

Oil firm seeks to join water case

Posted: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 9:55 pm |

A Texas oil and gas company says drilling in northeastern Wyoming could be compromised if the U.S. Supreme Court sides with Montana in a pending water rights case.

Montana has accused neighboring Wyoming of taking too much water from the Tongue and Powder rivers in violation of a long-standing agreement known as the Yellowstone River Compact.

Montana's 2007 lawsuit blames in part tens of thousands of coalbed methane wells drilled in Wyoming over the past decade. Those wells pump out large volumes of water to release trapped pockets of natural gas - water that Montana says should count toward Wyoming's share of the two rivers.

Houston-based Anadarko Petroleum Corp. said the water should not be covered under the compact. The company is seeking to intervene in the case.