

CONTANGO OIL & GAS CO
Form S-3
January 09, 2004
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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 9, 2004

Registration No. 333-

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM S-3
REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

CONTANGO OIL & GAS COMPANY

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

95-4079863
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

3700 Buffalo Speedway, Suite 960, Houston, Texas 77098

(713) 960-1901

(Address and telephone number of principal executive offices)

Kenneth R. Peak

Contango Oil & Gas Company

Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Financial Officer

3700 Buffalo Speedway, Suite 960

Houston, Texas 77098

(713) 960-1901

(Name, address and telephone number of agent for service)

Copies to:

Richard A. Shortz

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

300 South Grand Avenue

Los Angeles, California 90071

(213) 612-2500

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement, as determined in light of market conditions and other factors.

If the only securities being registered on this form are to be offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box.

If any of the securities being registered on this form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.

If this form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

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If this form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. "

If delivery of the prospectus is expected to be made pursuant to Rule 434, please check the following box. "

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Class of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Share	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price	Amount of Registration Fee
Common stock (1)	2,663,513 shares	\$ 6.81(2)	\$ 18,138,523.53(2)	\$ 1,467.41

- (1) Consists of (i) 1,333,328 shares of common stock, \$0.04 par value per share (the common stock), issuable upon conversion of the Registrant's outstanding Series C cumulative convertible preferred stock, \$0.04 par value per share (the Series C preferred stock); (ii) 785,185 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of certain warrants; (iii) 320,000 shares of common stock issued upon previous exercise of certain warrants; (iv) 25,000 shares issuable upon exercise of certain stock options; and (v) 200,000 shares of common stock, the Registrant's bona fide estimate of the number of shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of shares of the Registrant's Series C preferred stock issuable at the Registrant's option in lieu of cash dividends.
- (2) Estimated solely for the purpose of computing the amount of the registration fee in accordance with Rule 457(c) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, based upon the average of the high and low prices of the Registrant's common stock on the American Stock Exchange on January 8, 2004.

The Registrant hereby amends this Registration Statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the Registrant shall file a further amendment which specifically states that this Registration Statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until this Registration Statement shall become effective on such date as the Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

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The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. The selling stockholders may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

Subject to Completion

PROSPECTUS

January __, 2004

2,663,513 SHARES

CONTANGO OIL & GAS COMPANY

COMMON STOCK

This prospectus relates to offers and sales from time to time of up to 2,663,513 shares of our common stock by the selling stockholders listed in this prospectus. Approximately 1,333,328 shares are issuable upon the conversion of 1,600 shares of our Series C preferred stock, which we issued in a private placement in December 2003. Approximately 810,185 shares are issuable upon the exercise of outstanding warrants and stock options. Approximately 320,000 shares were issued upon exercise of certain warrants. From time to time, we may issue additional shares of Series C preferred stock in lieu of cash dividends on the Series C preferred stock. This prospectus includes shares of common stock that would be issuable upon conversion of those additional shares of Series C preferred stock. The selling stockholders may sell the shares of common stock at various times and in various types of transactions, including sales in the open market, sales in negotiated transactions and sales by a combination of these methods. The shares may be sold at market prices prevailing at the time of sale or at privately negotiated prices. The securities offered by this prospectus were issued to the selling stockholders in transactions exempt from registration under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

We will not receive any proceeds from such sales by the selling stockholders. We will bear all costs, expenses and fees in connection with the registration of the shares. The selling stockholders will bear all commissions and discounts, if any, attributable to the sales of the shares.

Our common stock is traded on the American Stock Exchange under the symbol MCF . The last reported sales price of the common stock on the American Stock Exchange on January 8, 2004 was \$6.73 per share.

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You should carefully review and consider the information under the heading Risk Factors beginning on page 2 and Cautionary Statement About Forward-Looking Statements beginning on page 9 of this prospectus.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is January __, 2004.

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No dealer, salesperson or other person has been authorized to give any information or to make any representations other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus in connection with the offer contained in this prospectus and, if given or made, such information or representations must not be relied upon as having been authorized by us. Neither the delivery of this prospectus nor any sale made hereunder shall under any circumstances create an implication that there has been no change in our affairs since the date hereof. This prospectus does not constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy securities other than those specially offered hereby or of any securities offered hereby in any jurisdiction where, or to any person to whom, it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation. The information contained in this prospectus speaks only as of the date of this prospectus unless the information specially indicates that another date applies.

This prospectus has been prepared based on information provided by us and by other sources that we believe are reliable. This prospectus summarizes certain documents and other information in a manner we believe to be accurate, but we refer you to the actual documents for a more complete understanding of what we discuss in this prospectus. In making a decision to invest in the debentures, you must rely on your own examination of our company and the terms of the offering, including the merits and risks involved.

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and the documents we have incorporated by reference. We have not authorized anyone else to give you different information. These securities are not being offered in any state or other jurisdiction that does not permit the offer. We will disclose any material changes in our affairs in an amendment to this prospectus, a prospectus supplement or a future filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

All references in this prospectus to the Company, Contango, we, us or our are to Contango Oil & Gas Company and its subsidiaries.

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SUMMARY

We are an independent natural gas and oil company engaged in the exploration, production and acquisition of natural gas and oil in the United States. Our primary source of production is currently in south Texas. While our south Texas properties account for nearly all of our production, we also have interests in producing properties located offshore in the Gulf of Mexico and hold a 10% limited partnership interest in a proposed LNG terminal in Freeport, Texas.

As of September 30, 2003, we owned approximately 20.1 Bcfe of total proved reserves, approximately 96% of which were classified as proved developed producing. The pre-tax net present value of our total proved reserves prepared in accordance with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC) guidelines as of September 30, 2003 was approximately \$49.1 million.

Recent Developments

On December 9, 2003, we announced that we and our 33%-owned subsidiary, Republic Exploration, LLC, have entered into an agreement to sell all of our currently producing Gulf of Mexico leases to private interests for approximately \$12.0 million.

On December 12, 2003, we sold 1,600 shares of Series C preferred stock to a group of private investors for gross aggregate proceeds of \$8,000,000. The shares of common stock issuable upon conversion of those shares of Series C preferred stock are part of the shares of common stock offered by this prospectus.

On December 21, 2003, we announced the signing of an agreement between ConocoPhillips and Freeport LNG Development, L.P., a partnership in which we have a 10% limited partnership interest. Under the agreement, ConocoPhillips will participate in Freeport LNG's project to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) receiving terminal on Quintana Island near Freeport, Texas.

Address of Principal Executive Offices:

Contango Oil & Gas Company
3700 Buffalo Speedway, Suite 960
Houston, Texas 77098
Phone: (713) 960-1901

Internet Address:

www.mcfx.biz (information contained on our web-site is not part of this prospectus)

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RISK FACTORS

In addition to the other information set forth elsewhere in this prospectus, you should carefully consider the following factors when evaluating Contango. An investment in Contango will be subject to risks inherent in our business. The trading price of the shares of Contango will be affected by the performance of our business relative to, among other things, our competitors, market conditions, and general economic and industry conditions. The value of an investment in Contango may decrease, resulting in a loss. The risk factors listed below are not all inclusive.

We have no ability to control the prices that we receive for natural gas and oil. Natural gas and oil prices fluctuate widely, and low prices could have a material adverse effect on our revenues, profitability and growth. Our revenues, profitability and future growth will depend significantly on natural gas and crude oil prices. Prices received also will affect the amount of future cash flow available for capital expenditures and repayment of indebtedness and will affect our ability to raise additional capital. Lower prices may also affect the amount of natural gas and oil that we can economically produce. Factors that can cause price fluctuations include:

The domestic and foreign supply of natural gas and oil

Overall economic conditions

The level of consumer product demand

Weather conditions

The price and availability of alternative fuels

Political conditions in the Middle East and other natural gas and oil producing regions

The price of foreign imports

Domestic and foreign governmental regulations

Because we have a limited operating history in the natural gas and oil industry, our future operating results are difficult to forecast. We entered the natural gas and oil exploration and production business in July 1999, and as a result, we have limited historical financial and operating information available on which to base your evaluation of our future performance. Additionally, because we have fewer financial resources than many companies in our industry, we may be at a disadvantage in bidding for acreage, seismic data and exploratory prospects and producing natural gas and oil properties.

Our ability to successfully execute our business plan is dependent on our ability to obtain adequate financing. Our business plan, which includes participation in 3-D seismic shoots, the drilling of exploration prospects and producing property acquisitions, has required and will require substantial capital expenditures. We anticipate that we will require additional financing to fund our planned growth. Our ability to raise additional capital will depend on the results of our operations and the status of various capital and industry markets at the time we seek such capital. Accordingly, we cannot be certain that additional financing will be available to us on acceptable terms, if at all. In particular, our credit

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facility imposes limits on our ability to borrow under the facility based on adjustments to the value of our hydrocarbon reserves, and our credit facility and the terms of our outstanding preferred stock limit our ability to incur additional indebtedness. In the event additional capital resources are unavailable, we may be required to curtail our exploration and development activities or be forced to sell some of our assets in an untimely fashion or on less than favorable terms.

Reserve estimates depend on many assumptions that may turn out to be inaccurate. Any material inaccuracies in these reserve estimates or underlying assumptions could

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materially affect the quantities and present values of our reserves. The process of estimating natural gas and oil reserves is complex. It requires interpretations of available technical data and various assumptions, including assumptions relating to economic factors. Any significant inaccuracies in these interpretations or assumptions could materially affect the estimated quantities and present value of reserves shown in this report.

In order to prepare these estimates, we must project production rates and timing of development expenditures. We must also analyze available geological, geophysical, production and engineering data, and the extent, quality and reliability of this data can vary. The process also requires economic assumptions relating to matters such as natural gas and oil prices, drilling and operating expenses, capital expenditures, taxes and availability of funds. Therefore, estimates of natural gas and oil reserves are inherently imprecise.

Actual future production, natural gas and oil prices, revenues, taxes, development expenditures, operating expenses and quantities of recoverable natural gas and oil reserves most likely will vary from our estimates. Any significant variance could materially affect the estimated quantities and pre-tax net present value of reserves shown in this report. In addition, we may adjust estimates of proved reserves to reflect production history, results of exploration and development, prevailing natural gas and oil prices and other factors, many of which are beyond our control. Some of the producing wells included in our reserve report have produced for a relatively short period of time as of June 30, 2003. Because some of our reserve estimates are not based on a lengthy production history and are calculated using volumetric analysis, these estimates are less reliable than estimates based on a more lengthy production history.

You should not assume that the pre-tax net present value of our proved reserves prepared in accordance with SEC guidelines referred to in this report is the current market value of our estimated natural gas and oil reserves. We base the pre-tax net present value of future net cash flows from our proved reserves on prices and costs on the date of the estimate. Actual future prices, costs, and the volume of produced reserves may differ materially from those used in the pre-tax net present value estimate.

Natural gas and oil reserves are depleting assets and the failure to replace our reserves would adversely affect our production and cash flows. Our future natural gas and oil production depends on our success in finding or acquiring new reserves. If we fail to replace reserves, our level of production and cash flows would be adversely impacted. Production from natural gas and oil properties decline as reserves are depleted, with the rate of decline depending on reservoir characteristics. Our total proved reserves will decline as reserves are produced unless we conduct other successful exploration and development activities or acquire properties containing proved reserves, or both. Further, substantially all of our reserves are proved developed producing. Accordingly, we do not have significant opportunities to increase our production from our existing proved reserves. Our ability to make the necessary capital investment to maintain or expand our asset base of natural gas and oil reserves would be impaired to the extent cash flow from operations is reduced and external sources of capital become limited or unavailable. We may not be successful in exploring for, developing or acquiring additional reserves. If we are not successful, our future production and revenues will be adversely affected.

We depend on the services of our chairman, chief executive officer, and chief financial officer, and implementation of our business plan could be seriously harmed if we lost his services. We depend heavily on the services of Kenneth R. Peak, our chairman, chief executive officer, and chief financial officer. We do not have an employment agreement with Mr. Peak, and the proceeds from a \$10.0 million key person life insurance policy on Mr. Peak may not be adequate to cover our losses in the event of Mr. Peak's death.

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We are highly dependent on the technical services provided by our alliance partner, JEX, and could be seriously harmed if our alliance agreement were terminated. Because we have only four employees, none of whom are geoscientists or engineers, we are dependent upon alliance partners for the success of our natural gas and oil exploration projects and expect to remain so for the foreseeable future. In particular, we have an agreement with JEX to source, screen, generate and present exploration and acquisition opportunities to us. This agreement is cancelable by JEX with 180-days notice or 30-days notice if we are in default under our alliance agreement. Highly qualified explorationists or engineers are difficult to attract and retain in this industry. As a result, the loss of the services of JEX could have a material adverse effect on us and could prevent us from pursuing our business plan. Additionally, JEX's loss of certain explorationists or engineers could have a material adverse effect on our operations as well.

We rely on the accuracy of the estimates in the reservoir engineering reports provided to us by our outside engineers. We have no in house reservoir engineering capability, and therefore must accept the accuracy of the periodic reservoir reports provided to use by our outside reservoir engineers. If those reports prove to be inaccurate, our financial reports could have material misstatements. Further, we use the reports of our independent reservoir engineers in our financial planning. If the reports of the outside reservoir engineers prove to be inaccurate, we may make misjudgments in our financial planning.

Exploration is a high risk activity, and our participation in drilling activities may not be successful. Our future success will largely depend on the success of our exploration drilling program. Participation in exploration drilling activities involves numerous risks, including the risk that no commercially productive natural gas or oil reservoirs will be discovered. The cost of drilling, completing and operating wells is often uncertain, and drilling operations may be curtailed, delayed or canceled as a result of a variety of factors, including:

Unexpected drilling conditions

Blowouts, fires or explosions with resultant injury, death or environmental damage

Pressure or irregularities in formations

Equipment failures or accidents

Adverse weather conditions

Compliance with governmental requirements and laws, present and future

Shortages or delays in the availability of drilling rigs and the delivery of equipment

Even when properly used and interpreted, 3-D seismic data and visualization techniques are only tools used to assist geoscientists in identifying subsurface structures and hydrocarbon indicators. They do not allow the interpreter to know conclusively if hydrocarbons are present or economically producible. Poor results from our drilling activities would materially and adversely affect our future cash flows and results of operations.

In addition, as a successful efforts company, we choose to account for unsuccessful exploration efforts (the drilling of dry holes) and seismic costs as a current expense of operations, which immediately impacts our earnings. Significant expensed exploration charges in any period would

materially adversely affect our earnings for that period and could cause our earnings to be volatile from period to period.

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The natural gas and oil business involves many operating risks that can cause substantial losses. The natural gas and oil business involves a variety of operating risks, including:

Blowouts, fires and explosions

Surface cratering

Uncontrollable flows of underground natural gas, oil or formation water

Natural disasters

Pipe and cement failures

Casing collapses

Stuck drilling and service tools

Abnormal pressure formations

Environmental hazards such as natural gas leaks, oil spills, pipeline ruptures or discharges of toxic gases

If any of these events occur, we could incur substantial losses as a result of:

Injury or loss of life

Severe damage to and destruction of property, natural resources or equipment

Pollution and other environmental damage

Clean-up responsibilities

Regulatory investigation and penalties

Suspension of our operations

Repairs necessary to resume operations

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Offshore operations also are subject to a variety of operating risks peculiar to the marine environment, such as capsizing, collisions and damage or loss from hurricanes or other adverse weather conditions. These conditions can cause substantial damage to facilities and interrupt production. As a result, we could incur substantial liabilities that could reduce the funds available for exploration, development or leasehold acquisitions, or result in loss of properties.

If we were to experience any of these problems, it could affect well bores, platforms, gathering systems and processing facilities, any one of which could adversely affect our ability to conduct operations. In accordance with customary industry practices, we maintain insurance against some, but not all, of these risks. Losses could occur for uninsurable or uninsured risks or in amounts in excess of existing insurance coverage. We may not be able to maintain adequate insurance in the future at rates we consider reasonable, and particular types of coverage may not be available. An event that is not fully covered by insurance could have a material adverse effect on our financial position and results of operations.

Failure to obtain approvals and permits for the LNG receiving terminal in Freeport, Texas from governmental and regulatory agencies could have a detrimental effect on the project. We own a 10% interest Freeport LNG Development, LP, formed to build a proposed LNG receiving facility in Freeport, Texas. Freeport LNG Development has yet to obtain several governmental and regulatory approvals and permits required in order to complete and maintain the Freeport LNG project. It may take several years of work to obtain the approvals and permits necessary to proceed with the construction and operation of an LNG receiving terminal. Freeport LNG Development has no control over the outcome of the review and approval process. If Freeport LNG Development is unable to obtain the approvals and permits, we may not be able to recover our investment in the project.

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The construction of our LNG receiving terminal is subject to various development risks. On December 21, 2003, we announced the signing of an agreement between ConocoPhillips and Freeport LNG Development. Under the agreement, ConocoPhillips will participate in the proposed LNG receiving terminal in Freeport, Texas. ConocoPhillips will acquire one billion cubic feet per day of capacity in the terminal for its use, obtain a 50% interest in the general partner of Freeport LNG Development, and provide construction funding presently estimated at \$400-450 million. We anticipate that the ConocoPhillips transaction will close in the spring of 2004, subject to completion of remaining documentation and satisfaction of closing conditions. If the ConocoPhillips transaction fails to close, we may not be able to fund or finance our 10% ownership interest in the LNG receiving facility and may lose our investment in the project.

Furthermore, the LNG receiving facility remains in development stage and subject to development risk such as permitting, cost overruns and delays. Key factors that may affect the completion of the LNG receiving terminal include, but are not limited to: timely issuance of necessary permits, licenses and approvals by governmental agencies and third parties; sufficient financing; unanticipated changes in market demand or supply; competition with similar projects; labor disputes; site difficulties; environmental conditions; unforeseen events, such as explosions, fires and product spills; delays in manufacturing and delivery schedules of critical equipment and materials; resistance in the local community; local and general economic conditions; and commercial arrangements for pipelines and related equipment to transport and market LNG.

If completion of the LNG receiving facility is delayed beyond the estimated development period, the actual cost of completion may increase beyond the amounts currently estimated in our capital budget. A delay in completion of the LNG receiving facility would also cause a delay in the receipt of revenues projected from operation of the facility, which may cause our business, results of operations and financial condition to be substantially harmed.

Hedging our production may result in losses. From time to time, we may enter into hedging arrangements on a portion of our natural gas and oil production to reduce our exposure to declines in the prices of natural gas and oil. The value of these arrangements can be volatile and can materially affect our future reported financial results. Hedging arrangements also expose us to risk of significant financial loss in some circumstances including the following:

There is a change in the expected differential between the underlying price in the hedging agreement and actual prices received

Production is less than expected

Payments owed under derivative hedging contracts typically come due prior to receipt of the hedged months production revenues

The other party to the hedging contract defaults on its contract obligations

In addition, these hedging arrangements can limit the benefit we would receive from increases in the prices for natural gas and oil. Furthermore, if we choose not to engage in hedging arrangements in the future, we may be more adversely affected by changes in natural gas and oil prices than our competitors who engage in hedging arrangements.

Our ability to market our natural gas and oil may be impaired by capacity constraints on the gathering systems and pipelines that transport our natural gas and oil. Most of our natural gas, and a substantial portion of our oil, is transported through gathering systems and pipelines, which we do not own. Transportation capacity on gathering systems and pipelines is occasionally limited and at times unavailable due to repairs or improvements being made to these facilities or due to capacity being utilized by other natural gas or oil shippers that may have

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priority transportation agreements. If the gathering systems or our transportation capacity is materially restricted or is unavailable in the future, our ability to market our natural gas or oil could be impaired and cash flow from the affected properties could be reduced, which could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

Most of our natural gas and oil production is concentrated in south Texas and is sold to a single purchaser. Most of our current production comes from wells drilled in south Texas. This production is being sold on a spot market basis to a single purchaser. Any disruption of our pipeline or marketing arrangements or financial difficulties with our purchaser, or alternative marketing sources, could have an adverse effect on our ability to market our natural gas and oil production. Additionally, if our purchaser suffered financial difficulties, we might not be able to collect receivables from the purchaser.

We have no assurance of title to our leased interests. Our practice in acquiring exploration leases or undivided interests in natural gas and oil leases is not to incur the expense of retaining lawyers to examine the title to the mineral interest prior to executing the lease. Instead, we rely upon the judgment of lease brokers or landmen who perform the field work in examining records in the appropriate governmental, county or parish clerk's office before leasing a specific mineral interest. This practice is widely followed in the industry. Prior to the drilling of an exploration well the operator of the well will typically obtain a preliminary title review of the drillsite lease and/or spacing unit within which the proposed well is to be drilled to identify any obvious deficiencies in title to the well and, if there are deficiencies, to identify measures necessary to cure those defects to the extent reasonably possible. We have no assurance, however, that any such deficiencies have been cured by the operator of any such wells. It does happen, from time to time, that the examination made by the title lawyers reveals that the lease or leases are invalid, having been purchased in error from a person who is not the rightful owner of the mineral interest desired. In these circumstances, we may not be able to proceed with our exploration and development of the lease site or may incur costs to remedy a defect. It may also happen, from time to time, that the operator may elect to proceed with a well despite defects to the title identified in the preliminary title opinion.

Competition in the natural gas and oil industry is intense, and we are smaller and have a more limited operating history than most of our competitors. We compete with a broad range of natural gas and oil companies in our exploration and property acquisition activities. We also compete for the equipment and labor required to operate and develop these properties. Most of our competitors have substantially greater financial resources than we do. These competitors may be able to pay more for exploratory prospects and productive natural gas and oil properties. Further, they may be able to define, evaluate, bid for and purchase a greater number of properties and prospects than we can. Our ability to explore for natural gas and oil and to acquire additional properties in the future will depend on our ability to evaluate and select suitable properties and to consummate transactions in this highly competitive environment. In addition, most of our competitors have been operating for a much longer time than we have and have demonstrated the ability to operate through industry cycles. We may not be able to compete effectively with these companies or in such a highly competitive environment.

We are subject to complex laws and regulations, including environmental regulations that can adversely affect the cost, manner or feasibility of doing business. Our operations are subject to numerous laws and regulations governing the operation and maintenance of our facilities and the discharge of materials into the environment. Failure to comply with such rules and regulations could result in substantial penalties and have an adverse effect on us. These laws and regulations may:

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Require that we obtain permits before commencing drilling

Restrict the substances that can be released into the environment in connection with drilling and production activities

Limit or prohibit drilling activities on protected areas, such as wetlands or wilderness areas

Require remedial measures to mitigate pollution from former operations, such as plugging abandoned wells

Under these laws and regulations, we could be liable for personal injury and clean-up costs and other environmental and property damages, as well as administrative, civil and criminal penalties. We maintain only limited insurance coverage for sudden and accidental environmental damages. We do not believe that insurance coverage for environmental damages that occur over time is available at a reasonable cost. Moreover, we do not believe that insurance coverage for the full potential liability that could be caused by sudden and accidental environmental damages is available at a reasonable cost. Accordingly, we may be subject to liability, or we may be required to cease production from properties in the event of environmental damages. These laws and regulations have been changed frequently in the past. In general, these changes have imposed more stringent requirements that increase operating costs or require capital expenditures in order to remain in compliance. It is also possible that unanticipated factual developments could cause us to make environmental expenditures that are significantly different from those we currently expect. Existing laws and regulations could be changed and any such changes could have an adverse effect on our business and results of operations.

We cannot control the activities on properties we do not operate. Other companies operate all of the properties in which we have an interest. As a result, we have a limited ability to exercise influence over operations for these properties or their associated costs. Our dependence on the operator and other working interest owners for these projects and our limited ability to influence operations and associated costs could materially adversely affect the realization of our targeted returns on capital in drilling or acquisition activities. The success and timing of our drilling and development activities on properties operated by others therefore depend upon a number of factors that are outside of our control, including:

Timing and amount of capital expenditures

The operator's expertise and financial resources

Approval of other participants in drilling wells

Selection of technology

Acquisition prospects are difficult to assess and may pose additional risks to our operations. We expect to evaluate and, where appropriate, pursue acquisition opportunities on terms our management considers favorable. In particular, we expect to pursue acquisitions that have the potential to increase our domestic natural gas and oil reserves. The successful acquisition of natural gas and oil properties requires an assessment of:

Recoverable reserves

Exploration potential

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Future natural gas and oil prices

Operating costs

Potential environmental and other liabilities and other factors

Permitting and other environmental authorizations required for our operations

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In connection with such an assessment, we would expect to perform a review of the subject properties that we believe to be generally consistent with industry practices. Nonetheless, the resulting conclusions are necessarily inexact and their accuracy inherently uncertain, and such an assessment may not reveal all existing or potential problems, nor will it necessarily permit a buyer to become sufficiently familiar with the properties to fully assess their merits and deficiencies. Inspections may not always be performed on every platform or well, and structural and environmental problems are not necessarily observable even when an inspection is undertaken.

Future acquisitions could pose numerous additional risks to our operations and financial results, including:

Problems integrating the purchased operations, personnel or technologies

Unanticipated costs

Diversion of resources and management attention from our exploration business

Entry into regions or markets in which we have limited or no prior experience

Potential loss of key employees, particularly those of the acquired organization

We do not currently intend to pay dividends on our common stock. We have never declared or paid a dividend on our common stock and do not expect to do so in the foreseeable future. Our current plan is to retain any future earnings for funding growth, and, therefore, holders of our common stock will not be able to receive a return on their investment unless they sell their shares.

Anti-takeover provisions of our certificate of incorporation, bylaws and Delaware law could adversely effect a potential acquisition by third parties that may ultimately be in the financial interests of our stockholders. Our certificate of incorporation, bylaws and the Delaware General Corporation Law contain provisions that may discourage unsolicited takeover proposals. These provisions could have the effect of inhibiting fluctuations in the market price of our common stock that could result from actual or rumored takeover attempts, preventing changes in our management or limiting the price that investors may be willing to pay for shares of common stock. These provisions, among other things, authorize the board of directors to:

Designate the terms of and issue new series of preferred stock

Limit the personal liability of directors

Limit the persons who may call special meetings of stockholders

Prohibit stockholder action by written consent

Establish advance notice requirements for nominations for election of the board of directors and for proposing matters to be acted on by stockholders at stockholder meetings

Require us to indemnify directors and officers to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law

Impose restrictions on business combinations with some interested parties

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT ABOUT FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Some of the statements made in this prospectus may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. The words and phrases should be , will be , believe , expect , anticipate , estimate , forecast , goal and similar expressions identify

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forward-looking statements and express our expectations about future events. These include such matters as:

Our financial position

Business strategy and budgets

Anticipated capital expenditures

Drilling of wells

Natural gas and oil reserves

Timing and amount of future production of natural gas and oil

Operating costs and other expenses

Cash flow and anticipated liquidity

Prospect development

Property acquisitions and sales

Hedging results

Development of our LNG receiving terminal

Although we believe the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements are reasonable, we cannot assure you that such expectations will occur. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from actual future results expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements. These factors include among others:

The risks associated with exploration, including cost overruns and the drilling of non-economic wells or dry holes

Availability of capital and the ability to repay indebtedness when due

Ability to raise capital to fund capital expenditures

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The ability to find, acquire, market, develop and produce new natural gas and oil properties

Natural gas and oil price volatility

Uncertainties in the estimation of proved reserves and in the projection of future rates of production and timing of development expenditures

Operating hazards attendant to the natural gas and oil business

Downhole drilling and completion risks that are generally not recoverable from third parties or insurance

Potential mechanical failure or under-performance of significant wells or pipeline mishaps

Climatic conditions

Availability and cost of material and equipment

Ability of LNG to become a competitive supply alternative in the U.S. oil and gas industry

Delays in anticipated start-up dates

Actions or inactions of third-party operators of our properties

Commodity price movements adversely affecting our hedge position

Ability to find and retain skilled personnel

Strength and financial resources of competitors

Federal and state regulatory developments and approvals

Environmental risks

Worldwide economic conditions

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You should not unduly rely on these forward-looking statements in this prospectus, as they speak only as of the date of this prospectus. Except as required by law, we undertake no obligation to publicly release any revisions to these forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances occurring after the date of this prospectus or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events. See the information under the heading **Risk Factors** referred to on page 2 of this prospectus for some of the important factors that could affect our financial performance or could cause actual results to differ materially from estimates contained in forward-looking statements.

USE OF PROCEEDS

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale by the selling stockholders of the shares covered by this prospectus. The selling stockholders who sell their shares will receive all of the net proceeds from the sale of such shares. The selling stockholders will not pay any of the expenses incurred in connection with the registration of the shares, but they will pay all commissions, discounts, and other compensation to any securities broker-dealers through whom they sell any of the shares.

Table of Contents**SELLING STOCKHOLDERS**

The following table lists the names of the selling stockholders, the number of shares of common stock beneficially owned by each selling stockholder on January 2, 2004, the number of shares which may be offered for sale by this prospectus, the number of shares of common stock to be owned by each selling stockholder upon completion of the offering, and the percentage of total shares of our common stock to be owned by each selling stockholder upon completion of the offering. Because the selling stockholders may offer all, some or none of their common stock, we cannot provide a definitive estimate as to the number of shares that will be held by the selling stockholders after the offering.

Under the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission, beneficial ownership includes shares over which the named stockholder exercises voting and/or investment control. Unless otherwise indicated in the footnotes below, we believe that the persons and entities named in the table have sole voting and investment power with respect to all shares beneficially owned, subject to applicable community property laws. The information with respect to beneficial ownership of common stock held by each person is based upon record ownership data provided by our transfer agent, information as supplied or confirmed by the selling stockholders, statements filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or our actual knowledge. Information in the footnotes regarding persons with voting and investment control over the shares is based solely upon information provided by the selling stockholders. Except as noted in the footnotes to the table below, within the last three years, none of the selling stockholders have held any position with us or entered into any material relationships with us.

Selling Stockholders	Shares Beneficially Owned Prior to Offering(2)		Shares Being Offered(3)		Shares Beneficially Owned After the Offering(1)	
	Offering(2)	Offered(3)	Number	Percent		
Bonanza Master Fund, Ltd. (4)	166,666	166,666				
Fairfield Industries Incorporated (5)	125,000	125,000				
Gryphon Master Fund, L.P. (6)	333,333	333,333				
Ironman Energy Capital, L.P. (7)	66,666	66,666				
John B. Juneau (8)	719,542	325,000	394,542	4.0%		
Nicholas Equity Income Fund, Inc. (9)	33,333	33,333				
Nicholas Income Fund, Inc. (9)						