

combined footage of 380,000 ft (72 miles),” Julie LeFever, Wilson Laird Core Library manager said. “We also store cuttings (crushed rock samples) for 20,360 wells of the 23,048 wells drilled. When the core and sample collection is combined with the data available on the website, it increases the efficiency of exploring for oil and gas on the North Dakota portion of the Williston Basin.”

These core samples can tell oil companies and academia what every inch of earth is right down to the shale. And every speck of dirt and grain of sand tell a story about where to turn, what to use and how to frac the sweet crude.

Increasing efficiency often increases the tempo, and in today’s wired world, that efficiency is performed with a fervor. Many of the companies working in the Bakken understand the double edged sword of shared data integrated with instant communications.

“In the past, public comments took time to reach people because there was no emails or websites,” Sonnenfeld said. “Today you have public comments on websites immediately for everyone to see.”

This valuable information can often lead to a myriad of paths depending on the level of information and the life cycle of the resource play.

“There are a number of distinct combinations of multiple play factors including source rock quality, maturity, reservoir quality, pressures, to name a few,” Sonnenfeld said. “Too much sharing data can lead to

squatters and other early issues, so sharing begins in the development phase. Right now there is a lot sharing in the Bakken because it is in development.”

Through the years, the state has set up a number of procedures to ensure proper care of the rock samples as well as preserving the integrity of the resource.

“Cores are only allowed to be shipped to a commercial lab for testing, not directly to the companies,” LeFever said. “Data acquired from the additional testing is required to be returned to the state and is made public after a short confidential period.”

LeFever added this protocol eliminates the need for running the same tests on the same core preserving the collection for later needs.

Let’s face it, we live in a world of innovation. Innovation that runs on petroleum and science. Most energy experts believe the modern day shale play is transforming the way the world views energy production and the Bakken is truly contributing in the creation of this new global consciousness. And in true North Dakota fashion, continuing to share the state’s resources offers significant aid to those attempting to address the common obstacles in the Bakken.

“We will continue to be a high tech energy play because our geology and geography has always demanded that,” Helms said. ■



Image courtesy of Neset Consulting Service
Siltstone



Image courtesy of Neset Consulting Service
Upper Bakken Shale

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