

## Mineralogy and CO<sub>2</sub> Storage at the Weyburn IEA CO<sub>2</sub>-EOR Site

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### Summary

Water-rock reactions are critical to the short- and long-term storage of injected CO<sub>2</sub>. Carbonate-CO<sub>2</sub>-fluid reactions releases CO<sub>2</sub> while silicate-CO<sub>2</sub>-fluid reactions potentially store CO<sub>2</sub> in the fluid and as newly formed carbonates. The detailed, quantitative mineralogy of the Weyburn reservoir is described in the context of flow units as defined by the operator of the Weyburn Field, EnCana Resources Ltd. Detailed, quantitative mineralogy is also presented for the units that overly the Weybrun Reservoir. Storage calculations show that even in a carbonte reservoir such as Weybrun, there are sufficient silicate minerals to provide long term storage of CO<sub>2</sub> by reaction with silicates. Also, overlying units that represent a wide array of rock types have the capacity to store CO<sub>2</sub> that might escape from the reservoir.

### Introduction

Burrowes and Gilboy (2000) have described the detailed geological setting of the Weyburn reservoir. The Weyburn field lies along the Mississippian subcrop belt on the northern extent of the Williston Basin, approximately 130 kilometers southeast of Regina, Saskatchewan. Medium gravity crude oil is produced from the Midale beds of the Mississippian Charles Formation (Figure 1). The Weyburn reservoir is comprised of the tight dolomitic Marly zone and the underlying calcitic more permeable Vuggy Shoal and less permeable Vuggy Intershool zones and is sealed by the Midale Evaporite anhydrite cap. EnCana has established a core-based, sequence stratigraphic interpretation of the Midale Marly and Vuggy units (Figure 2). Burrowes and Gilboy (2000) list general porosity and permeability estimates for the various flow units: The Midale Marly is characterized by high porosity (26%), and variable permeability (10 MD). The Midale Vuggy shoal

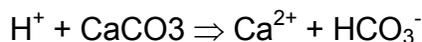
has lower porosity (15%), but high permeability (50MD), and the Vuggy intershoal unit is characterized by low porosity (10%) and low permeability (3 MD).

Trapping potential for CO<sub>2</sub> is related to mineralogy and the nature of reactions that occur in the fluid phase. Carbonate reservoirs typically containing Fe-, Mg- and Ca-bearing carbonates have less trapping potential for CO<sub>2</sub> than do silicate reservoirs, as can be shown by the reactions:

#### 1. CO<sub>2</sub> dissolution



#### *Calcite dissolution*



Both CO<sub>2</sub> and calcite dissolution



CO<sub>2</sub> dissolution results in the modified fluid having a lower pH and higher [HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>]. Calcite dissolution leads to higher carbonate alkalinity and higher cation concentrations. If both reactions take place, as shown by the final reaction, then for each mole of injected CO<sub>2</sub> that reacts, we can expect one mole of cation, and 2 moles of HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> dissolved in the in situ fluid.

In siliciclastic aquifers, CO<sub>2</sub> may be stored in the mineral and/or aqueous phase by reacting with silicate minerals. Although the Weyburn reservoir is dominantly calcitic and dolomitic, significant concentrations of potentially reactive silicate minerals may be present to assist in CO<sub>2</sub> storage. The overlying units to surface are comprised of a mixture of carbonates and siliciclastics that also contain significant volumes of silicate minerals. Gunter et al. (2000) have grouped mineral trapping into two types. Type 1 capture is defined as occurring when a mineral is precipitated incorporating the anion formed by the dissolved gas. Type 2 capture is defined as occurring when an acid gas is neutralized in solution forming a non-volatile soluble salt and subsequently leading to brine formation. Type 3 capture is characterized by CO<sub>2</sub> trapping in both solid and aqueous phases:

Geological units containing aluminosilicate mineral assemblages such as feldspar, zeolite, illite, and chlorite act as a base and facilitate CO<sub>2</sub> storage. If the assemblage contains Fe/Ca/Mg-bearing silicate minerals, neutralization of CO<sub>2</sub> results in precipitation of siderite, calcite or dolomite (i.e. Type 1 reaction), if it contains Na/K-bearing silicate minerals, neutralization of the CO<sub>2</sub> results in development of bicarbonate brines (i.e. Type 2 reaction). The reaction of the CO<sub>2</sub>-charged fluid with silicate mineral assemblages is key to trapping CO<sub>2</sub>, especially if reservoir containment is compromised.

## **Results - Mineralogy**

Approximately 100 core samples were obtained from each of the flow units shown in Figure 2 and a further 9 samples were obtained from units below and 48 above the Midale Beds. EnCana supplied flow unit interval information and cores were selected to maximize each sampled flow unit. Cores were also selected to correlate with wells sampled for the Geochemistry fluid/gas program (see paper by Raistrick et al, this volume). Five primary analytical methods were utilized for the samples:

1. polished thin section examination – general textural and mineralogical information.
2. X-Ray Diffraction – mineral identification and relative proportions.
3. X-Ray Fluorescence and Inductively-Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry – whole rock major and trace element composition.

4. Electron Probe Microanalysis – mineral identification and chemistry.
5. Linear Programming Normative Analysis – quantitative mineralogy for each sample.

The reservoir and nearest units include the Midale Marly, the Midale Vuggy, The Midale Evaporite Three Fingers Zone (TFZ) and the Frobisher Marly and Evaporite. The Midale Marly flow units comprise 50-65% dolomite, 10-25% calcite, with some anhydrite and have the greatest amount of silicate minerals (7.5-16%). The Midale Vuggy flow units are dominated by calcite mineralization (70-90%), relatively minor amounts of dolomite (5-15%) and traces of anhydrite (3-13%). Silicate minerals are minor to trace amounts (2-15%). The Midale Evaporite-TFZ is the cap rock for the reservoir. The lowermost sub unit is the “Three Fingers Zone” (TFZ, Burrowes and Gilboy, 2000). The TFZ is a dolomite-dominant rock, with minor quartz, feldspar, anhydrite, and illite. Silicate minerals form approximately one-third of this flow unit. The Frobisher Marly immediately underlies the reservoir units. This flow unit is marked by a dolomite-rich (>70%) rock with minor anhydrite, quartz, calcite, and feldspar. Silicates make up approximately 15% of this unit. The Frobisher Evaporite underlies only a portion of the Weyburn reservoir, and is essentially anhydrite (59%) and carbonate (39%).

#### *Over- and Underlying Regional Units*

The geology and depositional settings of stratigraphic units in Southeast Saskatchewan has been comprehensively studied, and is too voluminous to summarize here. The reader is referred to Saskatchewan Industry & Resources’ website (<http://www.ir.gov.sk.ca>). Geologists at the SIR subsurface facility provided access to preserved and logged core from Southeast Saskatchewan. Using SIR’s stratigraphic correlation chart, a number of units in Southeastern Saskatchewan were sampled (50 samples). The three aquifers, which lie below the Midale beds, and the six aquifers, which lie above the Midale beds, are represented by samples in this study. In addition, 5 aquitards, which lie above the Midale beds, are represented in the sample suite. The samples were correlated to corresponding aquifers/aquitards defined courtesy of B. Rostron.

The regional samples are not described, but include samples from all units spanning the Triassic-Jurassic Watrous Formation “red beds”, the Middle Jurassic Upper Watrous Formation evaporite, the Middle Jurassic Gravelbourg Formation, Upper Shaunavon Formation, the Vanguard Group, the Lower Cretaceous Mannville Group, the Lower Cretaceous Colorado Group and the Upper Cretaceous Sandstone and Shales. A wide range of lithologies and mineralogies are represented by these rocks.

#### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Although the Midale reservoir mineralogy is dominated by carbonate and sulfate minerals, Silicate minerals have been quantified using petrographic, analytical, and computational techniques. Silicate minerals are dominated by quartz (up to 17 vol%), followed by K-Feldspar (up to 9%), plagioclase (up to 3%), illite (up to 5%), and kaolinite (up to 1%). The most “promising” unit for silicate-reaction CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration is the uppermost Midale Marly and the Midale Evaporite Three Fingers Zone, where silicates form 15 to 35 % of the whole rock by volume. Although CO<sub>2</sub> is liberated by carbonate-CO<sub>2</sub>-fluid reactions, some of the CO<sub>2</sub>, be it injected or created from reservoir mineral dissolution, can potentially be stored as newly formed minerals from silicate mineral reactions.

Given:

1. a 20 km • 20 km • 20 m reservoir with 20% porosity
2. 2% reactive silicate minerals
3. a closed system (i.e. no CO<sub>2</sub> leakage)
4. silicate density = 2.8 g/cc, approximately 300 g/mol
5. approx. 1 mol CO<sub>2</sub> stored for 1 mole reactive silicates
6. complete reservoir saturation with CO<sub>2</sub>-charged fluid

Then:

1. total rock volume of  $8 \cdot 10^{15}$  cc
2. total reactive silicate volume of  $1.6 \cdot 10^{14}$  cc
3. total reactive silicate volume in contact with pore space of  $3.2 \cdot 10^{13}$  cc
4. total reactive silicate mass of  $9 \cdot 10^{13}$  g
5. total weight CO<sub>2</sub> stored: approx.  $1.3 \cdot 10^{13}$  g

This means that for just 2% reactive silicates by volume, 13 million metric tones of CO<sub>2</sub> could potentially be stored under ideal conditions in the Weyburn reservoir. The Alberta Research Council is currently evaluating the reservoir's capacity to store or produce CO<sub>2</sub> due to CO<sub>2</sub> injection. Should leakage from the reservoir occur, units which overlie the reservoir (e.g. Watrous, Vanguard, Mannville, etc.) would store orders of magnitude more CO<sub>2</sub>, given sufficient time for silicate-CO<sub>2</sub> reactions to reach completion. The mineralogical characterization of the overlying units improves the long-term risk and amount of CO<sub>2</sub> storage potential in these units.

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of several individuals and organizations. Steve Whittaker Chris Gilboy, and Erik Nickel of Saskatchewan Industry and Resources (SIR) provided help in obtaining core samples. Ian DeWolfe, assisted in sampling and sample preparation. Geoff Burrowes (EnCana) took time to familiarize KD with typical Weyburn Unit core, while Trevor Westman (EnCana) provided flow unit interval information for cored wells. Analytical assistance from Rob Marr (U of Calgary), Pam King (MUN), Roger Mason (MUN), and Mickey Horvath (U of C) is greatly appreciated. Funding for the IEA GHG Weyburn CO<sub>2</sub> Monitoring and Storage Project is provided by the Petroleum Technology Research Centre.

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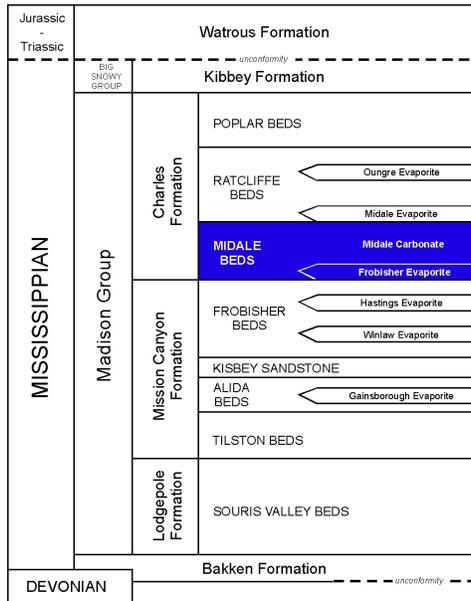


Figure 1: Mississippian stratigraphy in the Weyburn area.

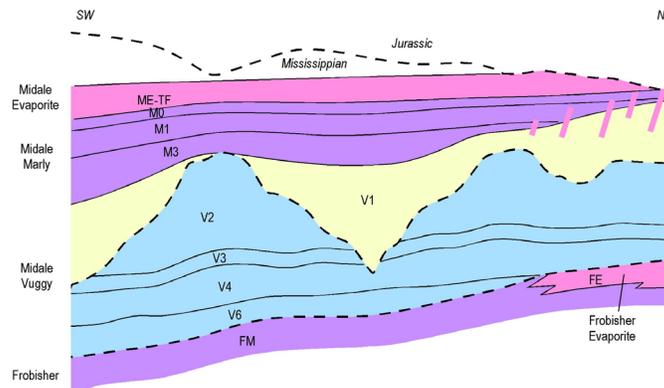


Figure 2: Geological cartoon of the Weyburn Unit reservoir, showing “flow units”, as described by Burrowes and Gilboy (2000). Samples were obtained from each of these flow units. Dashed lines represent unconformities/erosional horizons. The hatched area in the upper V1 flow unit corresponds to anhydrite pore filling.