CLAIMS

1. A flow restrictor system for use with a subterranean well, the system comprising:

at least first and second flow paths extending within an annular space formed between a base pipe and a sleeve surrounding the base pipe, wherein the first and second flow paths extend an equal distance longitudinally through the annular space;

a flow restrictor which resists flow through the first flow path; and

a pressure barrier which prevents flow through the second flow path, the pressure barrier being selectively openable to permit flow through the second flow path, wherein at least a portion of the second flow path is radially outward from the flow restrictor with respect to the base pipe.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the flow restrictor permits flow through the first flow path.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the first and second flow paths conduct flow between an interior and an exterior of a tubular string in the well.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a frangible barrier which breaks in response to application of a predetermined pressure differential.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a dissolvable plug.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the plug dissolves in response to contact with acid.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a degradable plug.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier opens in response to a signal transmitted to a sensor of the system.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the signal comprises a radio frequency signal.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the first and second flow paths receive fluid from a screen.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a valve.

12. A method of variably restricting flow in a subterranean well, the method comprising:

resisting flow through a first flow path; and

then selectively opening a pressure barrier which previously prevented flow through a second flow path, wherein the first and second flow paths extend within an annular space formed between a base pipe and a sleeve surrounding the base pipe, wherein the first and second flow paths extend an equal distance longitudinally through the annular space, and wherein at least a portion of the second flow path is radially outward from the flow restrictor with respect to the base pipe.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a valve.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein a flow restrictor permits flow through the first flow path.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second flow paths conduct flow between an interior and an exterior of a tubular string in the well.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a frangible barrier, and wherein the selectively opening comprises breaking the frangible barrier in response to application of a predetermined pressure differential.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a dissolvable plug.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the selectively opening comprises dissolving the plug by contacting the plug with acid.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the selectively opening comprises dissolving the plug by contacting the plug with water.

20. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a degradable plug.

21. The method of claim 12, wherein the selectively opening comprises opening the pressure barrier in response to a signal transmitted to a sensor of the system.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the signal comprises a radio frequency signal.

23. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second flow paths receive fluid from a screen.

CLAIMS

1. A flow restrictor system for use with a subterranean well, the system comprising:

at least first and second flow paths extending within an annular space formed between a base pipe and a sleeve surrounding the base pipe, wherein the first and second flow paths extend an equal distance longitudinally through the annular space;

a housing defined radially between the base pipe and the sleeve, wherein the first flow path is defined through the housing and wherein at least a portion of the second flow path is defined radially between the sleeve and the housing;

a flow restrictor secured in the housing which resists flow through the first flow path; and

a pressure barrier which prevents flow through the second flow path, the pressure barrier being selectively openable to permit flow through the second flow path, wherein at least a portion of the second flow path is radially outward from the flow restrictor with respect to the base pipe.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the flow restrictor permits flow through the first flow path.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the first and second flow paths conduct flow between an interior and an exterior of a tubular string in the well.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a frangible barrier which breaks in response to application of a predetermined pressure differential.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a dissolvable plug.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the plug dissolves in response to contact with acid.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a degradable plug.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier opens in response to a signal

transmitted to a sensor of the system.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the signal comprises a radio frequency signal.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the first and second flow paths receive fluid from a screen.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a valve.

12. A method of variably restricting flow in a subterranean well, the method comprising:

resisting flow through a first flow path; and

then selectively opening a pressure barrier which previously prevented flow through a second flow path, wherein the first and second flow paths extend within an annular space formed between a base pipe and a sleeve surrounding the base pipe, wherein the first and second flow paths extend an equal distance longitudinally through the annular space, wherein a flow restrictor secured in a housing resists flow through the first flow path, and wherein at least a portion of the second flow path is radially between the sleeve and the housing and radially outward from the flow restrictor with respect to the base pipe.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a valve.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein a flow restrictor permits flow through the first flow path.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second flow paths conduct flow between an interior and an exterior of a tubular string in the well.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a frangible barrier, and wherein the selectively opening comprises breaking the frangible barrier in response to application of a predetermined pressure differential.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a dissolvable plug.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the selectively opening comprises dissolving the plug by contacting the plug with acid.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the selectively opening comprises dissolving the plug by contacting the plug with water at an elevated temperature.

20. The method of claim 12, wherein the pressure barrier comprises a degradable plug.

21. The method of claim 12, wherein the selectively opening comprises opening the pressure barrier in response to a signal transmitted to a sensor of the system.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the signal comprises a radio frequency signal.

23. The method of claim 12, wherein the first and second flow paths receive fluid from a screen.