

§ 1-42.8. Ancient mineral claims extinguished in Rutherford County; oil, gas and mineral interests to be recorded and listed for taxation.

(a) Where it appears on the public records that the fee simple title to any oil, gas or mineral interests in an area of land has been severed or separated from the surface fee simple ownership of such land, and this interest is not in actual course of being mined, drilled, worked or operated, or in the adverse possession of another; or that the record titleholder of any oil, gas or mineral interests has not listed the same for ad valorem tax purposes in the county in which it is located for a period of 10 years prior to February 1, 1982, any person having the legal capacity to own land in this State who has on September 1, 1982, an unbroken chain of title of record to the surface estate of the area of land for at least 50 years, and provided the surface estate is not in the adverse possession of another, shall be deemed to have a marketable title to the surface estate as provided in the succeeding subsections of this section, subject to any interests and defects as are inherent in the provisions and limitations contained in the muniments that form the chain of record title.

(b) This marketable title shall be held by such persons and shall be taken by his successors in interest free and clear of any and all fee simple, oil, gas or mineral interests in the area of land founded upon any reservation or exception contained in an instrument conveying the surface estate in fee simple that was executed or recorded at least 50 years or more prior to September 1, 1982, and such oil, gas or mineral interests are hereby declared to be null and void and of no effect whatever at law or in equity: Provided, however, that any fee simple oil, gas or mineral interest not already extinguished by existing laws may be preserved and kept effective by recording within two years after September 1, 1982, a notice in writing duly sworn to and subscribed before an official authorized to take probate by G.S. 47-1, which sets forth the nature of the oil, gas or mineral interest and gives the book and page where recorded. This notice shall be probated as required for registration of instruments by G.S. 47-14 and recorded in the office of the register of deeds of the county wherein the area of land, or any part thereof lies, and in the book therein kept or provided under the terms of G.S. 1-42 for the purpose of recording certain severances of surface and subsurface land rights, and shall state the name and address of the claimant and, if known, the name of the surface owner, and shall also contain either a sufficient description of the area of land involved as to make the property readily located or due incorporation by reference of the recorded instrument containing the reservation or exception of the oil, gas or mineral interest. The notice may be made and recorded by the claimant or by any other person acting on behalf of any claimant who is under a disability, unable to assert a claim on his own behalf, or one of a class but whose identity cannot be established or is uncertain at the time of filing the notice of claim for record.

(c) This section shall be construed to effect the legislative purpose of facilitating land title transactions by extinguishing certain ancient oil, gas or mineral claims unless preserved by recording as herein provided. The oil, gas or mineral claims hereby extinguished include those of persons whether within or without the State, and whether natural or corporate, but do not include governmental claims, State or federal, and all such claims by reason of unexpired oil, gas or mineral releases.

(d) Within two years from September 1, 1982, all oil, gas or mineral interests in lands severed or separated from the surface fee simple ownership must be listed for ad valorem taxes, and notice of this interest must be filed in writing in the manner provided by G.S. 1-42.3(b) and recorded in the local registry in the book provided by G.S. 1-42 to be effective against the surface fee simple owner or creditors, purchasers, heirs or assigns of such owner. Subsurface oil, gas and mineral interests shall be assessed for ad valorem taxes as real property and such taxes shall be collected and foreclosed in the manner authorized by Chapter 105 of the General Statutes of North Carolina.

(e) The board of county commissioners shall publish a notice of this section in a newspaper published in the county or having general circulation in the county once a week for four consecutive weeks prior to September 1, 1982.

(f) This act applies only to Rutherford County. (1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1391, s. 1.)