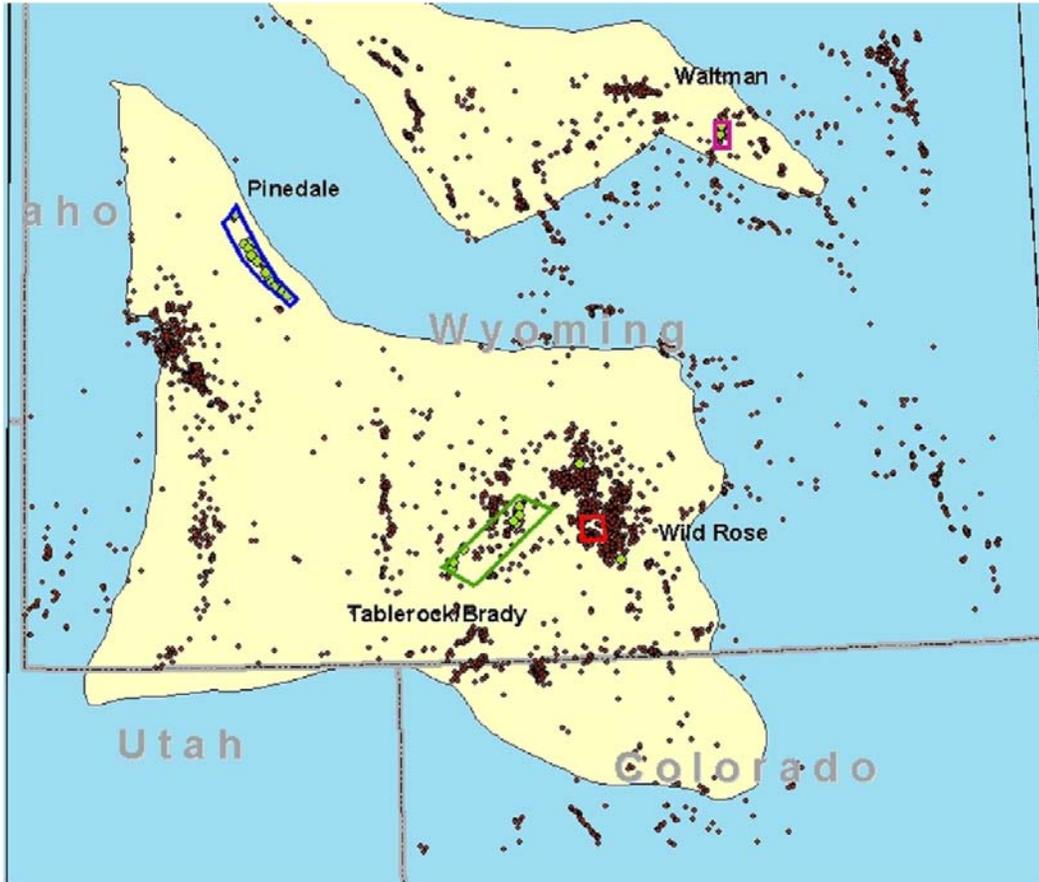


Fig. I-1 Areal distribution of water sample locations contained in the database

The database contains the results of routine chemical analyses performed on fluids produced during all phases of petroleum wellbore operations. The source and sampling method of the individual water samples is included where reported. Fluid sample analyses from drill stem test recoveries, as well as completion, workover, and production operations are represented.

As a result, there is a wide range of applications for the data depending on the specific purposes of the user.

Format and Structure

The digital database format facilitates the effective use of the data by professionals working to increase gas production from these areas. The database is available in native Access™ format as well as spreadsheet, text and Dbase™ formats, making possible immediate utilization in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or other workstation systems. Details of the data quality screening criteria and final database structure are included in the Read me file located with the database in Appendix A.

The database structure was designed to support use of stable and radiogenic isotope technology in the interpretive process. Produced waters from eighty-eight currently producing wells in four separate areas (Waltman/Cave Gulch fields (WRB), Pinedale, Table Rock and Wild Rose fields (GGRB) were sampled for routine and isotopic characterization as part of this study.

Although the analyses were screened for validity, formation tops and other data were assumed valid as reported by operators. Local lithostratigraphic and formation names were consolidated into broad groupings for mapping purposes. Those group names are included in the 'Revised Formation' database field.

Consolidation of these data into an organized, accessible digital format enables immediate use of an irreplaceable body of knowledge accumulated as a result of literally thousands of non-recurring opportunities. Acquired at enormous expense over decades of exploration and production activity, this information, now accessible, will prove an invaluable resource in meeting the challenge of increasing available domestic energy resources.

II. Digital Map Atlas

Our primary purpose in creating this digital atlas of maps was to increase the usability of the database with a high-level tool for exploring it geographically.

A principal value of a sizeable geographically-controlled digital database is the ability to identify large-scale regional variations in numerical data. This is particularly important for establishing a regional context when interpreting smaller prospect or field scale data sets. A digital atlas of maps displaying data distribution and several attributes potentially of interest to users is presented as Appendix B.

Map layers have been constructed using common queries likely to be of interest to the high level user exploring data distribution. These include layers of data distribution by quality, revised formation, sample and analysis types.

These maps are constructed in Arcmap™ (ESRI) and electronically published in Arcpublisher™ (ESRI). A copy of the current ArcReader™ (Windows version, ESRI) package is included in Appendix. B. The software package is freely available by download from the web link: <http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/arcreader/index.html>. Versions for Linux and Solaris operating systems are also available from this site. Refer to the ESRI website for hardware requirements, compatibility, and installation information.

ArcReader™ offers the ability to zoom and pan at the discretion of the user. Crude state and field outlines have been included for general reference. It includes public land survey grids to the section level. Users without direct access to GIS software can still use ArcReader™ with some query and data export limitations.

III. Produced Water Geochemistry Evaluation

Compiling a digital database of existing data and optimizing its accessibility with a digital map atlas laid were pre-cursors to the next phase of this project—conducting an in-depth evaluation of produced water geochemistry. The evaluation included interpretation as well as application to the practical aspects of the project objectives. This section is a high-level discussion of the results of the geochemical evaluation. Appendix C contains a detailed discussion of the analyses and interpretations.

The Process of Geochemical Analyses

First, aggregate produced water composition database were analyzed to establish regional trends and demonstrate potential uses for water chemistry as a tool to identify and remediate production of unwanted water. Geochemical interpretations were based on high-graded regional subsets and local samples collected as part of this project. Fig. I-1 is an index map showing general distribution of the data, which includes historical sample distribution and locations sampled and analyzed.

Then, new samples were collected specifically for the geochemical water evaluation. Data cluster of samples were chosen from areas known for their anomalous character or high-profile development activities. These areas were Table Rock, Waltman/Cave Gulch, Pinedale and Wild Rose Fields (fig. I-1). Appendix B includes a detailed discussion of each area. Fig. III-1 is a generalized stratigraphic column identifying the major units sampled and their geologic ages.

Finally, we performed three types of analyses on the formation water samples:

1. Major and minor elements
2. Stable isotopes (oxygen and hydrogen)
3. Strontium radiogenic isotopes

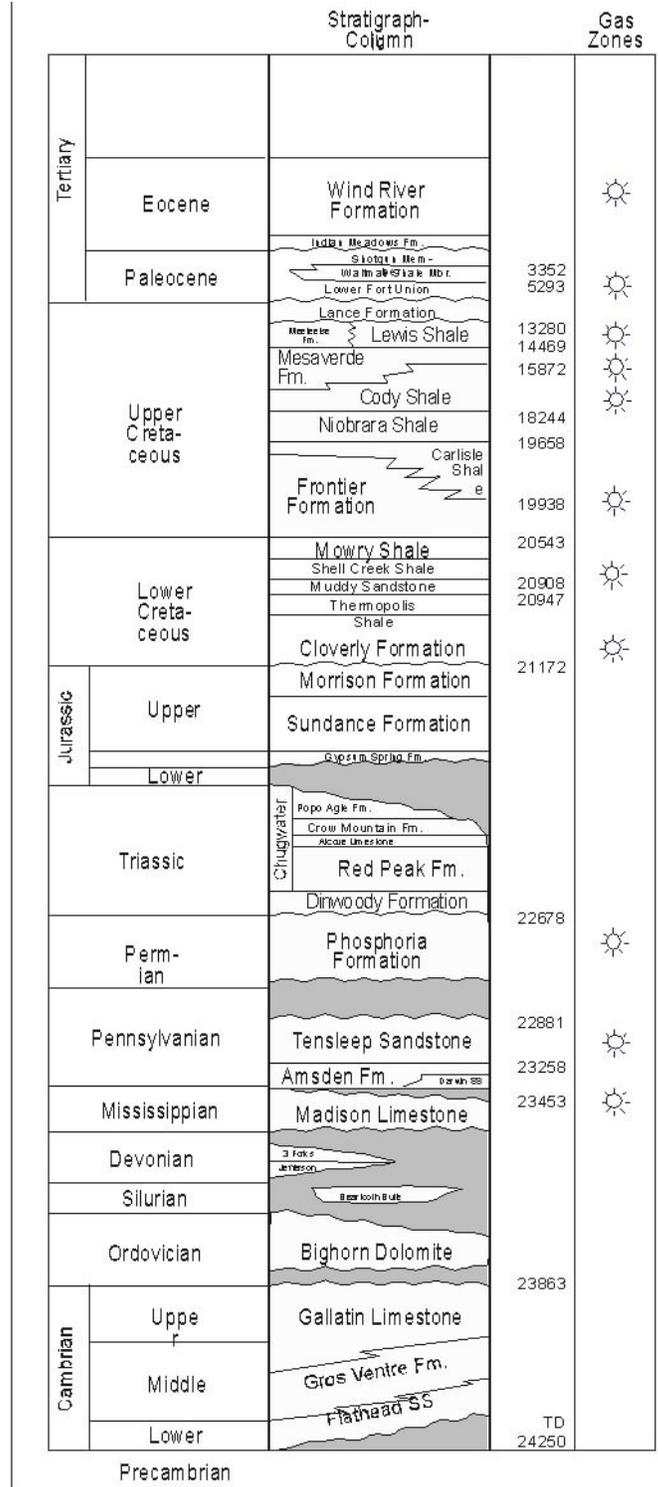


Fig. III-1. Stratigraphic column identifying major units & their ages

Assertions

From our analysis of formation waters produced from wells in the core study areas of Greater Green (GGRB) and Wind River Basin we assert that there is no large-scale fluid movement. Instead there are smaller areas of water moving along faults and other breaks in the vertical continuity of the basin fill, *more specifically*:

Depositional Environment of Host Rock

The main control on formation water chemistry is the original depositional environment of the host rock. The following evidence supports this assertion:

- There is little to no relationship between salinity of produced water and the depth of recovery for the three main producing horizons: Lance, Mesaverde, and Frontier formations (fig. III-2)

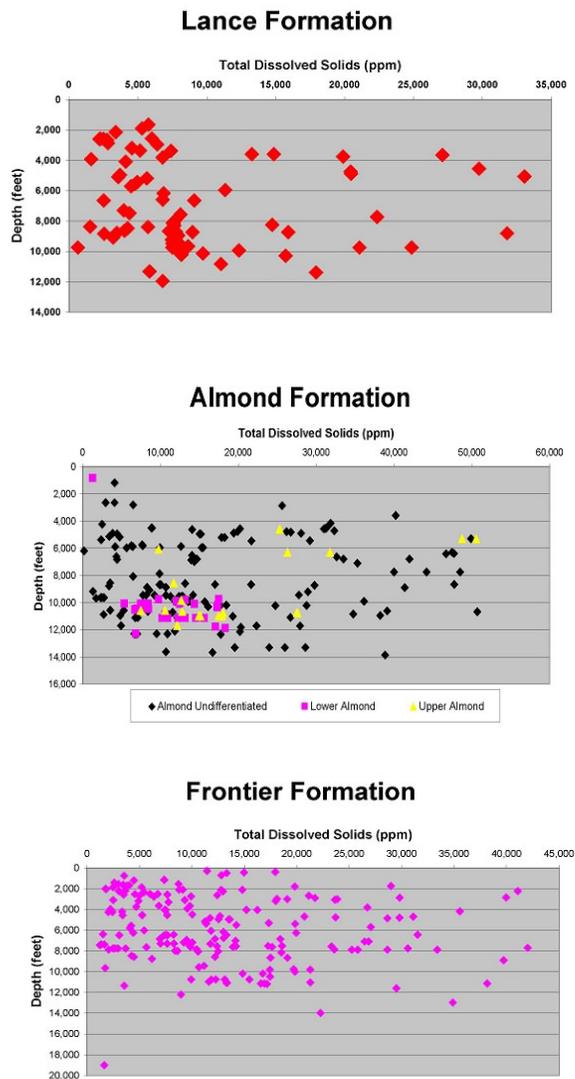


Fig. III-2. Salinity vs., depth for Lance, Almond and Frontier (Enlarged in Appendix C-20)

- The Frontier and Mesaverde formations are generally more saline, i.e., they exhibit wider ranges of salinity than the Lance formation waters. This is consistent with the marine affinities of the Frontier and the Mesaverde formations whereas the Lance is considered non-marine in origin and shows a fresher average salinity with less range (Table III-1).

Table III-1. Range of TDS from water analyses by formation

Formation	Range
Frontier	1,500 and 42,000 ppm
Almond	1,700 and 50,000 ppm
Lance	600 and 33,000 ppm

Both the Frontier and Mesaverde formations, in general, represent retrograde transgressive sequences, and in the study area are overlain with thick sequences of marine shale.

Thus, those formations deposited in marine environments produce water that tends to have higher total dissolved solids (TDS), has chloride as its dominant anion, and whose deuterium isotopes are less negative as compared to formations deposited in non-marine environments. Those deposited in non-marine environments tend to produce water that is fresher, has bicarbonate as the dominant anion, and has deuterium isotopes that are more negative (Table III-1).

The overall lower TDS of the Lance formation, both in the average and the range, is in keeping with its non-marine origin as compared to the marine Frontier formation.

- Where the Almond formation can be divided into upper and lower units, two distinct salinity populations are present. The Upper Almond, of marine origin, shows a wider range of TDS and a higher average TDS than the Lower Almond, which is predominantly of non-marine origin (Table III-2).

Table III-2. Range of TDS by salinity population

Salinity Populations	Range
Upper Almond	19,000 ppm
Lower Almond	13,000 ppm
Lance	9,000 ppm

The overall lower TDS of the Lance formation, both in the average and the range, is in keeping with its non-marine origin as compared to the marine Frontier formation.

Assessing Anomalies Against the Base

Second Assertion: Local salinities, TDS values or isotope signatures, at extreme variance to regional formation or facies norms, represent vertical disruption of the basin fill and fluid or charge transport along permeability conduits associated with basement faulting.

- Water samples collected along major lineaments or areas of high surface lineament density exhibit anomalous local values of salinity, TDS or isotopes in contrast to regional means for these same values. See Appendix C for a complete discourse on this significant assertion.
- Water samples collected along major lineaments or areas of high surface lineament density exhibit anomalous local values of salinity, TDS or isotopes in contrast to regional means for these same values. This phenomenon is exhibited in fig. V-10, and Appendix C figs. C-32 and C-33 where individual attributes such as R_w , isotopes, and saturation indices exhibit local departures from overall geographic trends established by relatively higher density sampling. See Appendix C for a complete discourse on this significant assertion.
- *Some local and regional geologic problems can best be understood through interpretation of chemical and isotopic compositions of produced formation waters.*

Geochemical attributes afford significant potential for impact on near and long-term exploration and development activities when properly sampled, analyzed, and interpreted. *A geodatabase is a powerful approach as it enables rapid evaluation of local analytical results and identification of anomalies within a regional geologic context.*

IV. Working Model for Reservoir Development

Background

Data from the produced water database, geochemistry, field demonstration phases of this project, as well as public information sources were used to develop a working model for movement of gas and water through low permeability basins within a framework of basin history.

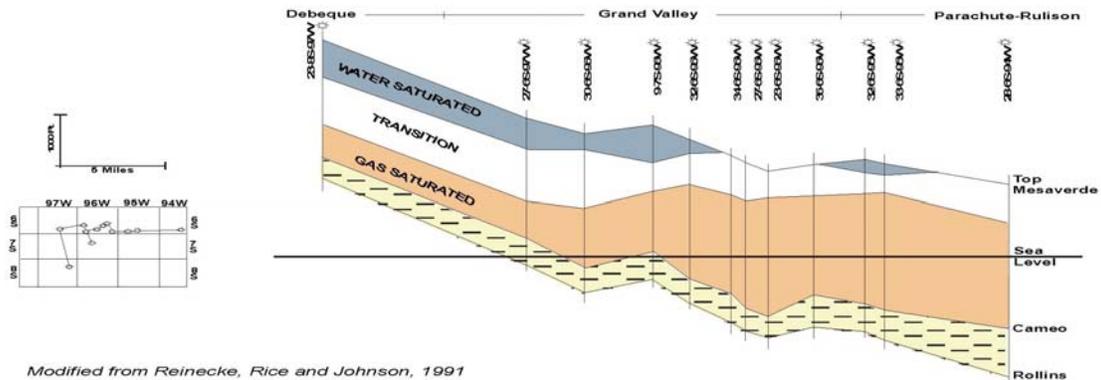
The nature and occurrence of moveable water, geomechanics, stratigraphy, and reservoir engineering guided our conceptualization of tight gas reservoir development. Knowledge of lithology, stratigraphy and basin history (particularly uplift) in the development of these enigmatic reservoirs was referenced extensively.

The results of the compositional study of the produced waters were applied, together with the authors' operating and research experience, to formulate working hypotheses about the origins of the produced waters. These hypotheses laid the foundation of our working model for strategies to avoid and/or remediate unwanted water production. The working model ensured consistency as our hypotheses were tested, refined, and ultimately incorporated into a conceptual model for water in tight gas reservoirs.

Iterations of the working model were presented at the AAPG Hedberg Tight Formation Gas Symposium in Vail, CO (April 2005) and at the 2005 AAPG national convention in Calgary, Alberta (June 2005). The Hedberg poster and the AAPG slides are included in Appendix D, which also includes an in-depth discussion of the reservoir development model.

Basin-Centered Gas Paradigm

The basin-centered gas paradigm postulates the presence of a large volume of gas-charged sediments at near irreducible water saturation. Located in a down dip position relative to an up dip water saturated volume it is depicted in fig. IV-5. Such units generally yield gas shows when drilled but are projected to have very low permeability to water.



Modified from Reinecke, Rice and Johnson, 1991

Cross-section showing relative position of gas-saturated, transition, and water-saturated zones

Fig. IV-5. Williams Fork fm Southern Piceance basic example

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) considers these to be continuous class hydrocarbon deposits. Since the early phases of basin-centered gas exploitation, it was commonly believed industry-wide that the only significant unknown variable was permeability—that exploitation of these widespread resources could be pursued on a statistical basis.

As development continues, it's become clear that this concept was limited by the data available. Encountering excess (moveable) water is a far more frequent outcome in recent years as tight gas development operations intensify. The rising risk of unwanted water production has prompted efforts (2004, Shanley and others) to re-evaluate the basin-centered paradigm.

Working Concept Premises

A major given for this study was a basin with a mixed fill of coarse and fine-grained clastic sediments with sufficient source, heat and reservoir to provide moderate gas charge, reservoirs and seals. We incorporated the following from our study of subsurface waters, previous work by others, and experience to frame our conceptualization of tight gas reservoir development within such a basin.

1. Produced water compositions generally reflect host rock environments of deposition. (2004 Henry and Billingsley).
2. Areas of faulting and vertical transport may be indicated by anomalous chemical and/or isotopic compositions as measured against background regional trends (2004 Henry and Billingsley).
3. One study of water chemistry suggests gas and water production from coals. (1998 Smith and Surdam).
4. Gravity segregation of some gas accumulations in the Greater Green River basin is well-documented (2004 Shanley, et al).
5. The impact of stress dependency on relative permeability is mathematically corroborated by Ostensen (1983), Byrnes (1997) and Shanley (2004).
6. The significant role of temperature in generation of subsurface stress as established by Warpinski (1989), Engelder (1985), and others.
7. The role of poro-elastic effects during uplift of gas charged sediments as documented by Katahara and Corrigan (2002).
8. Last, but not least we took into account that:
 - The ability of water to flow in the deep subsurface is more restricted than gas; water is more easily characterized chemically than gas.
 - Most significant large-scale tight gas basins have undergone significant uplift after gas generation.

Two-Phase Tight Gas Reservoir Development

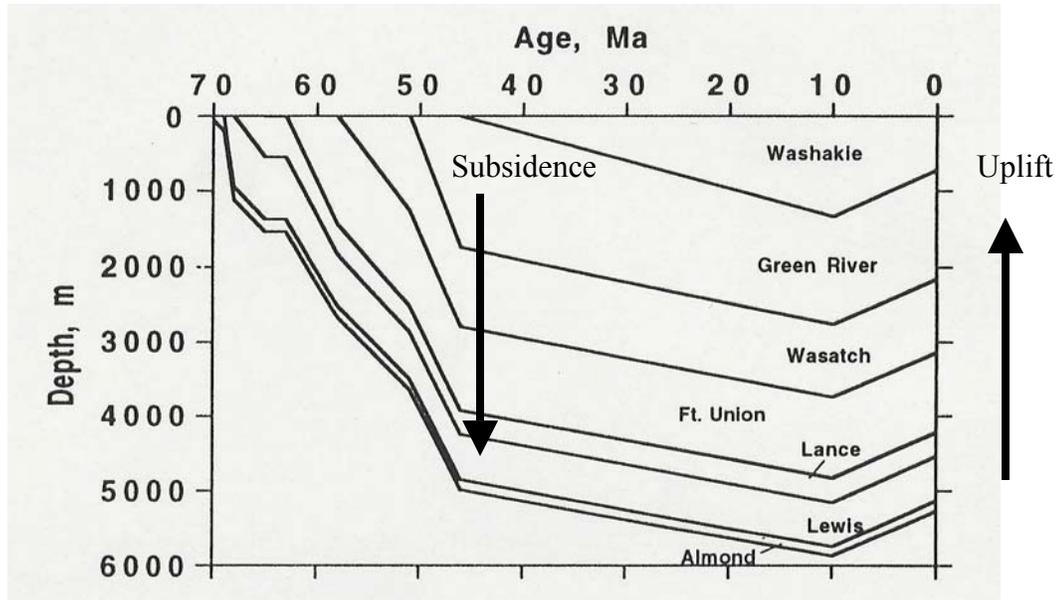
Introduction

Bourne (2001) observed that natural fracture development, particularly type, was influenced by whether net mean confining stress was increasing or decreasing when failure occurred. He used a modified Griffith –Coulomb failure criterion to show that shear failure in rocks would most likely occur when net mean stress was increasing, and that extensional failure would most likely occur when the net mean stress was decreasing (commonly during uplift).

Widespread extensional failure during uplift can be predicted using poroelastic (1993 Higgs and Bradley) or viscoelastic (1989 Warpinski) methods. Engelder (1990) also demonstrated the potential for widespread failure during uplift using thermoelastic methods (the fixed-grips Griffith energy balance approach). Regardless of the method used—poroelastic, viscoelastic and thermoelastic—the potential for widespread extensional failure can be shown to occur during periods of falling mean confining stress. The overall direction of our investigation was influenced by the convergence of these methods.

Other factors in tight gas reservoir development parallel the two-stage increase-decrease pattern. It is generally accepted that hydrocarbon generation occurs during increasing burial and slows or ceases during uplift. The progressive mechanical and chemical destruction of original porosity and permeability is often referred to as “burial” diagenesis. The generation of abnormal pressures at depth is envisioned as a consequence of increasing burial. The response of the basin fill to increasing burial (increasing stress) is different than it is to uplift.

A major common theme in the geologic history of the Rocky Mountain tight gas basins is a late stage uplift event. Fig. IV-6 is a representative example from the Washakie basin (1994 MacGowan et al). Cycles of energy input (increasing temperature and confining stress), and release (decreasing temperature and confining stress) control mechanical strains, and chemical diagenesis of sediments through time. This common sequence of events across several basins (not necessarily in severity or timing) prompted us to use frame the burial-uplift cycle and its impact on the basin fill as an organizational framework for our working model.



Although depth of burial, amounts of uplift and timing vary between basins, the Rocky Mountain tight gas basins share a common history of subsidence followed by later uplift. Modified after MacGowan et al, 1994.

Fig. IV-6. Burial history central Washakie basin

Basin Scale Processes

Stages in tight gas reservoir development

Stages in tight gas reservoir development (fig. IV-7) can be organized into two phases, each defined by the direction of net mean stress change over time: Phase I is a time of net mean stress increase and Phase II is a time of net mean stress decrease. Reservoir development is also highly influenced by mechanical properties of the reservoir, mineralogy (provenance), proportions of mineralogies present in different facies and diagenesis

Key Development Stages of the Working Model

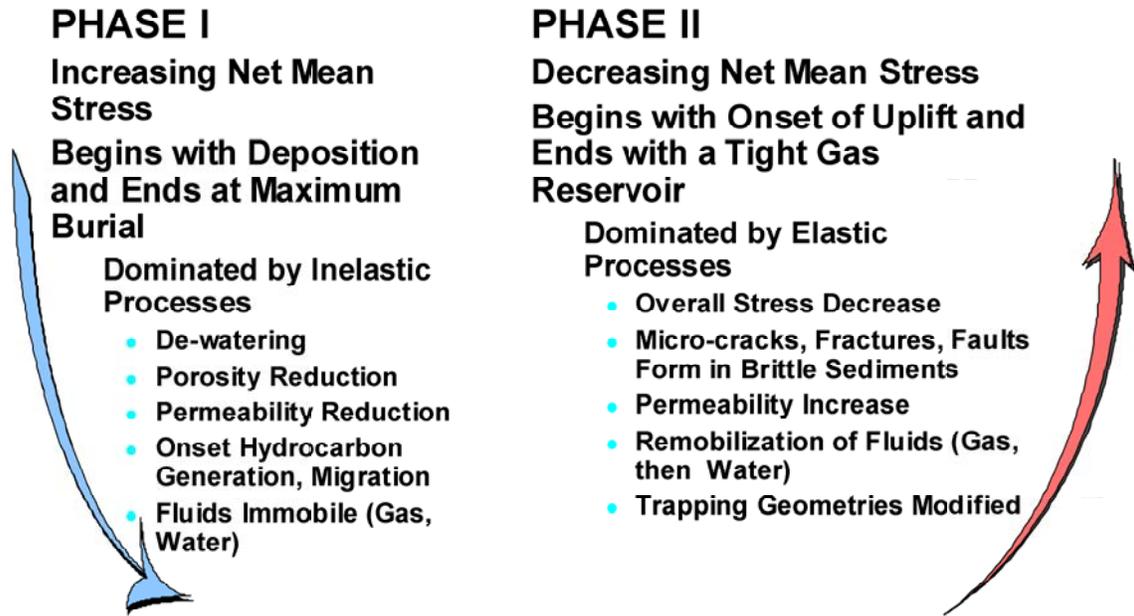


Fig. IV-7. The working model

Phase I (Burial)

Phase 1 of tight gas reservoir development begins with the deposition of the reservoir/source system and ends with the system at maximum temperature and burial depth. During Phase I the mechanical and chemical diagenetic effects of burial destroy a majority of the reservoir's primary porosity and permeability. Hydrocarbon generation occurs during the later stages of Phase I and peaks near maximum depth of burial.

At the end of Phase I the potential reservoir has reached its minimum porosity and permeability. It may be locked in the “permeability jail,” which Byrnes defined as conditions of porosity, permeability and relative saturation in a two-phase system such that neither phase present (gas or water for example) has significant permeability (2004 oral comm, Shanley). Permeability jail is a useful concept to mark the transition between developmental Phases I and II.

Phase II (Basin Uplift)

The onset of basin uplift marks the beginning of Phase II. Rock strength declines with net confining stress. Effective porosity and permeability increase (particularly in quartz rich sediments) as microfractures develop along the margins of shrinking quartz grains (tabular pore throats) and connect previously isolated primary porosity. Fig. IV-8 is a schematic illustration of the grain expansion and contraction process.

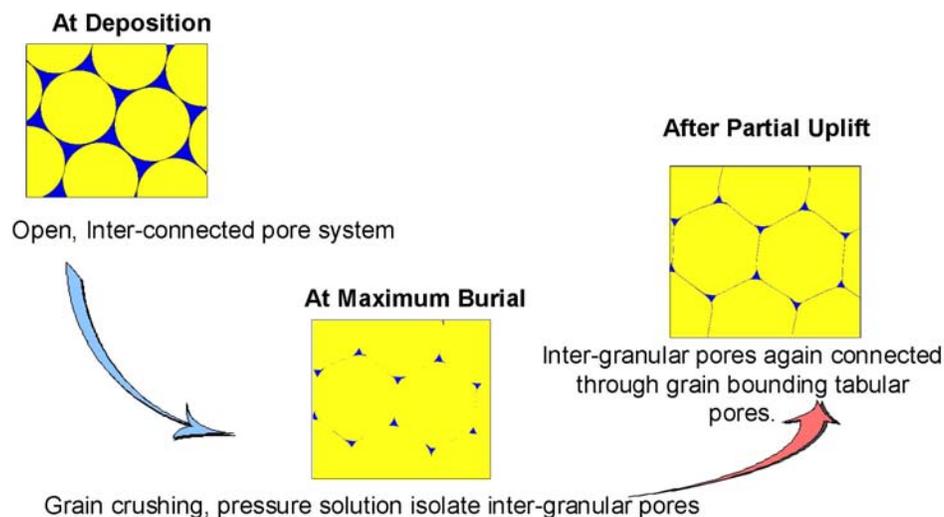


Fig. IV-8. Conceptual grain expansion & contraction

During Phase II of the developmental cycle, net mean stress on the rocks declines and permeability increases. Thermoelastic and lithostatic confining stresses decline while pressures from fluids and gases in pore spaces remain constant. The individual grains of the rock matrix contract, the external confining stresses decrease, and fractures develop along the grain boundaries. Remobilization of fluids (gas, water) begins—with gas expanding to fill developing pore space—and increasing its saturation with respect to water.

This process continues until the strains can no longer be accommodated within the matrix structure and macro fracturing begins. The pore throats expand throughout this process. Gas, both as free gas in pores and sorbed gas in coals and organic shales, expands to fill the voids.

When relative permeability conditions for flow are satisfied the substances previously trapped in the pore spaces begin to migrate. It is likely that gas moves first and most easily (as compressible gas expands to fill any increased porosity) while increasing its saturation at the expense of the water. This initiates gravity segregation, which generally leaves the original waters from deposition in place. As the uplift process continues, shrinkage of matrix grains reduces net confining stress and increases permeability.

Basin uplift cycles are most often driven by tectonic activity. The lateral accommodation required during this process typically involves faulting. Displacements from basement faulting will propagate upwards through the basin fill and disrupt its vertical integrity, allowing some migration of fluids across unit boundaries, leading to localized migration of formation water. Depending on the timing, water composition, temperature, and pressure conditions, mobility of waters across bed boundaries potentially alters the mineral stability fields, potentially enabling development of secondary porosity, as diagrammatically shown in fig. IV-9.

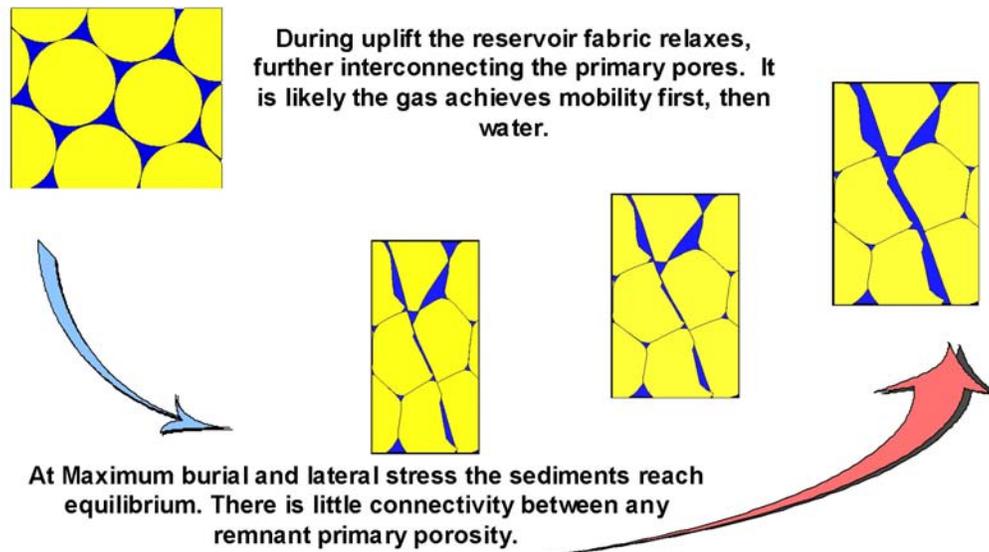


Fig. IV-9. Influence of lateral stress

Application of differential lateral stress during the development process imparts a weak planar fabric on the reservoir sediments perpendicular to the paleo-principal horizontal stress. Following relaxation of the lateral stress the planar surfaces open and support further enhancement of permeability. Extension fractures may develop in high strain zones parallel to axial trends of anticlines. Permeability development may be irregularly distributed according to the reservoir mineralogy, lithology and strain history of the local area.

The macro-stratigraphic architecture of the depositional systems remains intact unless disrupted by faulting. Interbedded or overlying ductile shales remain intact and function as lateral or vertical permeability barriers. Interbedded coals and organic-rich shales may also store hydrocarbons and eventually release gas as reservoir pressures decline. The exact contribution of interbedded organic-rich shales and coals to reservoir storage and flow is poorly understood possibly underestimated. The uplift process; improves permeability for tight gas reservoirs, preserves seals and releases charge.

With sufficient cooling, pore pressure, and lithostatic stress release, lithologically controlled bed scale extensional failure in the reservoir unit is induced, forming macro fractures. With sufficient uplift (and associated strain), the brittle reservoir may develop a large-aperture, saturated, extensional fracture system. The onset of macro fracturing increases total permeability within the reservoir and further facilitates gravity segregation of the gas and water.

Large-scale uplift events are typically associated with faulting of the basement. Late stage basement faulting will propagate upwards through the sedimentary section, disrupting lateral continuity of sediments with varying scales of shear fractures, and further facilitating gravity segregation of gas and water. These fault-related shear fracture systems in reservoirs can create areas of high permeability. If they coincide with high gas saturation, they produce gas at high rates. Likewise, if fractures coincide with areas of high water saturation, they can produce large volumes of water at high rates. Water will move through open natural fractures of any type or size when saturation conditions for flow are met.

Summary

The outcomes of the burial-uplift reservoir development run the gamut of structural, stratigraphic, and relative-permeability controlled, reservoir-trapping configurations. Depending on their stage of reservoir and trap development, these configurations show a variety of characteristics. Many are dual permeability, dual (and sometimes triple) porosity systems with some degree of gravity segregation. Uncovering the full range of potential commercial reservoir settings may require tools and concepts that shift away from conventional and historical analogs.

We envision the development of a tight gas reservoir as a process involving multiple simultaneous process threads. The process threads are inter-related and often involve irreversible changes to the chemical and physical structure of the basin fill. As a consequence, alterations to the basin fill in response to the subsidence process are not simply reversed on uplift. Rather, basin fill develops different features thru different alteration mechanisms.

V. Wild Rose Field Demonstration

Overview

The purpose of the field demonstration was to apply our working conceptual model, for reducing unwanted water production, in a practical setting. The team performed a thorough reservoir characterization and simulation of the field demonstration area to establish a base from which water avoidance or remediation strategies could be developed.

Site Selection

The Wild Rose field matched our profile and was selected for the demonstration because the operator (BP) recognized the need to minimize water production for the field while maximizing the amount of gas produced. Wild Rose Field is located along the Wamsutter arch area of the Washakie basin to the west of the Echo Springs/Standard Draw field complex (fig. V-1). The operator contributed the following data for study: well logs, 3D seismic, production data and water chemistry data. In addition, a number of new water samples were collected.

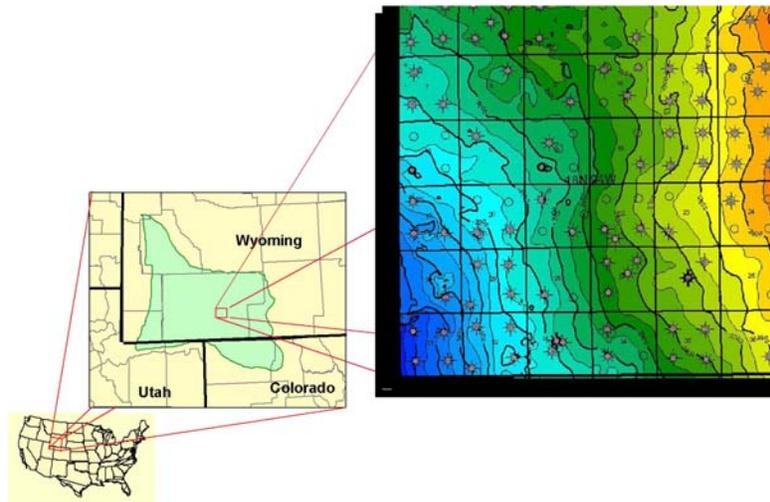


Fig. V-1. Wild Rose Field demonstration location map

The Geologic Characterization of the Field Demonstration Area

The reservoir characterization followed routine practice for construction of a reservoir model. The reservoir units were mapped using locally correlative electric log (elog) markers. Available core and log data was integrated petrophysically to generate reservoir porosity and saturations.

The 3D seismic data was mapped at the Almond (primary reservoir interval) and at a prominent deep reflector believed to be near the Paleozoic level. Mapping of reservoir units and 3D seismic was completed using the Petra software package.

The Petra project files with data (no seismic) and grids are included in Appendix E. Water samples from wells not previously sampled were collected and analyzed. Completion information and production data for the area was acquired, edited for quality and sequenced in time for the simulation.

Fig. V-2 is a general stratigraphic column for Wyoming.

Upper Cretaceous	Maestrichtian	Lance Fm.		
		Fox Hills Fm.		
		Lewis Fm.		
	Campanian	Mesaverde Group	Almond	Upper Almond
				Lower Almond
		Ericson Formation	Canyon Creek / Pine Ridge	
			Allen Ridge Formation	

Modified from Roehler (1990)

Fig. V-2. Stratigraphic column for Upper Cretaceous in Washakie basin, Wyoming

An Almond type log summarizing depositional environments and regional water salinities is shown in fig. V-3.

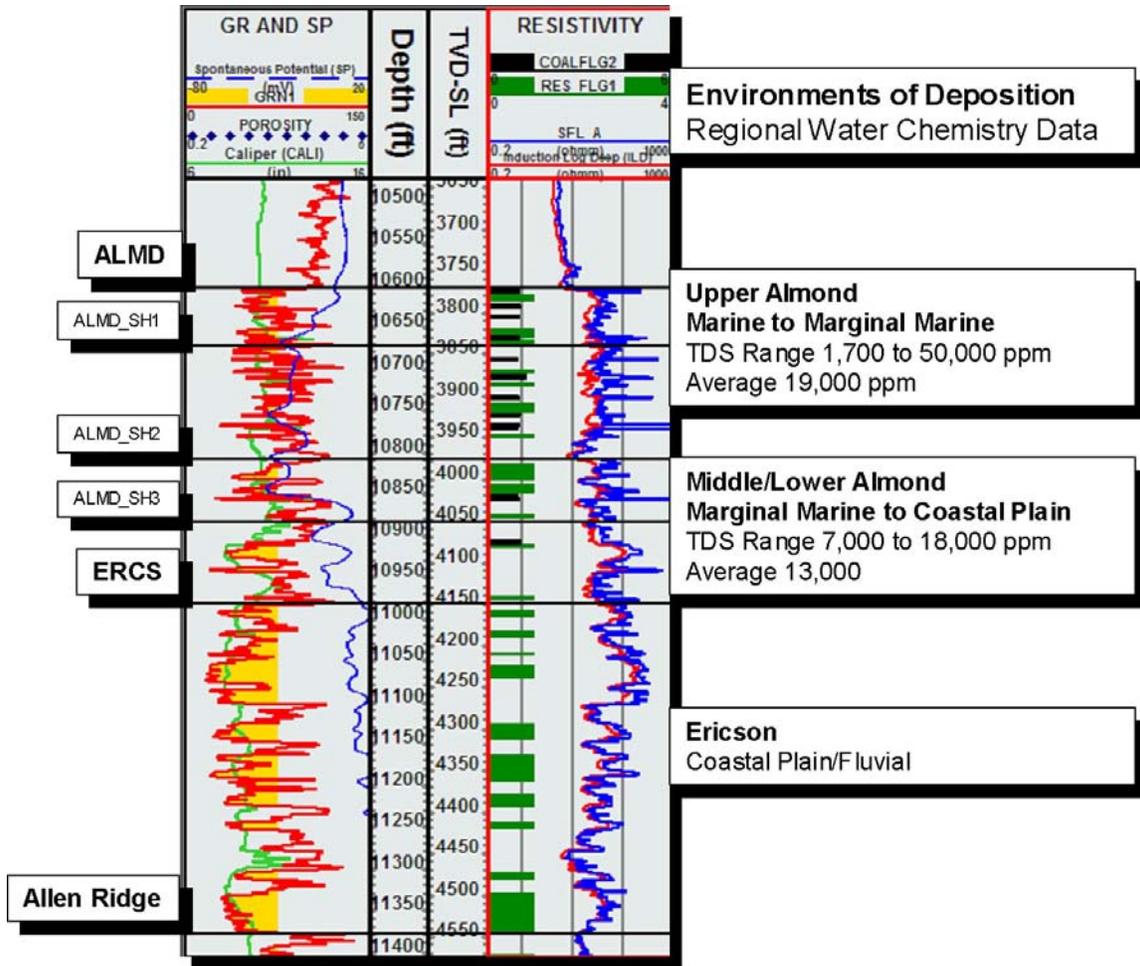


Fig. V-3. Wild Rose type log

The primary reservoir unit is the Almond formation of the Mesaverde Group. It is composed of stacked, laterally discontinuous marine and estuarine sandstones interbedded with coals, siltstones and shales. In general, individual sandstones are thin (1-20 feet), coarsening upward sequences. Local channels do occur, and are cleaner, higher quality reservoirs.

There is a prominent flooding surface within the Almond formation (ALMD_SH2) that spans the study area. Above the Almond is the Lewis formation, a marine shale/siltstone sequence that forms the top seal of the reservoir interval. The upper part of the sequence (L-Marker) is high gamma ray “hot” bentonite shale—a prominent stratigraphic marker and seismic horizon. Below the Almond formation is the Ericson formation. Cleaner, more porous fluvial channel sandstones characterize the Ericson formation.

Regionally, north to south trending Upper Almond retrograde marine barrier island facies produce large volumes of gas in fields such as Echo Springs/Standard Draw. Wild Rose field lies to the west of the Standard Draw barrier island facies, thus the bulk of the field's production is from stacked thin marine, estuarine and channel facies of the Lower and Upper Almond back bar facies (fig. V-4).

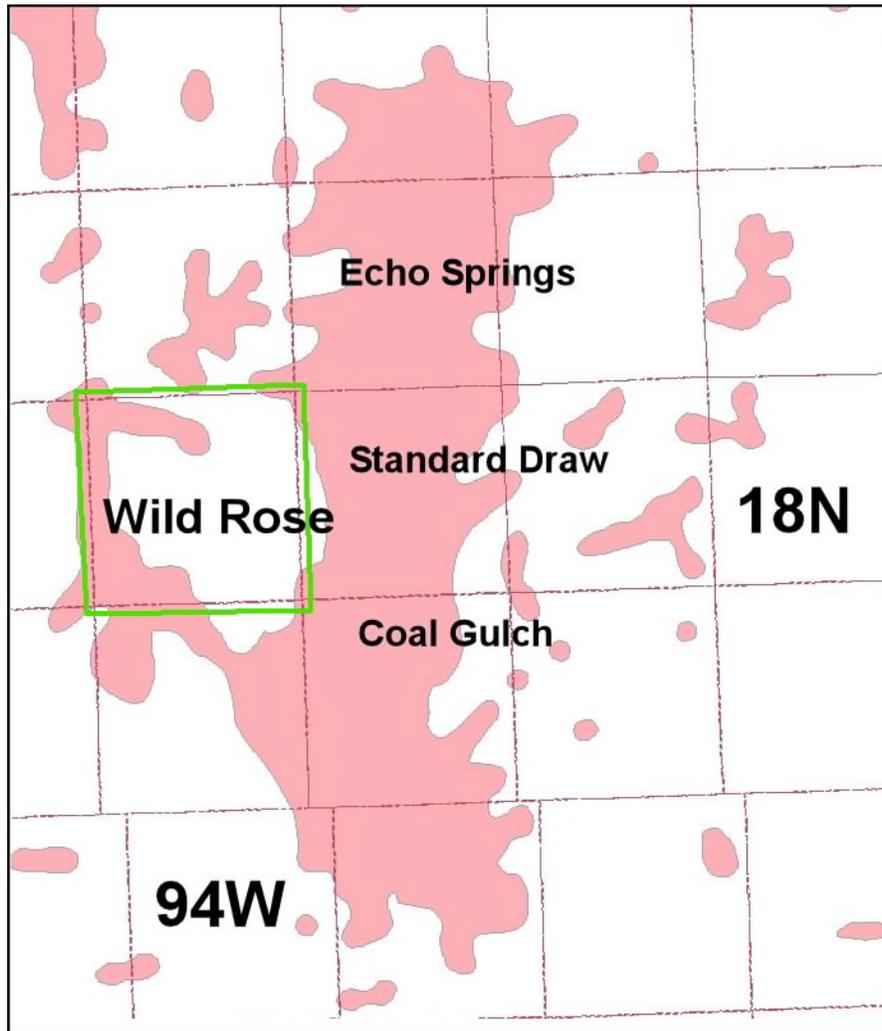
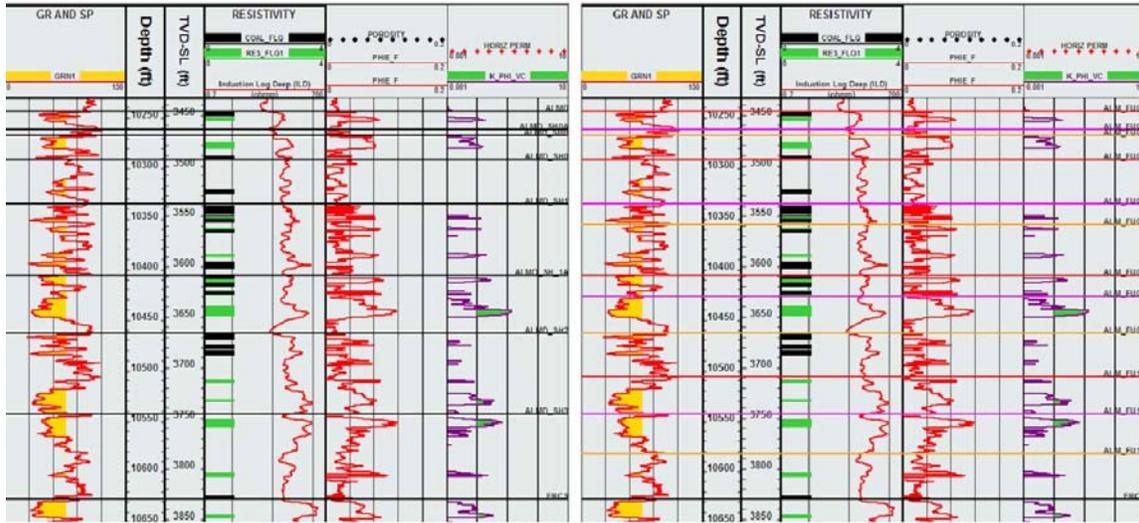


Fig. V-4. Local Wild Rose field index map

The Almond was broken into eight lithostratigraphic units (fig. V-5) based upon local flooding surfaces (shales) and correlative coal beds. The reservoir interval was then subdivided into 23 flow units for petrophysical characterization and simulation.

Champlin 293 A2

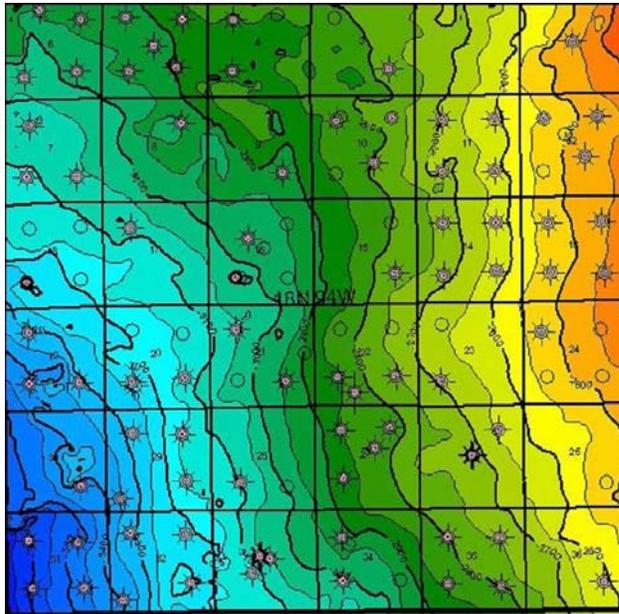


Flow unit picks match ARI stratigraphic picks except where subdivided.

Fig. V-5. Flow unit and stratigraphic pick relationships

These units were further defined as flow units for petrophysical study and put into the reservoir simulation model as displayed in fig. V-4. The ALMD_SH2 is a regional flooding surface and can be correlated with some confidence across the demonstration area. Other markers are less continuous, as are individual sandstones between the marine flooding events.

An upper Almond structure map was constructed using seismic and well control. The Almond strikes northwest to southeast across the study area and dips gently to the southwest (fig. V-6).



Map contour interval is 50 feet. Total depth change across the township is approximately 1,100 feet. Changes in the Almond strike are construed to represent small scale (+/- 50 ft) faulting at the reservoir level.

Fig. V-6. Top Almond subsea structure from 3D seismic and wells

Local strike changes, some abrupt, occur as the result of warping and small scale faulting that trends northeast-southwest across the township. The map constructed at the Paleozoic level from 3D seismic is considerably more complex with a clear northeast-southwest trending fault system bifurcating in the northeast portion of the study area. Breccias, vertical stylolites, extension fractures and other evidence of strain are commonly observed in Almond cores throughout the Wamsutter area.

The small scale faulting and changes in strike observed at the Almond level are interpreted to reflect the displacements across the basement faults. Stratigraphic complexity and low seismic frequency content, however, precluded detailed three dimensional fault interpretations within the Almond itself.

A prominent high-energy reflector, inferred to be near the Paleozoic, is displaced across a complex northeast-southwest trending fault system at around 20,000 feet subsurface (14,000 feet subsea). There are observable strike changes reflecting numerous smaller displacement subparallel faults distributed across the township (fig. V-8).

The prominent deep (possibly Paleozoic) reflector was mapped in detail for the demonstration area (fig. V-7).

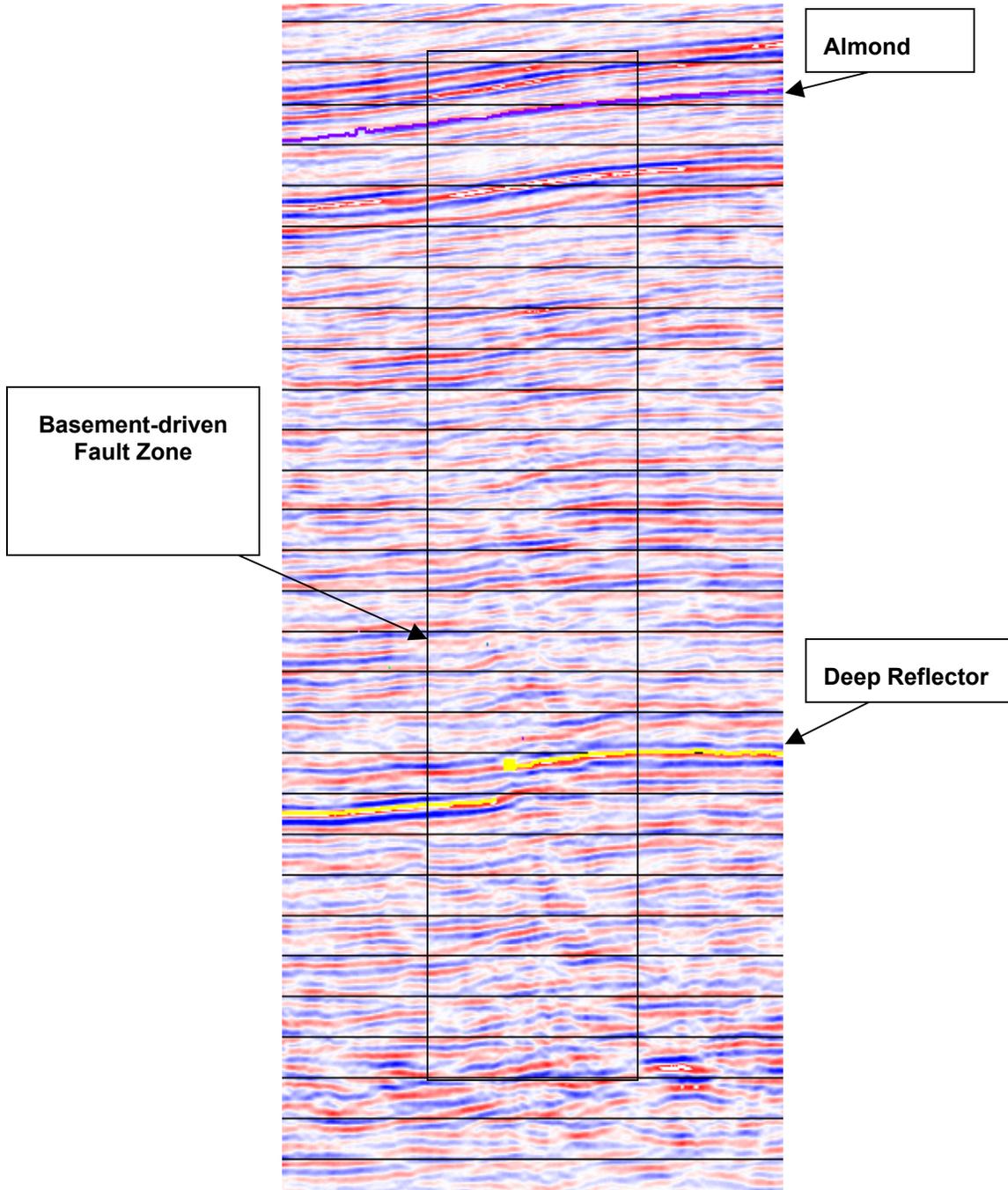


Fig. V-7 Northwest-southeast seismic time section

The Paleozoic structure was selected for mapping because of its potential to affect the distribution of natural fracture permeability within the Almond reservoir. Depth-wise there was sufficient displacement across the faults to determine the three-dimensional geometry of the fault system.

The faults dip predominantly southeast and show reverse displacement. The system bifurcates in the northeast corner of the demonstration area. A subset of faults, located to the southeast of the juncture, show northwest dip and reverse displacement (fig. V-8).

These faults lie immediately beneath the small closed Paleozoic structure in sections 23-24 (fig. V-8), and at the Almond level of the prominent southwest plunging antiform in the same sections. This movement at depth propagates upward, resulting in flexure and small scale faulting at the Almond interval and forms the prominent southwest plunging antiform at this level.

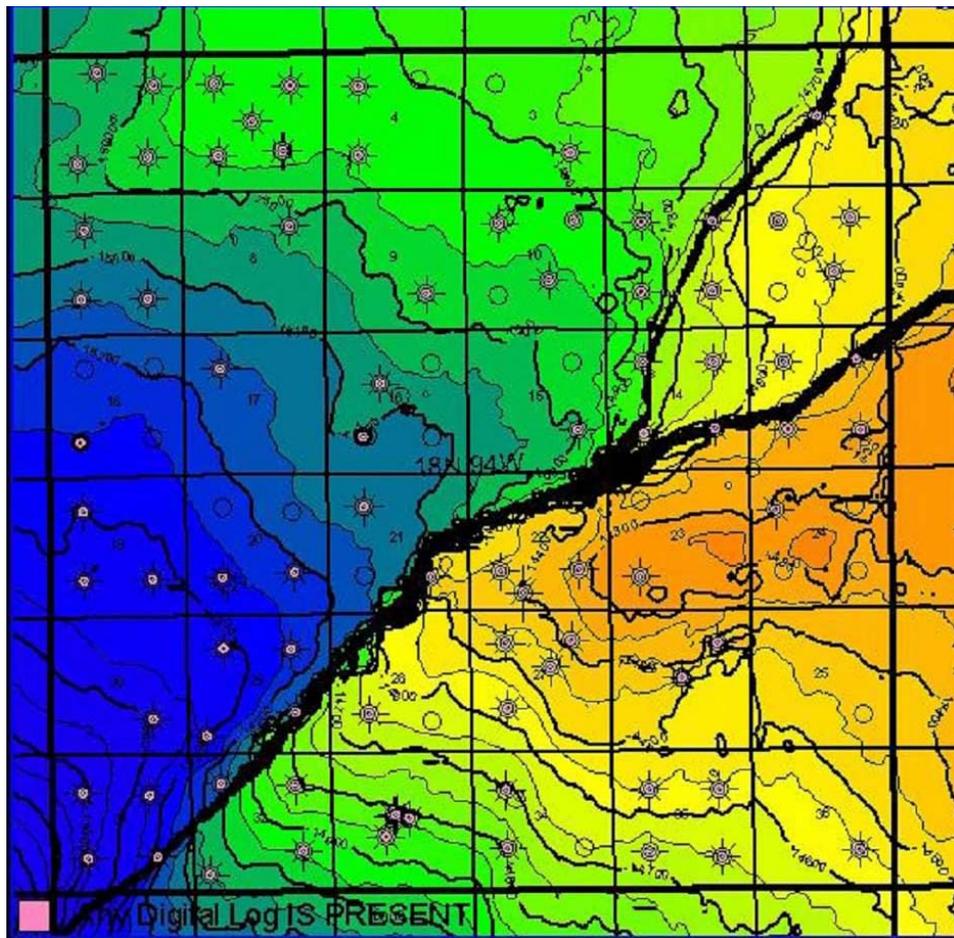
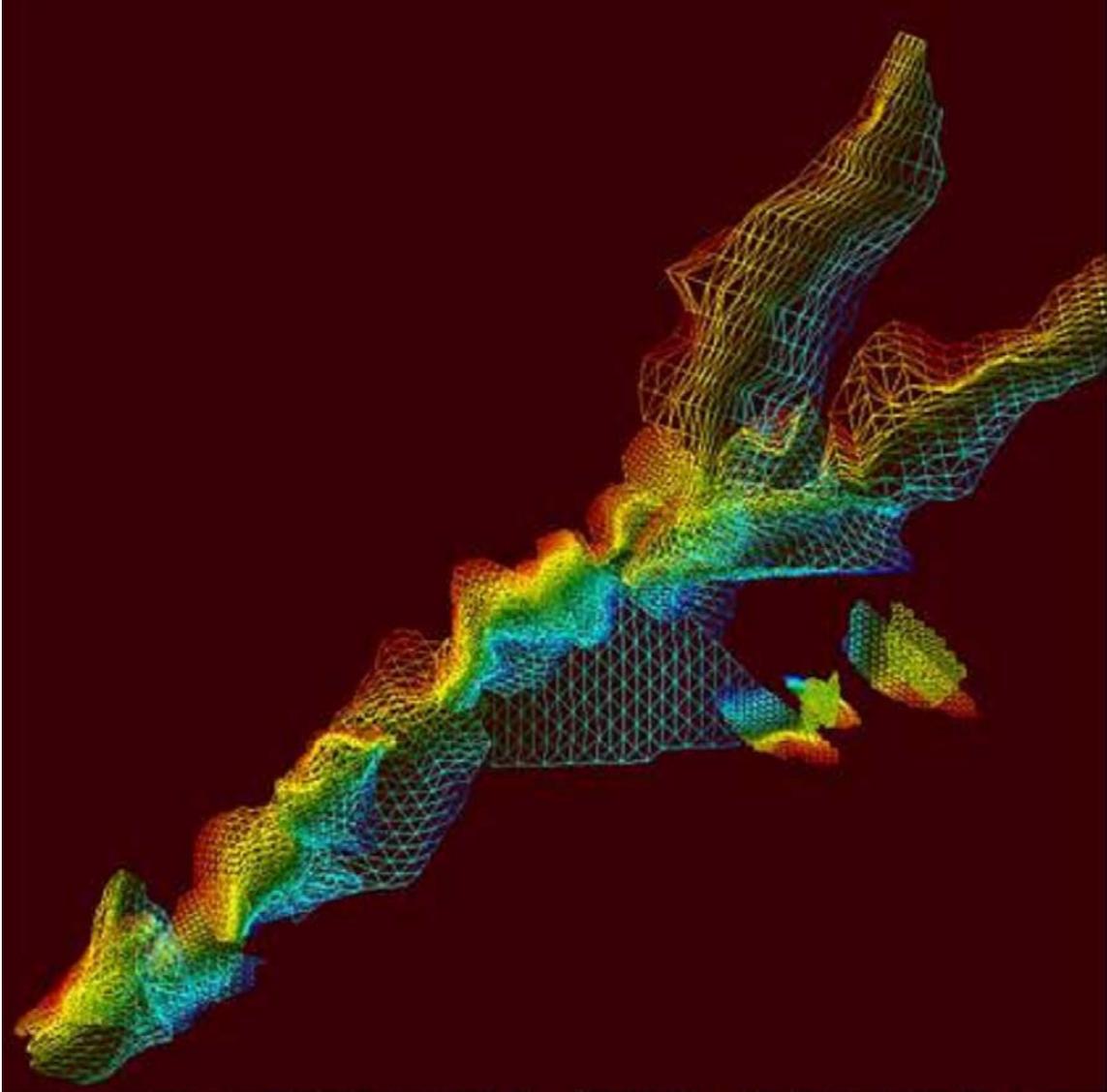


Fig. V-8. Paleozoic Depth Structure from 3D seismic

The deep Paleozoic fault system was exposed as a complex of over twenty anastomosing reverse faults (the wireframe in fig. V-9).



In this wireframe illustration of the deep fault system the wireframe elements reflect their relative depth in the subsurface, blue (deeper) to red (shallower). North is to the top of the screen capture and the area is the same as the depth structure maps of the Almond and Paleozoic horizons previously referenced.

Fig. V-9. Wireframe illustration of deep Paleozoic fault system

Petrophysical Reservoir Characterization

Particular attention and care was paid to the determination of reservoir properties from the well logs and core available, both inside the demonstration area and from the greater Wamsutter area. Our working concept suggested permeability and relative permeability would be key issues in the field demonstration.

A variety of approaches, techniques and calculation methods were scrutinized in order to derive a solid petrophysical model for determining saturation. The petrophysical aspects of the demonstration are summarized here and discussed in detail in Appendix E.

The primary tasks of the petrophysical reservoir characterization were:

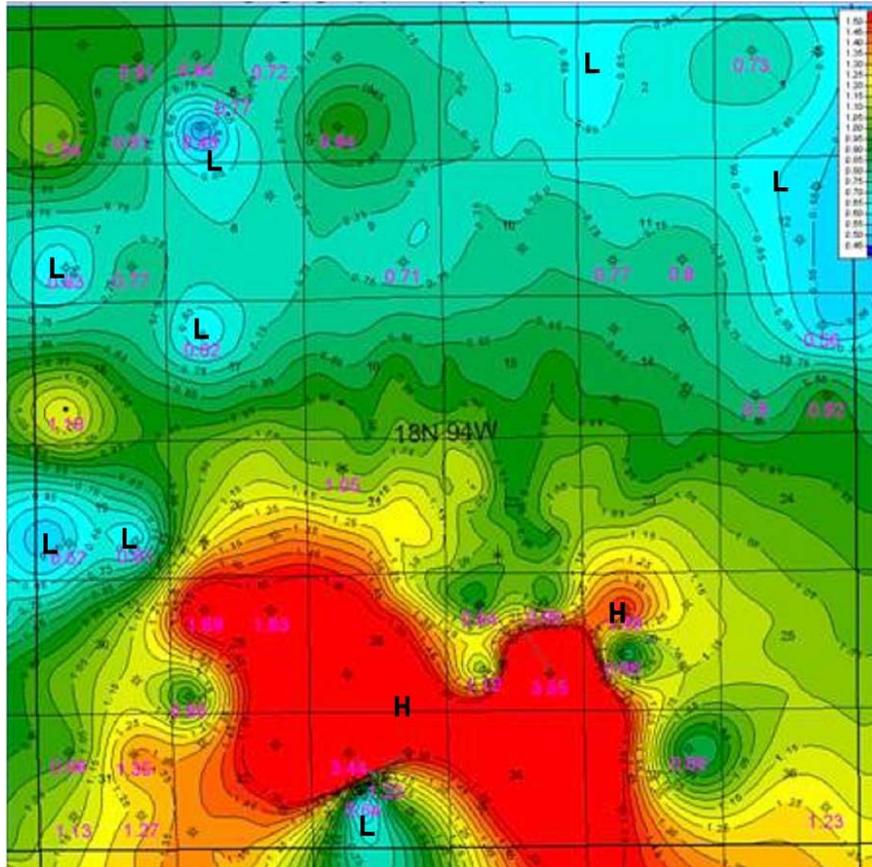
- Build a petrophysical model for clay volume, porosity, permeability, and water saturation based on openhole log suites and core data.
 - Review prior petrophysics and revise/incorporate as appropriate.
- Calibrate cased-hole pulsed neutron log response (TDT) to the petrophysical models developed for the openhole logs.
- Correct core data to in situ reservoir pressure conditions and shift, relative to logs.
- Utilize log suites to distinguish between gas and low salinity formation water.
- Define and distribute flow units based on stratigraphy, facies and petrophysical characteristics.
- Export and incorporate summations into a reservoir simulation model.

A total of 103 wells were loaded and screened for petrophysics. Seventy-one had openhole logs, and thirty-seven had cased hole logs. Of this 108, five had both cased and openhole logs. Eleven of the 103 wells were cored. Of the 103 wells, eighty-five were *fully processed* for petrophysics; the remaining wells had cased hole logs with limited or poor data sets. Production logging information was limited to one well within the demonstration area.

Present wellbore mechanical designs and operating practice precluded acquisition of additional logs during the project.

Rw Calibration

Produced water analyses were used to calibrate the petrophysical interpretation. Accurate in situ R_w values are critical to effective pay determination. Resistivity values from samples collected indicate a prominent high R_w anomaly in the southwest portion of the demonstration area, immediately overlying the trace of the major basement fault (fig. V-10).

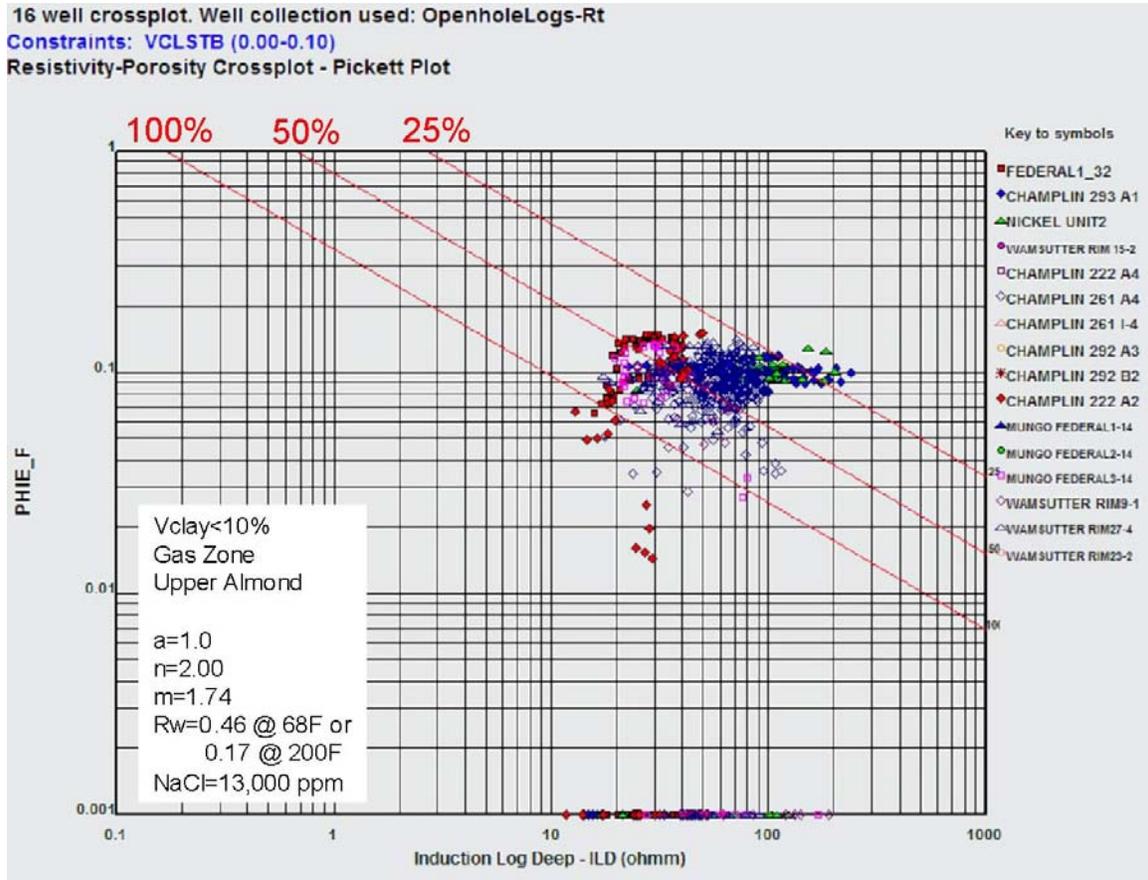


This map shows the average resistivity of the produced water samples (measured at 68 deg F) in the Wild Rose demonstration area. **H** indicates areas of high R_w and **L** indicates areas of lower R_w . There is a conspicuous high resistivity anomaly in sections 28, 29, 32, 33 and 34 that is most likely related to faulting.

Fig. V-10. Produced water R_w map of Wild Rose field demonstration area

Historical analyses were particularly valuable in this effort because they were typically collected from specific intervals within the Almond as opposed to the present-day practice of commingling the entire Almond section.

Spontaneous potential (SP) and resistivity ratio techniques were used to calibrate R_w , which as a reality check were then tested via Pickett plot methods (fig. V-11).

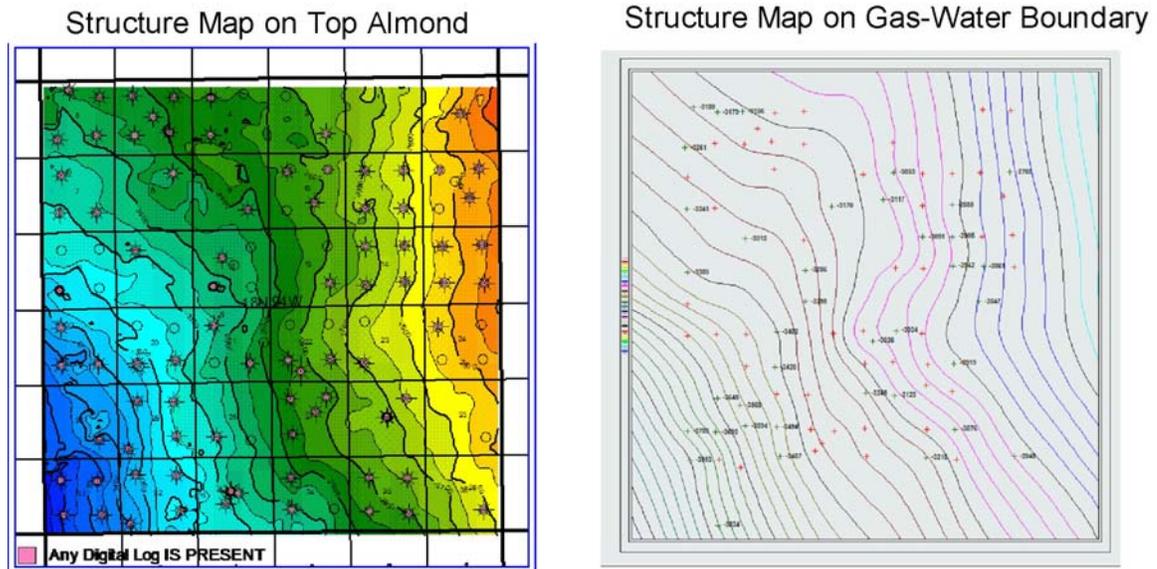


Using $R_w=0.46@68F$, Pickett plots show the gas-bearing intervals to calculate 25-60% water saturation.

Fig. V-11. Pickett plot gas zone – $R_w=0.46 @ 68F$

Some limited special core analysis data was available to support the saturation validity. Complete details and examples of this work are in Appendix E.

Vertically and laterally shifting R_w values make pay determination a challenge in this area. Combining the R_w and pay determination techniques led to the identification of an apparent salinity interface that appears to delineate the boundary between discontinuous gas charged sands of the Almond and underlying sands with lower gas saturation (fig. V-12) although it neither follows structure rigorously nor appears to be flat.



Gas-water boundary follows dipping structure, but not rigorously; therefore, is a boundary between discontinuous gas-charged & aquifer sands rather than an actual contact.

Fig. V-12. Inferred SP-GWC structure map

Despite mineralogical and textural complexity, a high-quality petrophysical model (Appendix E) for V_{clay} , porosity, permeability and water saturation was developed and applied. It works well in most openhole logs and in approximately 60% of the cased hole logs but requires extensive quality control. Permeability was found to be affected by both porosity and V_{clay} .

The conclusion that SP and resistivity ratios can be used effectively to determine changes in formation water (R_w) is a valuable, immediately applicable outgrowth of this demonstration. Although the theory and techniques themselves are old, they have not been applied of late because of the difficulties in calibration against R_w . Improved understanding of R_w brought about by this project may make the techniques valuable tools in pay determination and water avoidance.

The results of the structural mapping and petrophysical study were broken down into flow units, gridded across the demonstration area and sampled on a regular grid node basis for incorporation into the reservoir simulation input files. Initially, a natural fracture permeability grid was generated using Discrete Fracture Network (DFN) techniques and integrated into the permeability grids for each layer. There was no local fracture data with which to calibrate the network; however, and subsequent permeability adjustments

(increases) required to achieve an effective history match across the field were sufficiently extreme as to make the DFN permeability approach irrelevant.

The Reservoir Simulation

Reservoir simulation technology was used to link the petrophysical reservoir characterization with the actual production behavior of the field. This was done to identify relationships between water production and reservoir characterization that could be used to minimize water production during continuing development. Historical gas and water production data, completion intervals, gathering pressures, and other engineering data were compiled into simulator files together with the earth science and petrophysical interpretations.

Matching Procedures

Appendix includes a detailed discussion of the matching procedures as well as input and output simulator files with a Comet™ post processor for displaying them.

To perform this modeling work, the township study area was discretized into a 40- by 40-foot rectangular grid of 800-foot by 800-foot squares. This grid spacing covered the complete 23,000-acre demonstration area. Vertically, the model contained twenty-three layers of alternating gas and water-charged sand and coal layers, with each layer having variable thicknesses, spatially (fig. V-13).

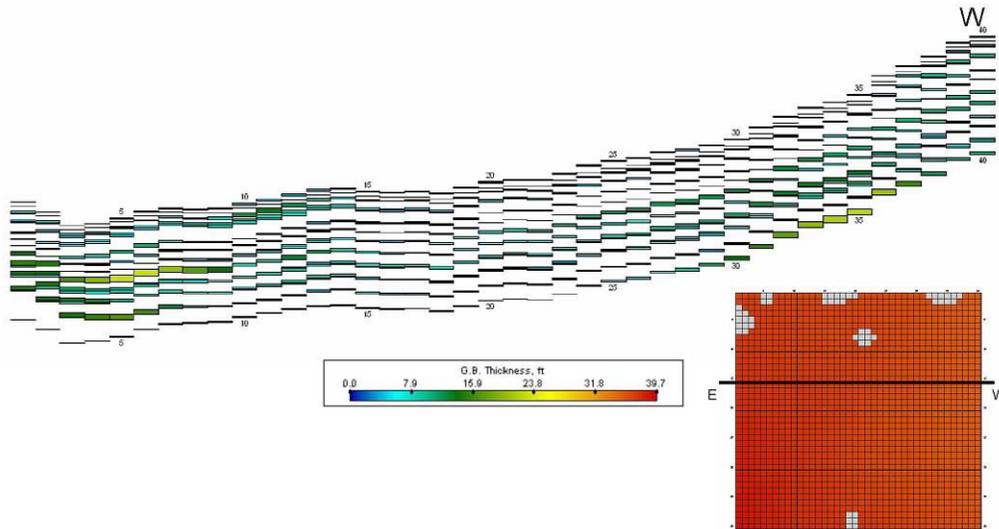


Fig. V-13. Cross-section from east to west along northern portion of model grid

There were twelve sand layers and eleven coal layers, with odd-number layers being sand bodies (from top to bottom in the reservoir column). When constructing these alternating sand/coal layers, only immediate sand/coal pairs were permitted to communicate vertically. This procedure emulated the rather interspersed nature of coal stringers through the Almond formation.

Consistent with field completion practices no coal seams were perforated in the model. Sands were completed in accordance with industry-reported data.

With nearly twenty-eight years of historical production data available for the Wild Rose area, wells were controlled through monthly gas rates. Field-observed backpressures were a secondary operational constraint. Changes in operating practice and regulations over the years contributed uncertainty to the history match. Additional dynamic production data (e.g., detailed wellhead flowing or gathering pressures, additional production logs, etc.) could have strengthened the history match.

A reservoir model representing the Wild Rose demonstration area was built, executed and adjusted until we achieved a reasonable match between reservoir attributes and production. The petrophysically derived reservoir parameters were held constant through the match process. No additional information indicated a need to revisit the petrophysics and the underlying data was considered more reliable than other model inputs.

Permeability was used as the primary attribute for adjustment. Initial coarse areal adjustments were made, progressing to individual wells near the conclusion of the match process. Original gas-in-place volumes, as calculated in the simulator, are shown in Table V-1.

Table V-1. Initial gas & water in place for 23 model layers

	Initial GIP (bcf)			Initial WIP (MMbbls)
	Sorbed	Free	Total	
layer 1	0	57.5	57.5	39,148.4
layer 2	9.2	0	9.2	916.1
layer 3	0	5.3	5.3	3,123.9
layer 4	0.2	0	0.2	19.4
layer 5	0	36.3	36.3	31,842.1
layer 6	37.8	0	37.8	3,780.3
layer 7	0	104.1	104.1	80,521.7
layer 8	46.5	0	46.5	4,641.3
layer 9	0	30.2	30.2	24,686.3
layer 10	86.8	0	86.8	8,661.0
layer 11	0	39.0	39.0	32,213.8
layer 12	37.9	0	37.9	3,782.2
layer 13	0	54.9	54.9	47,278.2
layer 14	98.7	0	98.7	9,853.0
layer 15	0	105.0	105.0	82,417.4
layer 16	2.2	0	2.2	223.0
layer 17	0	99.5	99.5	90,124.4
layer 18	99.9	0	99.9	9,964.2
layer 19	0	50.8	50.8	82,367.7
layer 20	49.1	0	49.1	4,901.3
layer 21	0	68.7	68.7	147,257.4
layer 22	13.8	0	13.8	1,382.0
layer 23	0	33.1	33.1	112,308.1
TOTAL	482.1	684.4	1,166.5	821,413.4

Overall, 1.1 tcf of gas and 820-billion barrels of water were estimated to be in-place in the study area (Table V-1). Noting that sand and coal (odd and even layers, respectively) bodies alternate within the model, nearly 60% of the original hydrocarbons in-place were estimated to have been contained in the sands, leaving the remaining 480 bcf in the adsorbed state within the coal seams. Field verification of the employed isotherm should be conducted to confirm the accuracy of the estimated gas in-place in the coal seams.

Field Match Results

While the field match was quite good, individual well matches did vary; however, these variabilities were considered acceptable within the overall field match. Table V-2 shows the by-layer production during the twenty-three year history.

Table V-2. By-layer voidage & cumulative gas recovered in field thru October 2003

	Initial GIP (bcf)	Cumulative Gas Produced (bcf)	Gas Recovery Percent IGIP
layer 1	57.5	3.1	5.3
layer 2	9.2	0.0	0.0
layer 3	5.3	0.2	4.2
layer 4	0.2	0.0	0.0
layer 5	36.3	1.8	4.8
layer 6	37.8	0.0	0.0
layer 7	104.1	3.7	3.5
layer 8	46.5	0.0	0.0
layer 9	30.2	2.2	7.3
layer 10	86.8	0.0	0.0
layer 11	39.0	3.4	8.7
layer 12	37.9	0.0	0.0
layer 13	54.9	2.4	4.3
layer 14	98.7	0.0	0.0
layer 15	105.0	6.9	6.6
layer 16	2.2	0.0	0.0
layer 17	99.5	7.5	7.6
layer 18	99.9	0.0	0.0
layer 19	50.8	2.3	4.6
layer 20	49.1	0.0	0.0
layer 21	68.7	0.8	1.1
layer 22	13.8	0.0	0.0
layer 23	33.1	0.3	0.9
TOTAL	1,166.5	34.5	3.0
Remaining Gas (bcf)			
Sands (odd layers)		649.8	
Coals (even layers)		482.1	
TOTAL		1,131.9	

It is noteworthy that the coal seams are negligible contributors to date, while the sands have produced only 5% of their initial volume and 3% of the overall system in-place volume. Depletion in this system, via pressure for sand layer 15, is depicted in fig. V-14.

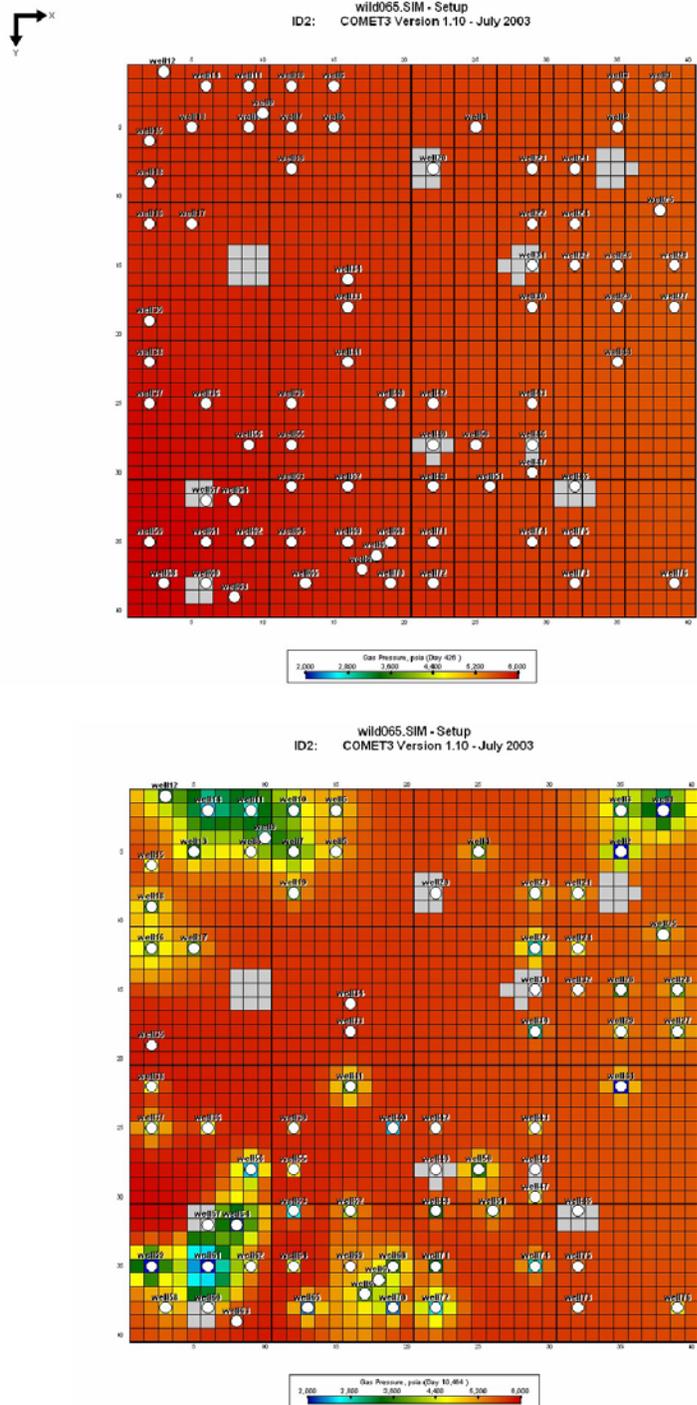


Fig. V-14. Initial to final gas pressure arrays (layer 15) depicting some edge effects & showing relative depletion for inter-grid wells

The Wild Rose area history match results supported the following suppositions.

1. There appears to be infill potential in this area because of the low volumes produced to date. The operators are currently undertaking infill projects. (Eleven of seventy-nine permitted wells had been drilled as of 9/05).
2. Taking away edge effects, average well drainage appears to be eighty acres in the developed areas and interference appears to be minimal (fig. V-15). Therefore, the infill pattern development is justified.
3. The coal seams apparently have not contributed to the overall production. Confirmation of coal initial gas-in-place (IGIP) is necessary to better gauge the future contribution of these seams.

The field-wide cumulative gas and water production matches are shown in fig. V-15.

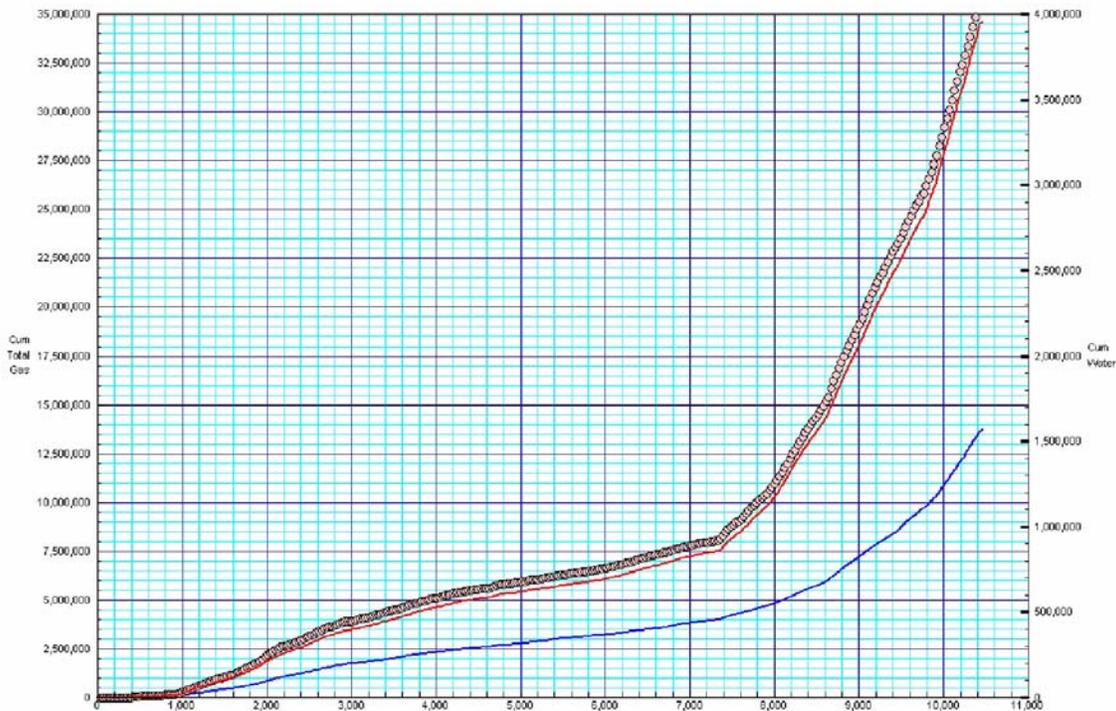


Fig. V-15. Final field-wide cumulative gas & water production

ARI experience during this production simulation is in stark contrast to the assertion of Shanley, et al (2004) that *little* correction was usually required to match bulk production permeabilities to values generated using core and petrophysical methods. It is clear from fig. V-16 that major upward adjustments to permeability were required to match the historical production rates. Only twelve of the well bore cells required less than a two-fold adjustment between original matrix kh and that required to match production. The average adjustment was 7.5-fold and the maximum was 36-fold. For this reason a major reassessment of the permeability model was made in order to generate a more geologically reasonable permeability map across the demonstration area. Fig. V-16 is a comparison between the original and matched arrays for one of the layers.

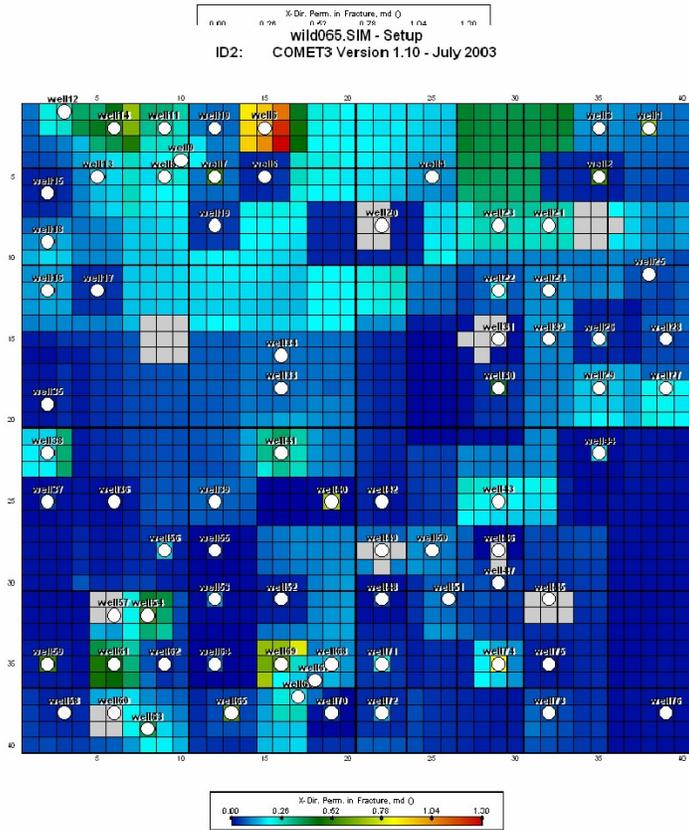
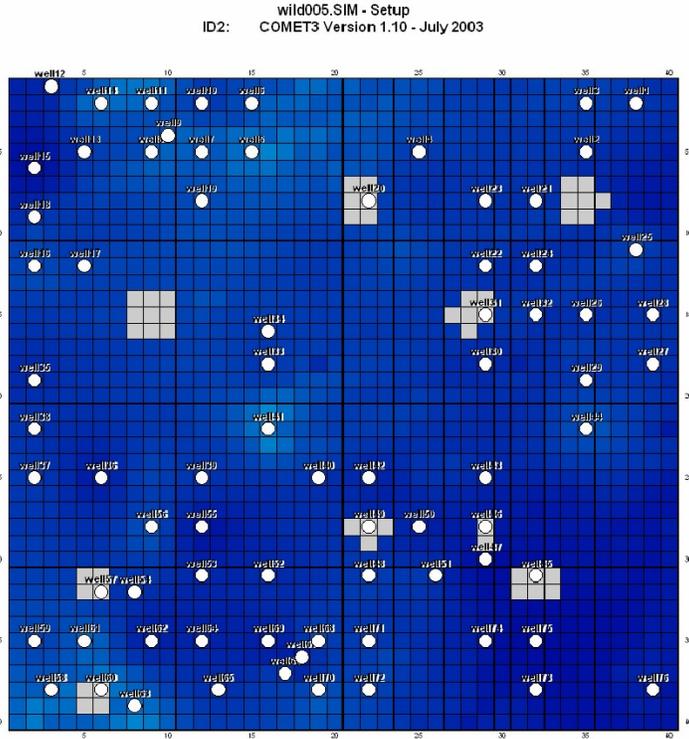


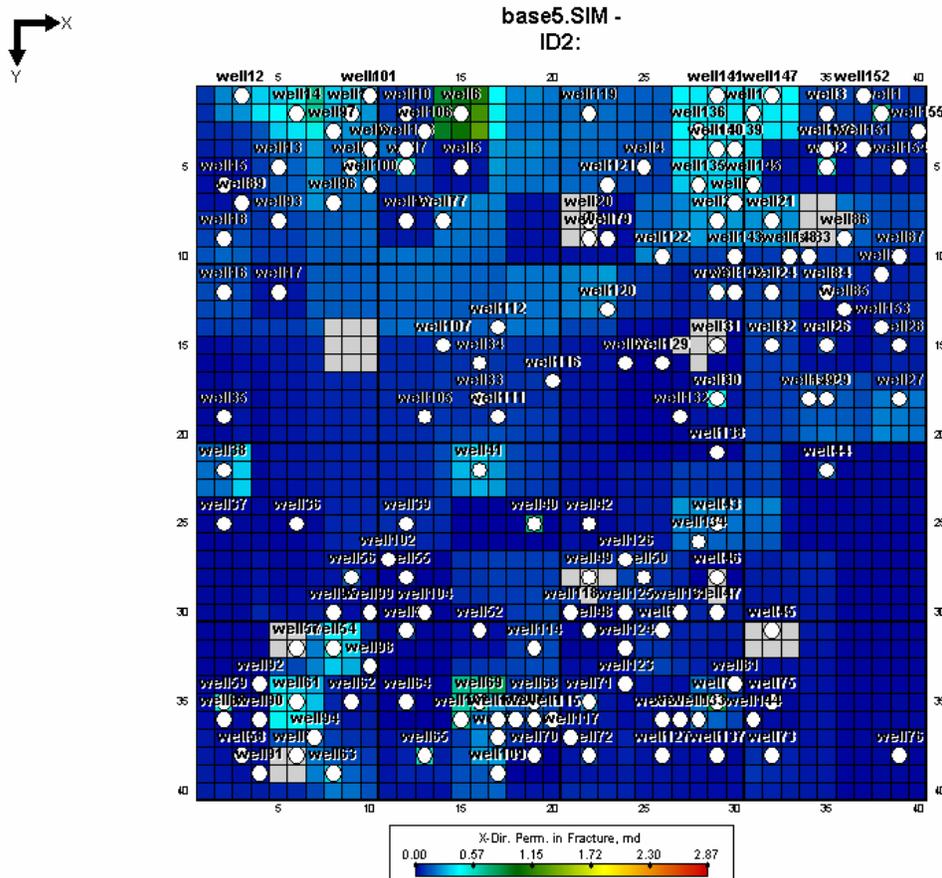
Fig. V-16. Permeability arrays before and after modifications (layer 15)

Forecast Model

The permeability matrix for the forecast model was generated using the original matrix values (petrophysically derived) and conditional simulation methods. The composite, matched permeability array was deconstructed and the matrix permeability values were subtracted. The wellbore cells alone were geostatistically described using variography.

A conditional simulation was run using the wellbore cells and the eight surrounding cells as inputs. The permeability matrix was repopulated using the nine cells around each wellbore as givens and populating the intervening areas from the simulation array. The resulting fracture permeability array was added back to the matrix arrays and re-integrated into the simulation file.

In this way, the local wellbore match values were held constant and the inter-well areas received statistically valid values that reflected the range of the control data set. The final layer 15 permeability array is shown in fig. V-17 as an example.



This map is the permeability grid (of layer 15) used for the forecast runs. The variography indicated a significant nugget effect and directional anisotropy in a northeast-southwest trend.

Fig. V-17. Final layer 15 forecast permeability grid

The Wild Rose area production forecast used the existing seventy-six wells as a base. Additionally, the eleven wells drilled and completed during the demonstration were post-appraised against the forecast. Sixty-eight permitted well locations were *projected* to be drilled at a rate of two per month going forward and then added to the forecast.

The forecast run was executed for twenty-five additional years, through 2028. See fig. V-18 for the gas rate and cumulative gas forecasts for the 155 well-run as compared to forecasting only the pre-existing seventy-six wells already matched in the base case. This forecast estimates that peak gas rate will be on the order of 35 MMcfd and further suggests that cumulative gas production from the area will eventually surpass 200 bcf (projected to the year 2035).

The cumulative gas production from the eleven new wells compared favorably to the forecast, suggesting the history match should be adequate to predict aggregate infill potential as well as estimate future production. However, point forward the forecast model should be updated on an ongoing basis to reflect the data gathered (via geophysical logs and production) and minimize the differences between the forecast and actual field performance.

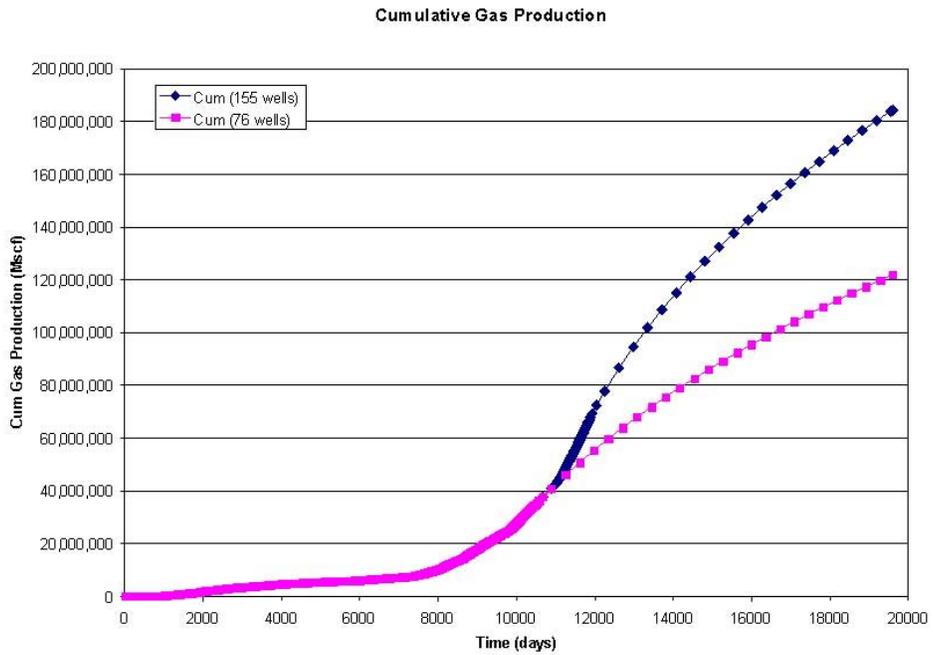
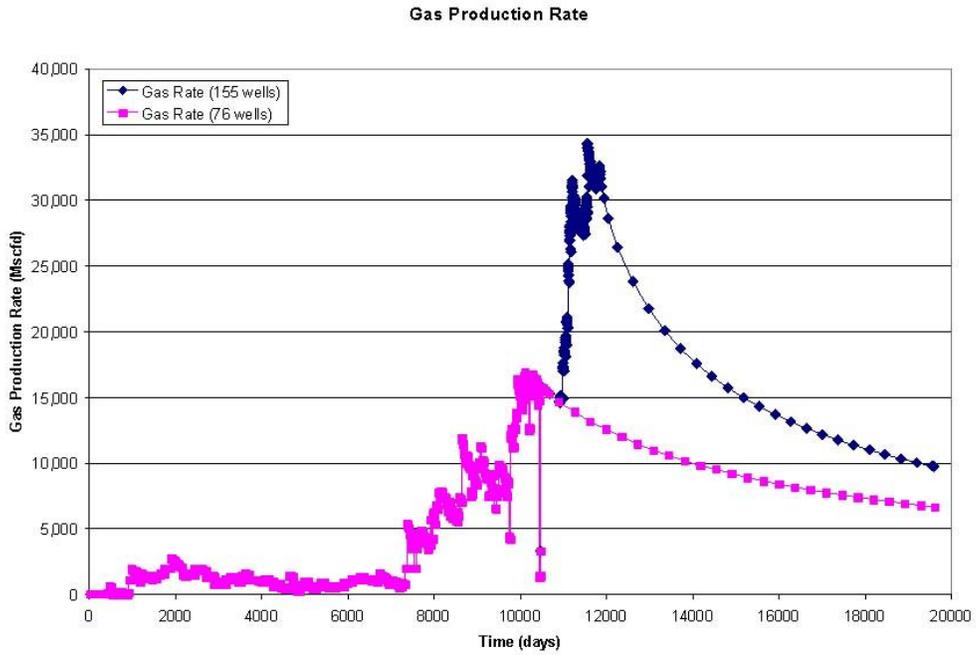


Fig. V-18. Gas rate (A) & cumulative gas (B) forecasts for 155 wells, compared to forecasting pre-existing 76 wells

Analysis

The simulation results were reviewed to identify any observable relationships between bulk permeability and water production. A data set of seventy-five current wells with over 12 months production was selected for reasons of completion and operating consistency. Total matrix permeability-thickness (kh) was subtracted from the simulation (match) kh. This difference is attributed to the permeability contribution of natural fractures.

The wells were ranked 1/low through 75/high in (1) matrix kh, (2) natural fracture kh, (3) first 12 months gas production and (4) water gas ratio. A four-variable bubble plot (fig. V-19) was constructed using the resulting relative rankings.

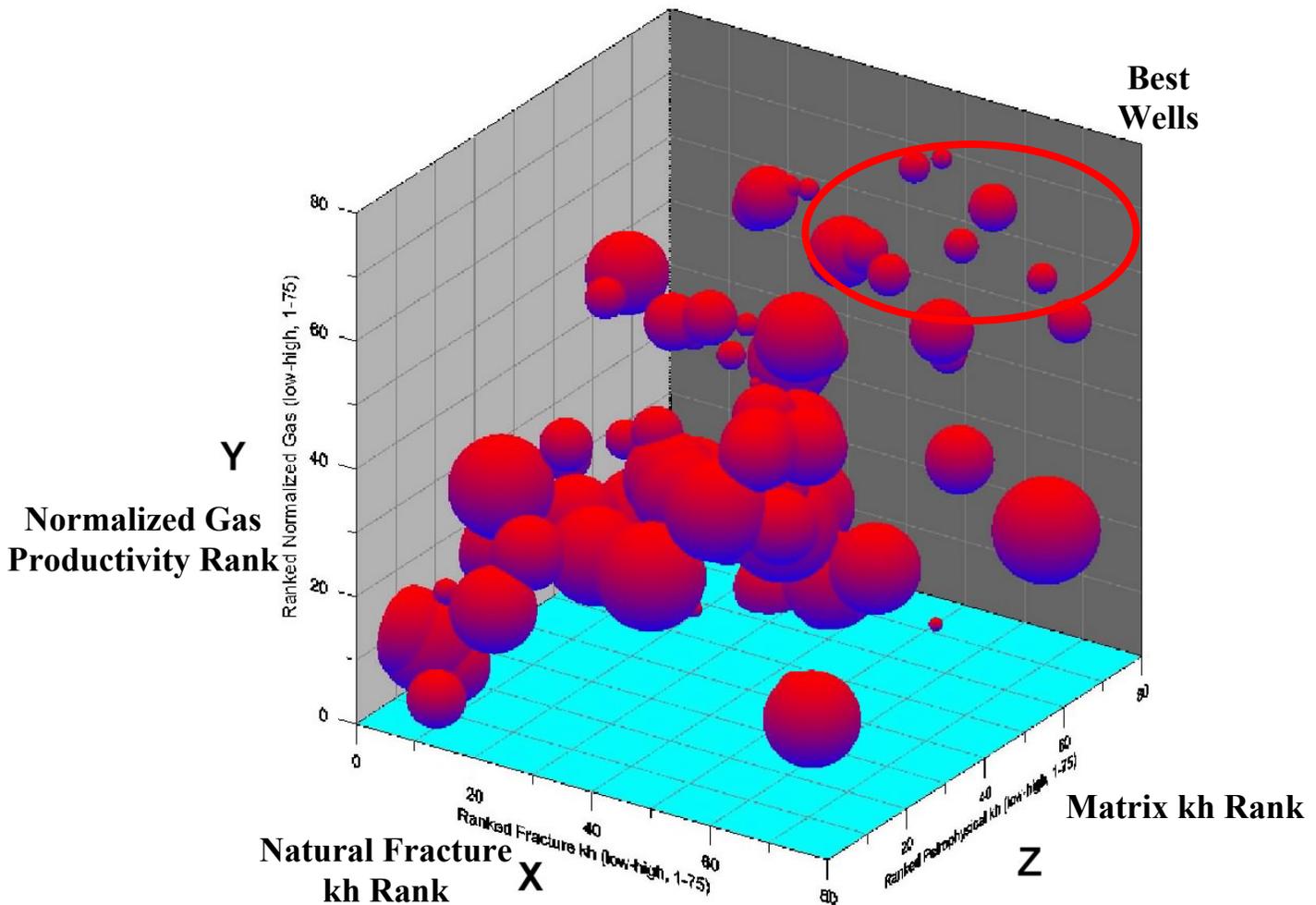


Fig. V-19. Four-variable plot of Wild Rose reservoir attributes

This plot (fig. V-19) shows clearly that the highest productivity gas wells with the smallest water gas ratio are those with the most matrix kh and the most fracture kh (small bubbles (upper right back corner of the cube)).

The size of the bubbles represents the water-gas ratio ranking (smaller is better). The matrix kh, fracture kh and normalized gas variables are plotted against the axes (z, x and y respectively). The origin (0,0,0) is located at the lower left front corner of the cube. The upper right back corner of the cube is 80, 80, 80 and represents the highest-ranking wells for each variable within the population. A point located at the lower front corner of the plot would exhibit the worst matrix kh, greatest fracture kh component and worst gas production.

The upper back corner represents the best matrix kh, worst fracture kh component and the best production rank. There are no points in the upper back corner.

The majority of the wells with relatively small fracture permeability components also rank lower in normalized gas production (near the axis between 0,0,0 and 80,0,0), with a mixture of water-gas ratio rankings. There is also a significant number of low productivity, high fracture component wells with high water production (large bubbles, low in the cube, towards the right).

The simulation results from the Wild Rose area demonstrate that the Almond reservoir is a composite system of both matrix and natural fracture permeabilities. Wells optimally located to access significant pore volume and fracture permeability structurally high in a gas column will flow significant gas at low water to gas ratios. Wells with little fracture permeability component tend to be poor producers of gas although they may generate less water as well.

This relationship of gas to water is also observed with high fracture permeability wells, which tend to produce at high water gas ratios. Thus the impact of natural fracture permeability on production quality is neither all good nor all bad. Rather, *the negative or positive impact of natural fracture permeability on production is determined by its relative position within the gas column—high or low.*

Trends and Context

Understanding the nature and occurrence of water in tight gas settings is more a question of understanding trends and context than specific determinative criteria. There are several significant, related trends in the Wild Rose demonstration area.

Salinity Trends

For example, a variation in water salinities (high to low) should be expected between the marine upper Almond, transitional middle Almond, and lower Almond/Ericson. A consistent Rw across these intervals would be anomalous. Successful pay determination in these situations requires rigorous data collection to capture changing salinity trends because individual data points have little value out of context.

Fig. V-8 is a map of produced water resistivity in the demonstration area showing a major Rw anomaly in the southwest portion of the township. Strontium isotopes and calcite saturation indices were anomalous as well (elucidated in Appendix C). Water has moved in this area on the basis of the geochemical signatures.

Basement Structural Trends

Structure mapping at the deep Paleozoic level confirmed a prominent fault trend extending from the southwest corner of the township to the northeast corner (fig. V-7). There is an analogous trend in the Almond structure (fig. V-7).

The inflection of the prominent flexure at the Almond level is subparallel to, and nearly overlies, the deep fault itself. The first-year water production map shows a less prominent but nonetheless visible alignment along the same trend (fig. V-21). The high permeability cells from the reservoir simulation display similar directional trends (fig. V-17).

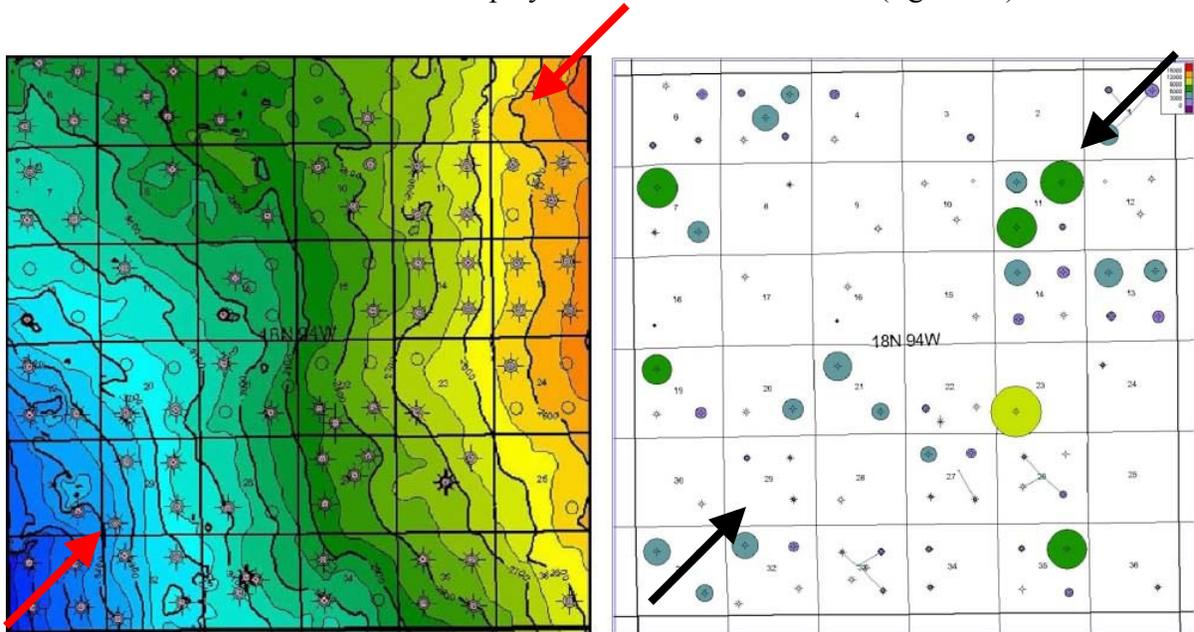
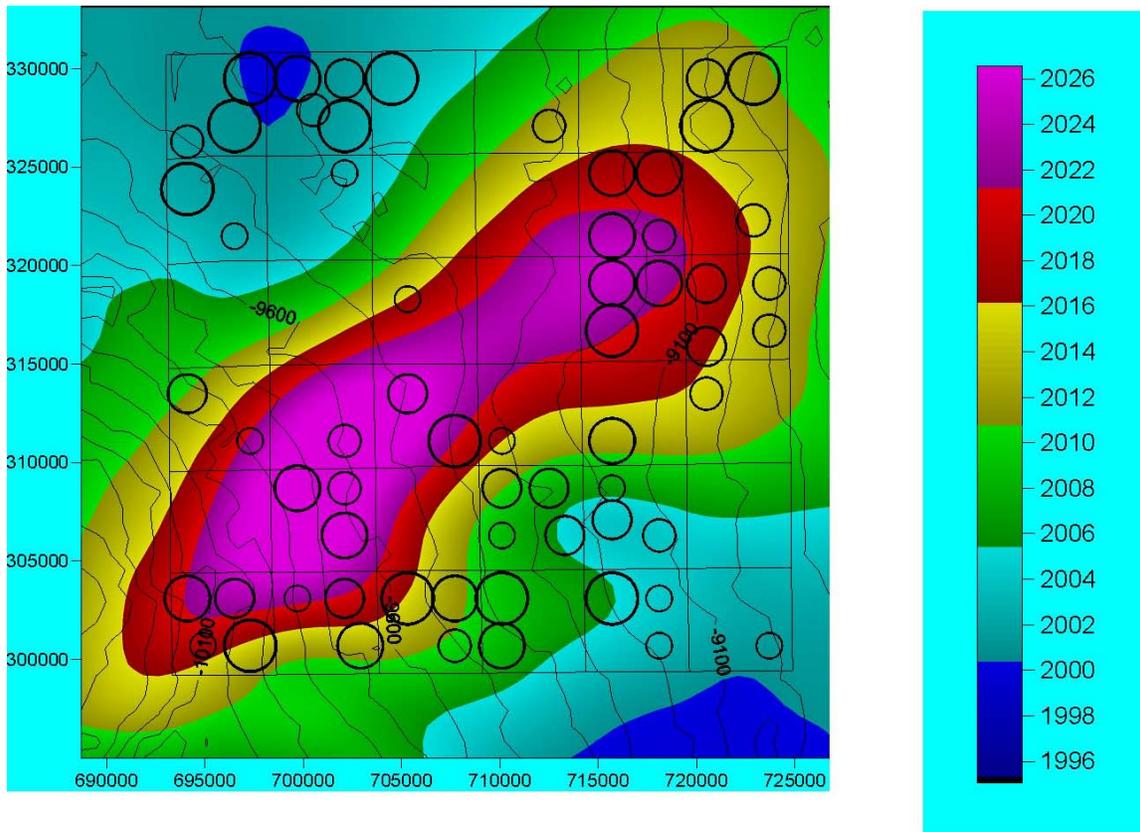


Fig. V-21. Wild Rose field—first year water production

Structural Modeling

To analyze the impact of the deep Laramide displacements on the reservoir horizon we constructed a geomechanical model of the deep basement fault system (fig. V-7). From the model we created a map of estimated shear stress at the Almond level (fig. V-22).



Structure contours at the Almond level are shown superimposed on shear stress, estimated from boundary element modeling of the deep Paleozoic fault system. The open circles represent fracture permeability rank (larger is better). Only the central NE-SW fault system was modeled, resulting in the NW and SE quarters of the township containing no valid stress values. The purple area (dark center area) represents maximum concentration of shear stresses along fault trend at Almond level.

Fig. V-22. Projected Laramide shear stresses at Almond level

Not surprisingly, the distribution of the simulated shear stresses generally follows the northeast southwest corridor delineated by the water production and simulator permeabilities.

Structural geometries, water production, and simulator match permeabilities all support a northeast-southwest structural grain across the demonstration area. Time slices of the confidential seismic data and small deflections of the structure contours indicate the presence of small scale, small displacement shear zones traversing the demonstration area along the general corridor of the simulated shear stress maxima. At least one source of unwanted water production in this area is related to subseismic (resolution) fault systems.

Vertical Mineralogical Trend

Another aspect of the Wild Rose demonstration area is a vertical mineralogical trend. Yin and Surdam (1994) characterized Almond and Ericson sandstones petrographically and mineralogically from cores taken around the GGRB. They found the Almond to be significantly more feldspar rich than the Ericson. Two-direction whole core permeability data (presented in Appendix D) demonstrates the extreme sensitivity of the Ericson core to stress release microfracturing versus other units, including the Almond.

In the Wild Rose area, the sandstone maturity (increasing quartz content) improves downward through the Almond intervals to the Ericson. Permeability is likely to parallel this trend, increasing with depth. Traditionally this was considered a positive but as the saturation calculations from the petrophysics study show, gas saturation decreases with depth, particularly below the more significant coal units. An increasing permeability trend in the face of decreasing gas saturation may not be desirable if the objective is to avoid water production.

Production Validation

The operator ran only one production log for the Wild Rose demonstration area. A simple log montage of this production log, a TDT log, and the mudlog was constructed and is available in Appendix F. Water-gas ratios for the fluid gas influx at each perforation are shown in Table V-3.

Table V-3. Water-gas ratios for fluid gas influx at each of 9 perforation sets

Perforation Set	Depth	Water Rate (Bbls/d)	Gas Rate (Mcf/d)	Water-Gas Ratio
1	9550	0	12	0.000
2	9600	1.8	121	0.015
3	9640	19.8	1463	0.014
4	9690	12.8	81	0.158
5	9730	2.7	20	0.135
6	9750	1.1	15	0.073
7	9790	0	6	0.000
8	9830	0	2	0.000
9	>9900	4.6	31.7	0.145

Nine intervals were perforated across approximately 400 feet of the Almond reservoir. Three out of nine perforated intervals in this well flow at a water gas ratio ten-fold higher than the other six. Perforation sets 4, 5, and 9 produce less than 10% of the gas and nearly 50% of the water. Perforation sets 1, 2 and 3 yield 91% of the gas and 50% of the water. Visual examination of the TDT log (log panel in Appendix F) does not suggest major differences in sand quality across the interval yet a single perforation zone makes four times the gas rate as all other zones combined at only a tenth of the water-gas ratio of the lower zones.

Our petrophysical study projected the salinity/gas-water boundary (GWB) interface to be at approximately 9,800-feet MD in this well. Based on that projection, the lower zone at 9,900 feet is most likely a low-gas saturation, quartz-rich, high-permeability lower Almond sand. The low-gas rate, low-water ratio zones 7 and 8 reflect tight, low permeability reservoir rock and zones 4, 5 and 6 are transitional, with permeability to both gas and water. Zone 3 has a conspicuously high flow rate but low water gas ratio. It most likely represents a natural fracture zone. Zones 1 and 2 are low permeability zones high in the gas column, right beneath the Lewis Shale.

Lack of openhole logs precludes solid confirmation of this production scenario. It does display potential interpretations upon which a water avoidance strategy based on selective completion could be built and executed within an operational program. A consistent data collection policy would enable such strategies to be implemented.

Water Remediation Strategies

In the demonstration area simulation unwanted water was produced when higher permeability intervals were encountered and perforated in zones with low gas saturation. We found no pervasive irreducible gas saturation settings within the Wild Rose area that uniformly produce gas at low water-gas ratios. This was indicated by the presence of a generally identifiable salinity boundary that coincides with increased gas saturations in the upper few hundred feet of the Almond formation.

This salinity boundary does not correspond directly to structure. On openhole electric logs this boundary presented as a saline SP log deflection. (For other indicators see Appendix E, Petrophysical section.) With additional calibration, the boundary may be identifiable on TDT logs. Thus, in new wells the boundaries should be identified and completion operations planned accordingly.

To understand the salinity boundary with respect to stratigraphy, formation waters will be routinely sampled during completion operations. Periodic flow tests prior to hydraulic fracture completion operations may yield fluids for R_w analysis. This will improve petrophysical pay determinations and reduce completion of highly permeable, low gas saturation zones.

Quartz and calcite rich reservoir intervals are particularly susceptible to developing permeability to water. The large thermal expansion coefficients of quartz and calcite contribute to the development of large aperture grain-bounding microfractures during uplift. Large pore throats create low capillary entry pressures and increase mobility of fluids.

Quartz content of Mesaverde sediments peaks in the delta plain fluvial facies (lower Almond channels and Ericson formation). These units are also more likely to contain relatively fresh formation water, complicating gas saturation determinations. Based on the results presented here, these units are at high-risk of low-gas saturation coupled with high permeability to water.

To avoid completion of high permeability, low gas saturation zones in these intervals, we recommend perforation followed by flow testing. While not specifically investigated here, we hypothesize that these units also have lower internal stresses that could cause hydraulic fractures to propagate towards them. Even a modest program of stress determination and hydraulic fracture mapping, early in a development program, could avoid or ameliorate such issues.

Unwanted water production from natural fracture zones occurring low in a low-saturation gas zone is another significant menace identified during this study. These zones are identifiable by their extremely high permeabilities. We advocate two strategies for managing this setting: (1) avoidance or (2) capture.

Avoidance Strategy for Small Scale Faulting

Our proposed strategy for avoiding small scale faulting is to identify and avoid them prior to drilling. Throughout the Wild Rose demonstration area there are small-scale fault zones at or below the effective resolution of seismic. We believe the primary producing perforation in the Wamsutter Rim 15-2 (discussed earlier) is such a zone. Typically these fault zones are highly permeable, and when optimally located within the gas column, very prolific gas producers. However, when located in a transitional or low gas saturation zone they can be a significant economic drag on the well.

An attempt was made during this project to construct detailed fault maps within the Almond reservoir interval. Stratigraphic complexity and low seismic frequency content were major barriers to successfully completing this effort. The Colorado School of Mines Reservoir Characterization Project (RCP) has demonstrated the use of an automated fault-picking software package (Ant Tracker Algorithm™, Schlumberger) for interpreting small-scale faults within reservoir volumes (supplemented with human editing). In the future such a semi-automated process might be an effective tool in finding and avoiding small-scale fault zones. Seismic resolution will likely remain a challenge because velocity or other issues may preclude the level of accuracy required to intersect or avoid a 50-foot discontinuity at 10,000 feet subsurface.

Capture Strategy for Small Scale Faulting

A second strategy to address the issue is to capture the permeability fabric of the unanticipated small scale fault. Most natural small-scale faults contact significantly more reservoir than man-made hydraulic fractures. If this were not the case hydraulic fractures would consistently perform much better, and more consistently.

Significant downspacing of an area substantially increases the subsurface sampling. Thus downspacing offers the opportunity to perform detailed subsurface mapping if appropriate information and logs are obtained and analyzed. While there were no image logs available for this study, our experience suggests consistent image log collection during the downspacing program offers the opportunity to map fracture zones directly, developing detailed maps of their geometry.

Highly detailed fault maps would enable the deliberate intersection of these extremely permeable zones at the optimal point in the reservoir. While it is projected that the rate of return could increase, an economic analysis of each location would substantiate the value.

CONCLUSION

Oil and gas exploration and development are progressive processes that are hugely dependent on historical data and experience for successful results. Data pertaining to the chemical and electrical properties of intra-formational waters is also crucial but has been difficult to effectively access. This is no longer the case as a primary output of this project is a robust database amassing thousands of formation water analyses.

Digital Database and Atlas

The [*digital database*](#) provides data with dynamic value for operators to increase gas production from key Rocky Mountain basins, without significant additional overhead. Along with electric logs, core, and seismic, the database becomes yet another valuable tool for maximizing production.

A [*digital atlas*](#) showing the distribution of the data and some specific analyses has been constructed using [*ArcReader*](#) to increase the usability of the database. The digital atlas has query and limited mapping capability for users without ready access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software.

Applications

Beyond the database however, this project has demonstrated techniques of interpretation and applications of the formation water data to identify and solve common exploration and production (E&P) issues. The tools, techniques and strategies presented here have potential for impacting secondary porosity prediction, formation evaluation, and development strategies.

1. Secondary Porosity Prediction

Formation water geochemistry is an indicator of the in situ diagenetic system. The chemical compositions of subsurface waters can be interpreted within the context of their host sediments to reveal anomalies of potential significance. For example, local variations in ion saturation indices can reflect inter-formational water movement with significant implications for secondary porosity development.

2. Formation Evaluation

Vertical and lateral formation water resistivity changes are common. Collecting water samples for R_w and using the information in log interpretation will improve pay determination and completion decisions.

Bulk system permeabilities are often underestimated. Bulk reservoir permeabilities determined through reservoir simulation can be many times greater than those initially estimated through petrophysical studies alone. (Bottom hole build up pressure tests also show bulk reservoir permeabilities, but were not within the scope of this project.)

3. Development Strategies

Perforation Strategy

Avoid completion of high permeability low gas saturation zones. In higher risk intervals, we recommend perforation followed by flow testing. While not specifically investigated here, we hypothesize that these units also have lower internal stresses that could cause hydraulic fractures to propagate toward the high-permeability unit. Even a modest program of stress determination and hydraulic fracture mapping, early in a development program, could avoid or mitigate such issues.

Avoidance Strategy for Small Scale Faulting

Identify and avoid small-scale faults prior to drilling. Throughout most tight gas reservoirs there are small-scale fault zones at or below the effective resolution of seismic. We believe the primary producing perforation in the Wamsutter Rim 15-2 (discussed earlier) is such a zone. Typically these fault zones are highly permeable, and when optimally located within the gas column, very prolific gas producers. However, when located in a transitional or low gas saturation zone they can be a significant economic drag on the well. In the future semi-automated fault-picking processes might be an effective tool in finding and avoiding small-scale fault zones.

Capture Strategy for Small-Scale Faulting

Capture the dynamic value of the drilling program. Most natural small-scale faults contact considerably more reservoir than man-made hydraulic fractures. Significant downspacing of an area substantially increases the subsurface sampling. Thus downspacing offers the opportunity to perform detailed subsurface mapping. Consistent image log collection during the downspacing program allows for identifying fracture zones directly, and developing detailed maps of their geometry. This would enable the deliberate intersection of these extremely permeable zones at the optimal point in the reservoir.

Future Research

A key result of this project is an integrative conceptual gas reservoir development model. This model encompasses diverse views within a single developmental continuum. Effective tight gas reservoir development is the result of a dynamic process with multiple essential ingredients:

- The original sedimentary provenance
- The proper mix of depositional systems and facies
- A strong history of *burial* and *uplift*

It follows from the conceptual model that:

Generation of increasing reservoir permeability is a natural by-product of stress release during uplift. Gas sweet spots form in traps delineated by strain fields or ductility contrasts. Understanding the natural process of sweet spot development—by stress release and concentration of gas in traps formed by strain fields and/or ductility contrasts—offers options for manmade replication through engineering technologies.

A prime example is cavitation, used commonly in coalbed methane plays and less commonly in conventional reservoirs to increase permeability around a wellbore (1999 Palmer). During cavitation completions, a large volume of rock material is removed from the reservoir creating a cavity or void space. The cavity accentuates the normal disturbance of the local in situ stress field created by the wellbore. Under favorable conditions shear failure occurs in the rocks surrounding the cavity and fractures propagate away from the wellbore into the reservoir. The shear fractures improve production by creating permeability conduits and increasing the effective wellbore radius.

By creating room for expansion of the rocks themselves, the cavitation technique might also initiate stress release and associated permeability increases in the rocks surrounding the well. Speculation suggests development of the cavity should parallel the natural process of permeability enhancement during uplift and allow the gas and water to self-segregate. Developing the practical methods of deliberately inducing such events in tight gas sands will require additional research.

The uplifted gas basins of the Rocky Mountains have large volumes of gas trapped in low-saturation, low-permeability settings, outside established field areas. Where hydraulic fracturing techniques improve connection to a reservoir, effective application of cavitation (or similar) techniques may not only improve connectivity *they may actually increase local permeability in the reservoir and release trapped gas.*

Developing the technology to proactively create the conditions for increased permeability of these reservoirs and allowing the gas to segregate itself in situ and flow into the wellbore for recovery would capture the full dynamic value of the large resource base and should be considered a long term research goal.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALMD_SH2 ...	Almond formation
API	American Petroleum Institute
ARI	Advanced Resources Inc.
Bbl	barrel
bcf	billion cubic feet
BHPBU	bulk wellbore scale production permeabilities
BVW_F	bulk volume water = $SWT_F * PHIE_F$
bwpd	barrels of water per day
CAL_BS	caliper-bit size difference
CEC	cation exchange capacity
CEC1	CEC calculation from porosity
COAL_FLG ...	coal flag
COALFLGT ...	TDT coal flag
CTE	coefficient of thermal expansion
DFN	discrete fracture network
DST	drill stem test
elog	electric log
EHS	effective horizontal stress
EVS	effective vertical stress
E&P	exploration and production
fm	formation
GGRB	Greater Green River Basin

GIP gas-in-place
GIS Geographic Information Systems
GRL gamma ray linear
GRN1 normalized gamma ray
GWB gas-water boundary
IGIP initial gas-in-place
k permeability
kh permeability-feet
K_PHI_HI high core porosity-permeability trend
K_PHI_LO low core porosity-permeability trend
K_PHI_MD medium core porosity-permeability trend
K_PHI_VC permeability from modified Timur-Coates equation (PHI & Vclay)
MD measured depth
md millidarcies
md/poro millidarcies/porosity unit
MMcfd millions of cubic feet per day
MWX multi-well experiment
nms net mean stress
NPHILS NPHI in limestone units
NPHISS NPHI in sandstone units
OGIP original gas in place
ohm-m ohm meters
phi porosity
PHIE effective density porosity
PHIE_D1 $PHIT_D1 * (1-V_{clay})$
PHIE_DF final effective density porosity (edited for clay, coal & washouts)
PHIE_DG1 $PHIT_DG1 * (1-V_{clay})$

PHIE_F..... final effective porosity

PHIE_ND1..... $PHIT_ND1 * (1-V_{clay})$

PHIE_NDF final effective density porosity (edited for clay, coal & washouts)

PHIE_PN3..... final corrected TDT porosity

PHIT_AVG average of PHIT_MX and PHIT_VSH

PHIT_D1 total density porosity, grain density = 2.68g/cc

PHIT_DG1..... total density porosity with variable grain density and SXO gas correction

PHIT_MX..... maximum porosity based on Vshale-Porosity trend

PHIT_ND1..... total neutron-density crossplot porosity

PHIT_ND2..... total porosity form sum of squares of NPHI and DPHI

PHIT_VSH..... porosity derived from Vshale-porosity trend

ppm parts per million

PRES1 pressure curve

psi..... pounds per square inch

QC..... quality control

Qv..... cation exchange concentration

QV1 Qv calculation from CEC & porosity

RCP..... Reservoir Characterization Project

RES_FLG1 reservoir flag

RHOBS environmentally corrected & shifted density

RHOMAT..... density of matrix by stratigraphic interval

Ro..... vitrinite reflectance in oil

RTratDS ratio of deep/shallow resistivity

RTratSD ratio of shallow/deep resistivity

Rw formation water resistivity

RW_Rmf1..... resistivity of mud filtrate

SEM scanning electronic microscope

SP spontaneous potential (log)
 SPE Society of Petroleum Engineers
 SQL structured query language
 Sw water saturation
 SW_ARC1..... Archie water saturation in Almond gas zone (1.0, 1.74, 2.00, 0.46 @ 68F)
 SW_ARC2..... Archie water saturation in Almond Aquifer (1.0, 1.74, 2.00, 1.74 @ 68F)
 SW_ARC3..... Archie water saturation in Erickson (1.0, 2.00, 2.00, 1.74 @ 68F)
 SW_DWT1 water saturation from dual water equation
 SW_SIM1 water saturation from Simandoux equation
 SW_WS2..... water saturation from Waxman-Smits equation
 SWT_F final merged water saturation
 Sxo water zone saturation
 SXO_ARC1 ... Archie water saturation for using RW_Rmf & shallow resistivity
 tcf trillion cubic feet
 TD total depth
 TDS total dissolved solids
 TDT thermal decay time
 TDT_RT TDT resistivity derived from the sigma curve
 TDTratFN ratio of TDT far/near counts
 TDTratNF ratio of TDT near/far counts
 TEMP1 temperature Curve
 TGRN TDT normalized gamma ray
 TPHI cased hole pulsed neutron porosity
 TSW_WS1 TDT water saturation from Waxman-Smits equation
 TVD true vertical depth
 USGS United States Geological Survey
 VCLSTB volume clay by Steiber method

Vr..... vitrinite reflectance

VSH..... volume shale

VSHGRL volume shale by gamma ray linear method

WRB..... Wind River Basin

APPENDICES

A. Database

- [Database Readme](#)
- [Database Access](#)
- [Database CSV](#)
- [Database DBF](#)
- [Database XLS](#)

B. Atlas of Maps

- [ArcReader Install](#)
- [Digital Atlas](#)

C. [Produced Water Geochemistry](#)

D. [Working Model for Reservoir Development](#)

E. [Wild Rose Field Petrophysics](#)

F. [Wild Rose Reservoir Simulation](#)