

# Operator targets probe at Kentucky frontier play



By NOAH  
BRENNER  
Houston 17  
April 2015  
00:00 GMT

## **Bruin among players filing permits to explore Rogersville shale after fresh analysis**

A SUBSIDIARY of Cimarex Energy has filed a permit to drill a second wildcat in the Rogersville shale play in Kentucky, where a handful of major operators are quietly putting together acreage positions to test the frontier play.

Bruin Exploration has filed a permit to drill the vertical Walbridge Holdings 1 well south of the town of Louisa in Lawrence County along the border with West Virginia.

The well follows Bruin's initial wildcat — the Sylvia Young 1 — that was drilled early last year, which was the first modern well to explicitly test the Rogersville formation. The Sylvia Young well reportedly tested with a flare but Bruin has not filed results of those production tests with the state to date.

In addition to Bruin's Walbridge Holdings 1 well, Kentucky state regulators have received permits for two additional confidential stratigraphic tests of the Rogersville at undisclosed locations.

Kentucky oil and gas regulations allow operators to keep virtually all the details of stratigraphic wells confidential but such wells cannot be fractured or production tested unless the operator applies for a new permit.

The latest stratigraphic permits, which were issued in late March, follow a pair of high-profile stratigraphic tests by shale pioneer Chesapeake Energy and Appalachian energy giant EQT.

Those wells were drilled in Lawrence County and to the south in Johnson County, respectively.

In the case of EQT, the company subsequently asked Kentucky regulators for permission to start a horizontal well using the stratigraphic test bore in what would be the first horizontal well ever drilled into the Rogersville formation.

Besides Cimarex, EQT and Chesapeake, Continental Resources has actively acquired acreage in the play but to date, the Oklahoma City oil player has not filed publicly for a drilling permit.

The Rogersville formation is a Cambrian-aged dark-gray shale member of the Conasauga group that lies at depths ranging from 9000 to 14,000 feet at the base of the Rome Trough extensional basin running from central Kentucky through West Virginia and into southern Pennsylvania.

While it was at first considered to have been too old and too deep to generate commercial hydrocarbons, more recent analysis by state and federal geologists has indicated that it could hold potential for liquids-rich gas.