U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2008-151-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC-14302

PROJECT NAME: Compressor and Production Equipment on Government Federal Well 397-3-1 (Set Compressor and Production Equipment)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T3S, R97W, Section 3

APPLICANT: Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation

ISSUES AND CONCERNS: Noise

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: The Government Federal Well 397-3-1 is an existing well pad. The application permit to drill (APD) is dated August 10, 1981 and the original owner was Rio Blanco Natural Gas Co. Effective August 1, 2006, the Operator of record was changed from Gordon Engineering to Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation, for subject well. This has been approved by both Operators.

Bond coverage pursuant to 43 CFR 3104 for lease activities is being provided by Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation under bond RLB 0006746. Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation will be responsible for compliance under the terms and conditions of the lease for the operations conducted upon the leased lands.

This pad is located between the two well pads that were submitted and approved for the Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation two well environmental assessment (EA) CO-110-2008-032-EA.

Gas will only be allowed to be measured on lease COC-14302.

Proposed Action: Whiting Oil and Gas Corporation (hereafter Whiting) is requesting to utilize the Gordon Federal 397-3-1 well pad location for placement of a compressor and gas processing equipment for treatment of the natural gas produced on Lease # COC-014302. The equipment and infrastructure changes that are proposed for the location will be as follows:

- Perimeter Fence

- Dehy Skid
- Coalescing Filter
- Two (2) 400 bbl liquid tanks
- Flare Stack: Height = 50'
- One (1) Caterpillar C3406NA Natural Gas Fired generator set.
- One (1) Caterpillar G3608 lean burn natural gas fired compressor unit for the facility.

A temporary Caterpillar C3516LE lean burn natural gas fired unit will then be used then removed and replaced by the permanent C3608 unit. Only one compressor engine is allowed as per the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) construction permit. One (1) meter house on the pad, with gas sales line tie-in and custody transfer point, as indicated on pad diagram. All natural gas fired equipment has been permitted with the CDPHE Permit #07RB0461 issued April 7, 2008 (copy enclosed in well file). Sound Control will be utilized on the equipment. No additional surface area will be needed around the pad. There will be no expansion outside of the fenced area indicated on the enclosed diagram.

The Fed 397-3-1 is currently shut-in and may be used for a water supply well at a future date.

- Some pad grading and all weather surfacing will be required.

As per conversation with Scott Webb of Whiting Oil and Gas on June 5, 2008:

- The sound control measures – Whiting will use hospital grade mufflers as a sound control measure on the Caterpillar C3406NA Natural Gas Fired generator, on the Caterpillar G3608 lean burn natural gas fired unit, on the Caterpillar C3516LE lean burn natural gas fired unit and on any compressor and gas processing equipment operated for treatment of the natural gas produced on Lease # COC-014302.
- Initially this facility will service two well pads with 4 wells on each pad for a total of 8 wells. At this time the long term potential is for this facility to service up to 8 pads with 4 wells per pad for a total of 32 wells.
- The equipment proposed for this facility in the future may need to be upgraded/updated to process the potential additional wells.
- This facility is for treatment of the natural gas produced on Lease # COC-014302.

No Action Alternative: The Compressor and Production Equipment would not be authorized or placed on Government Federal Wellpad 397-3-1 to (Set Compressor and Production Equipment).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: The purpose of the proposed action is to manage the exploration and development of mineral resources on Public Lands in a manner that avoids, minimizes, reduces, or mitigates potential impacts to other resource values.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Page 2-5

Decision Language: "Make federal oil and gas resources available for leasing and development in a manner that provides reasonable protection for other resource values".

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS RECORD CHECKLIST

DETERMINATION OF STAFF:		
Determination	**Resource**	**Rationale for Determination***
CRITICAL ELEMENTS		
PI	Air Quality	Construction activities will be minor and temporary. Operational emissions will result from gas compression and maintenance activities.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	There are no ACEC within proximity of the proposed action.
PI	Cultural Resources	See below for analysis of Cultural Resources
PI	Invasive, Non-native Species	See below for analysis
NI	Migratory Birds	The proposed action involves little to no new surface disturbance. Clearing will take place outside of the migratory bird nesting season and as such will have no direct impacts on nesting activities. Operational and maintenance activities associated with the proposed action may displace those species less tolerant to human disturbance within ~ 100 m of pad however; due to surrounding disturbance (i.e., neighboring well pads) it is likely nest densities are reduced to a certain degree.

DETERMINATION OF STAFF:		
Determination	**Resource**	**Rationale for Determination***
NP	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animal Species	There are no animal species listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act, nor animals considered sensitive by the BLM, that are known to inhabit areas potentially influenced by the proposed action.
NP	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species	The proposed action would have no conceivable influence on special status species or associated habitats.
PI	Wastes (hazardous or solid)	No hazardous or solid wastes are likely to result from this project, either from the construction or operation of the facility.
PI	Water Quality (Surface/Ground	The disturbance of a previously disturbed site will result from this project. Long term impacts from compaction due to equipment placement and travel on the site would occur as a result of this proposal.
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	There are no riparian or wetland areas that would be potentially influence by the proposed action.
NP	Wilderness	There are not any Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas within proximate to the proposed action.

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions
NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required
PI = present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The entire White River Field Office (WRFO) area has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all air pollutants, and most of the area has been designated for the prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) class II. The proposed action is more than ten miles from any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. Unfortunately, no air quality monitoring data is available for this area. However, air quality conditions near the proposed location (Grand Junction, CO) indicate generally good air quality for this region.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would increase the level of inhalable particulate matter, specifically particles ten microns or less in diameter (PM_{10}) associated with fugitive dust during construction. In addition, increases in the following criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone (secondary pollutant), nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide would also occur due to combustion of fossil fuels. Also, non-criteria pollutants such as visibility, nitric oxide, air toxics (e.g. benzene) and total suspended particulates (TSP) may also experience slight, temporary increases as a result of the proposed action (no national ambient air quality standards have been set for non-criteria pollutants). The Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) estimates the maximum PM_{10} levels (24-hour average) in rural portions of western Colorado to be near 50 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$). This project is not likely to exceed this western Colorado dust standard.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impacts would occur

Mitigation: This item should be added as a condition of approval (COAs).

All access roads will be treated with water and/or a dust suppressant during construction and operation activities so that there is not a visible dust trail behind vehicles. All vehicles will abide by company or public speed restrictions during all activities. If water is used as a dust suppressant, there should be no traces of oil or solvents in water. Only water needed for abating dust should be applied; dust abatement should not be used as a water disposal option under any circumstances.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed well tie area has been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Conner and Davenport 2006, Compliance Dated 10/31/2006, Horn et al 1992, Compliance Dated 3/13/1992, Piontkowski 2006, Compliance Dated 5/3/2006, O'Neil 1981, Compliance Dated 6/14/1981) with no cultural resources identified in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There would be no new impacts to any known cultural resources from the proposed project.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no new impacts to cultural resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: 1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no known noxious weeds at the sites of the proposed location. The invasive alien annual cheatgrass occurs in the project area primarily in association with unrevegetated earthen disturbance along roads, wells, and pipelines.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will not create any new of new earthen disturbance but will re-disturb a previously disturbed area, which if it is not revegetated with desirable species and /or treated with herbicides to eradicate noxious weeds/ cheatgrass, will be invaded and dominated by noxious weeds/cheatgrass, increasing the potential for fire and the consequent further proliferation of cheatgrass. Noxious weeds could establish onsite, the seed or propagules having been transported by equipment hauled to the site for construction and drilling operations. Noxious weeds, if they establish on site could also spread from the project site to surrounding native rangelands resulting in a long term negative impact. The resulting proliferation of noxious weeds/cheatgrass would perpetuate a downward cycle of environmental degradation that would be largely irreversible. The will be a low likelihood of long term negative impact *if* the proposed mitigation is properly implemented

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: The operator will be required to monitor the project area for the life of the project and eradicate all noxious and invasive species which occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.

Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas including road and pad cut and fill slopes with Native Seed mix #3. Revegetation will commence immediately after construction and will not be delayed until the following fall. Debris will not be scattered on the pipeline or disturbed areas until after seeding operations are completed. Seed mixture rates are Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre. Drill seeding is the preferred method of application.

Native Seed Mix #3		
Western wheatgrass (Rosanna)	4	Gravelly 10"-14", Pinyon/Juniper
Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar)	3	Woodland, Stony Foothills, 147
Thickspike wheatgrass (Critana)	3	(Mountain Mahogany)
Indian ricegrass (Rimrock)	3	
Fourwing saltbush (Wytana)	1	
Globemallow	1	
Alternates: Needle and thread, Utah sweetvetch		

Distribute topsoil evenly over the location and prepare a seed bed by disking or ripping. Drill seed on contour at a depth no greater than ½ inch. In areas that cannot be drilled, broadcast at double the seeding rate and harrow seed into soil.

Use seed that is certified and free of noxious weeds. Seed certification tags must be submitted to the area manager.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: Fuels, oils, and lubricants will be used during the project, and solid waste (human waste, garbage, etc.) will be generated during activities. There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials have been identified that will be used, stored or disposed of at sites included in the project area. Garbage will be contained onsite and then hauled to an approved disposal site. If present, sewage from trailers and portolets will be hauled to an approved disposal site.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Accidental spills or leaks associated with equipment failures, refueling or maintenance of equipment, and storage of fuel, oil, or other fluids could cause soil, surface water and/or groundwater contamination. With implementation of the mitigation measures described below and Whiting's spill prevention program, impacts would likely be temporary.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative, the pad would go through final reclamation and an additional site would need to be identified to locate the compression facilities.

Mitigation: The release of any chemical, oil, petroleum product, produced water, or sewage, etc, (regardless of quantity) must be reported by the lease holder, to the Bureau of Land Management – WRFO Hazardous Materials Coordinator at (970) 878-3800.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The proposed action would clear an old pad that is adjacent to the main local road that accesses Whiting's wells. Whiting plans to place compression facilities on the site to serve wells in the immediate area. The project is in the Middle Piceance watershed that drains into the Piceance tributaries to the White River (Segment 16), this section is protected for Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation 2, and Agriculture.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Construction of the compressor site on the old pad will result in temporary disturbance causing increased erosion and surface runoff from this location. Disturbing a previously disturbed site such as this pad is likely better than new disturbance to place the compression facilities. There is nothing unique about the old pad site to protect from a water quality perspective, the topography is generally flat and it is revegetated with sage brush and annual/perennial grasses. This topsoil should be saved for use in reclaiming areas not needed at the pad site.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The pad would go through final reclamation and an additional site would need to be identified to locate the compression

facilities. Total disturbance would most likely be greater under this alternative and assuming a new compression site is found and approved.

Mitigation: Salvage topsoil from revegetated pad and use it in reclaiming disturbed areas around this pad or store the topsoil for future use. Topsoil piles should be stabilized during storage to prevent erosion and unnecessary degradation of the viability of the topsoil. This can be accomplished by erosion fabric, placement of waddles along the perimeter or other efforts. The operator should submit a sundry detailing the location and storage method for this topsoil as well as describing the location and planned use of the original topsoil pile.

Provide for erosion-resistant surface drainage by adding necessary drainage facilities prior to rain or snow events. When erosion in disturbed areas is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site.

Locate culverts or drainage dips (waterbreaks) in such a manner as to avoid discharge onto unstable terrain such as headwalls or slumps. Provide adequate spacing of these drainage features to avoid accumulation of water in ditches or road surfaces. Monitor culvert installations to ensure proper placement and adequate armoring of inlets and outlets. Patrol areas susceptible to road or watershed damage during periods of high runoff.

Keep road inlet and outlet ditches, catchbasins, and culverts free of obstructions, particularly before and during spring runoff. Routine machine-cleaning of ditches should be kept to a minimum during wet weather. Leave the disturbed area in a condition that provides drainage with no additional maintenance.

The access roads should be maintained to BLM Manual Section 9113 standards for road shape and drainage features. Culverts and waterbars should be installed according to 9113 standards and sized for the 10-year storm event with no static head and to pass a 25-year event without failing.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: It is unlikely that conversion of this pad to use as a compression facility would result in an exceedence of state water quality standards. However, cumulative impacts from this activity and others may eventually impact sediment yields to the degree that they impact listing of the Piceance Creek or its tributaries.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED: No flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers exist within the area affected by the proposed action. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*
NON CRITICAL ELEMENTS:		
NI	Soils	No fragile soils, steep slopes or other concerns are present at the site or along the access road. With proper stabilization and reclamation impacts

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*
NON CRITICAL ELEMENTS:		
		are not likely to occur to the productivity of soils.
NI	Vegetation	No new disturbance
NI	Livestock Grazing	Piceance Mountain Allotment
NP	Wildlife, Aquatic	There are no aquatic systems that would be potentially influenced by the proposed action.
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial	See below

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions
NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required
PI = present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA

TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: The proposed compressor site, which is located on an existing well pad, is situated along a ridge dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush with scattered, immature juniper. This area is considered big game general winter range and is typically occupied from November through January and again in late-March and April. Access traverses 1¼ miles of mule deer severe winter range, a specialized component of winter range that periodically supports virtually all an area's deer under the most severe winter conditions (i.e., extreme cold and heavy snowpack). These ranges, especially those south-facing slopes northeast of the access road, receive heaviest use from January through April.

Raptors may opportunistically forage throughout the project area however the proposed location and immediate vicinity lack any suitable nest substrate. The project area lacks cliff bands or rock outcrops which may provide nest sites for golden eagle or red-tailed hawks.

Small mammal populations are poorly documented however, the species that are likely to occur in this area display broad ecological tolerance and are widely distributed throughout the Resource Area. No narrowly distributed or highly specialized species or subspecific populations are known to inhabit this area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The pad itself, which lies in big game general winter range, would involve no new surface disturbance. Access to the site would cross approximately 2¼ miles of mule deer severe winter range (~ 1 mi on private; ~ 1 ¼ mi on federal) with the remainder (~ 1 mile on federal) involving general winter range. Vehicle use associated with the proposed action may involve portions of the winter or spring that would normally be subject to a timing limitation that defers use during the January through April severe winter period (i.e., big game severe winter range stipulation TL-08).

Because of the timing limitation, an alternate access route was proposed by the proponent involving both federal and private lands. This route, which is approximately 13 miles longer than the proposed route, involves nearly 11 miles of basin big sagebrush bottomlands (used

extensively for winter recovery in April and May) and approximately 5 miles of upland/ridgeline habitat dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush and immature pinyon-juniper woodlands. This alternate route would involve slightly over two miles of mule deer severe winter range on private lands. While this route would effectively avoid mule deer severe winter ranges on federal lands, behavioral impacts to wildlife associated with vehicle traffic on such an extended route (16 mi.) would be far greater than disturbance associated with crossing three miles of severe and general winter ranges as proposed. Based on conversations with the company, traffic during the severe winter range period would generally not involve the use of heavy rigs, but would be limited to water trucks and standard pick-up use.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have any direct or indirect influence on terrestrial wildlife or associated habitats.

Mitigation: Access will be allowed through severe winter ranges only during the 2008 – 2009 winter use period (1 December through 30 April).

Pad size will be kept to the minimum necessary to house the equipment addressed in the proposed action. No equipment (e.g., tank, pipe, etc.) storage will be allowed on the facility.

The compressor will be enclosed in a building to minimize noise levels.

The use of interim reclamation techniques will be used to the extent practicable on this site (i.e., all disturbed areas, including cut and fill slopes, are reseeded with seed mix recommended by the Authorizing Officer).

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): As the proposed action does not involve any new surface disturbance, the land health standards do not apply.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation			X
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights			X
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise		X - With applicable Mitigation	

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Paleontology			X
Rangeland Management			
Realty Authorizations		X	
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment: *Affected Environment*: Proposed action will impact Rio Blanco County (RBC) road 5 as well as BLM road 1011 and 1015.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: It is likely with the continued increase in traffic of all types to service and construct these wells that road surface damage may occur as a result if road maintenance activities are not commensurate with the levels of road usage. An increase in route proliferation is also likely due to the increase in new roads being developed. No new access will be created.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER RIGHTS

Affected Environment: Government Federal Well 397-3-1 located on the pad is currently shut-in and the operator has indicated that it may be used for a water supply well at a future date.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: This action could deplete water sources and has the potential to impact water rights if sources are not properly permitted for this use. The operator has provided sufficient information in the proposed action (sundry notice) to indicate water rights will be protected. This well conversion would need to be approved via sundry with the below condition, before use and must follow Onshore Order #1 specifications for well conversion, if relevant, at the time of abandonment.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The Fed 397-3-1 well would likely be abandoned, plugged and go through final reclamation.

Mitigation: The operator will only convert Government Federal well 397-3-1 to a water well based on an approved sundry notice from the BLM. The sundry notice submitted to the BLM by the operator should include plans for well completion that will be reviewed by a BLM

petroleum engineer (PE), as well as a joint water rights filing with the BLM for water use. BLM will retain the opportunity to determine if the well would be converted to a water well once the operator is finished using the well and used by the surface land manger (BLM) in the future as per Onshore Order #1 requirements.

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The proposed action is in an area generally mapped as the Uinta Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM, WRFO has classified as a Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 5 (Condition I) formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically important fossil resources.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: If it should become necessary to excavate into the underlying rock formation to construct the compressor site there is the potential to impact scientifically important fossil resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no new impacts to fossil resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: If it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying rock formation to install the well tie pipeline a paleontological monitor shall be required for all such excavations.

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The proposed action occurs within the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). BLM custodially manages the ERMA to provide for unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and off-highway vehicle use. One BLM issued Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for commercial outfitting and guiding during the fall big game hunting seasons are permitted within the project area.

The project area has been delineated a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). SPM physical and social recreation setting is typically characterized by a natural appearing environment with few administrative controls, low interaction between users but evidence of other users may be present. SPM recreation experience is characterized by a high probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The public will directly lose approximately 10 acres of dispersed recreation potential while wells are in operation. The public will most likely not recreate in the vicinity of these facilities and will be dispersed elsewhere. If action coincides with hunting seasons (September through November) it will most likely disrupt the experience sought by those recreationists. Anecdotal evidence from the SRP holder indicates that as an increase in industry activity increases through the development of more roads, wells,

and pipelines it is becoming more challenging to attract clients during the fall hunting seasons as the perception is where industrial activity is heavy there will not be big game animals to hunt.

With the introduction of new well pads and roads, an increase of traffic could be expected increasing the likelihood of human interactions, the sights and sounds associated with the human environment and a less naturally appearing environment.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No loss of dispersed recreation potential and no impact to hunting recreationists.

Mitigation: None.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed actions would be located in an area with a Visual Resource Management (VRM) III classification. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed actions would be located in area that has limited access by a casual observer. The route most likely traveled by a casual observer would be RBC 5, which is located at a lower elevation along Piceance Creek. The proposed actions would not be visible from this route. Persons viewing the disturbance associated with the proposed actions would be energy related personnel, the local ranchers/ permittees, and seasonal big game hunters. A casual observer traveling any of the routes open to the public would be able to view the proposed actions for a short duration of time.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no environmental impacts.

Mitigation: All permanent (onsite for six [6] months or longer) structures, facilities and equipment placed above ground shall be painted Munsell Soil Color Chart Covert Green or equivalent within six months of installation.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts from oil and gas development were analyzed in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) completed in June 1996. Current development, including the proposed action, has not exceeded the cumulative impacts from the foreseeable development analyzed in the PRMP/FEIS.

REFERENCES CITED:

Conner, Carl E. and Barbara J. Davenport
2006 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for the Proposed Chevron Skinner Ridge Pipeline Project in Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado for Trigon EPC. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado

Reed, Alan D .and Jonathon C. Horn
1992 Cultural Resource Inventory of the Planned TransColorado Natural Gas Pipeline Western Colorado and Northwestern New Mexico: a Report of the 1991 Field Season. Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Montrose, Colorado.

O'Neil, Brian
1981 A Cultural Resource Survey for Rio Blanco Natural Gas, 397-3-1 Government, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Powers Elevation Company, Inc., Denver, Colorado.

Pointkowski, Michael
2006 A report of the Class III Inventory of the EnCana meeker South and West Pipelines and Related Facilities, Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado and Uintah County, Utah. Uncompahgre Archaeological Consultants, Grand Junction Colorado.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: None

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Wastes (Hazardous or Solids), Water Quality (Surface and Ground), Hydrology and Water Rights, and Soils.
Ken Holsinger	Botanist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Michael Selle	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation , Rangeland Management
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation & Visual Resources
Jim Michels	Fire/Fuels Technician	Fire Management, Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2008-151-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the mitigation listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. As in the proposed action, only Federal wells within the boundaries of lease COC-14302 will be tied to the proposed Compressor and Production Equipment on Government Federal Well 397-3-1.

2. As in the proposed action, any noise associated with the proposed project **[**Compressor and Production Equipment on Government Federal Well 397-3-1 (Set Compressor and Production Equipment)**]** will be reduced to the greatest extent practicable.

3. As per conversation with Scott Webb of Whiting Oil and Gas on June 5, 2008: The sound control measures – Whiting will use hospital grade mufflers as a sound control measure on the Caterpillar C3406NA Natural Gas Fired generator, on the Caterpillar G3608 lean burn natural gas fired unit, on the Caterpillar C3516LE lean burn natural gas fired unit and on any compressor and gas processing equipment operated for treatment of the natural gas produced on Lease # COC-014302.

4. All access roads will be treated with water and/or a dust suppressant during construction and operation activities so that there is not a visible dust trail behind vehicles. All vehicles will abide by company or public speed restrictions during all activities. If water is used as a dust suppressant, there should be no traces of oil or solvents in water. Only water needed for abating dust should be applied; dust abatement should not be used as a water disposal option under any circumstances.

5. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop

activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

6. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

7. Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas including road and pad cut and fill slopes with Native Seed mix #3. Revegetation will commence immediately after construction and will not be delayed until the following fall. Debris will not be scattered on the pipeline or disturbed areas until after seeding operations are completed. Seed mixture rates are Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre. Drill seeding is the preferred method of application.

Native Seed Mix #3		
Western wheatgrass (Rosanna)	4	Gravelly 10"-14", Pinyon/Juniper
Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar)	3	Woodland, Stony Foothills, 147
Thickspike wheatgrass (Critana)	3	(Mountain Mahogany)
Indian ricegrass (Rimrock)	3	
Fourwing saltbush (Wytana)	1	
Globemallow	1	
Alternates: Needle and thread, Utah sweetvetch		

8. Use seed that is certified and free of noxious weeds. Seed certification tags must be submitted to the area manager.

9. Distribute topsoil evenly over the location and prepare a seed bed by disking or ripping. Drill seed on contour at a depth no greater than ½ inch. In areas that cannot be drilled, broadcast at double the seeding rate and harrow seed into soil.

10. The operator will be required to monitor the project area for the life of the project and eradicate all noxious and invasive species which occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.

11. The release of any chemical, oil, petroleum product, produced water, or sewage, etc, (regardless of quantity) must be reported by the lease holder, to the Bureau of Land Management – WRFO Hazardous Materials Coordinator at (970) 878-3800.

12. Salvage topsoil from revegetated pad and use it in reclaiming disturbed areas around this pad or store the topsoil for future use. Topsoil piles should be stabilized during storage to prevent erosion and unnecessary degradation of the viability of the topsoil. This can be accomplished by erosion fabric, placement of waddles along the perimeter or other efforts. The operator should submit a sundry detailing the location and storage method for this topsoil as well as describing the location and planned use of the original topsoil pile.

13. Provide for erosion-resistant surface drainage by adding necessary drainage facilities prior to rain or snow events. When erosion in disturbed areas is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site.

14. Locate culverts or drainage dips (waterbreaks) in such a manner as to avoid discharge onto unstable terrain such as headwalls or slumps. Provide adequate spacing of these drainage features to avoid accumulation of water in ditches or road surfaces. Monitor culvert installations to ensure proper placement and adequate armoring of inlets and outlets. Patrol areas susceptible to road or watershed damage during periods of high runoff.

15. Keep road inlet and outlet ditches, catchbasins, and culverts free of obstructions, particularly before and during spring runoff. Routine machine-cleaning of ditches should be kept to a minimum during wet weather. Leave the disturbed area in a condition that provides drainage with no additional maintenance.

16. The access roads should be maintained to BLM Manual Section 9113 standards for road shape and drainage features. Culverts and waterbars should be installed according to 9113 standards and sized for the 10-year storm event with no static head and to pass a 25-year event without failing.

17. Access will be allowed through severe winter ranges only during the 2008 – 2009 winter use period (1 December through 30 April).

18. Pad size will be kept to the minimum necessary to house the equipment addressed in the proposed action. No storage will be allowed on the facility.

19. The compressor will be enclosed in a building to minimize noise levels.

20. The use of interim reclamation techniques will be used to the extent practicable on this site (i.e., all disturbed areas are reseeded with seed mix recommended by the Authorizing Officer).

21. The operator will only convert well Fed 397-3-1 to a water well based on an approved sundry notice from the BLM. The sundry notice submitted to the BLM by the operator should include plans for well completion that will be reviewed by a BLM PE, as well as a joint water rights filing with the BLM for water use. BLM will retain the opportunity to determine if the well would be converted to a water well once the operator is finished using the well and used by the surface land manger (BLM) in the future as per Onshore Order #1 requirements.

22. If it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying rock formation to install the well tie pipeline a paleontological monitor shall be required for all such excavations.

23. All permanent (onsite for six [6] months or longer) structures, facilities and equipment placed above ground shall be painted Munsell Soil Color Chart Covert Green or equivalent within six months of installation.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: On-going compliance inspections and monitoring of Compressor and Production Equipment on Government Federal Well 397-3-1 (Set Compressor and Production Equipment) and post-production activities will be conducted by White River Field Office staff during construction to place Compressor and Production Equipment on Government Federal Well 397-3-1 (Set Compressor and Production Equipment). Specific mitigation developed in this Environmental Assessment and the lease terms and conditions will be followed. The Operator will be notified of compliance related issues in writing, and depending on the nature of the issue(s), will be provided 30 days to resolve such issues.

NAME OF PREPARER: Jay Johnson

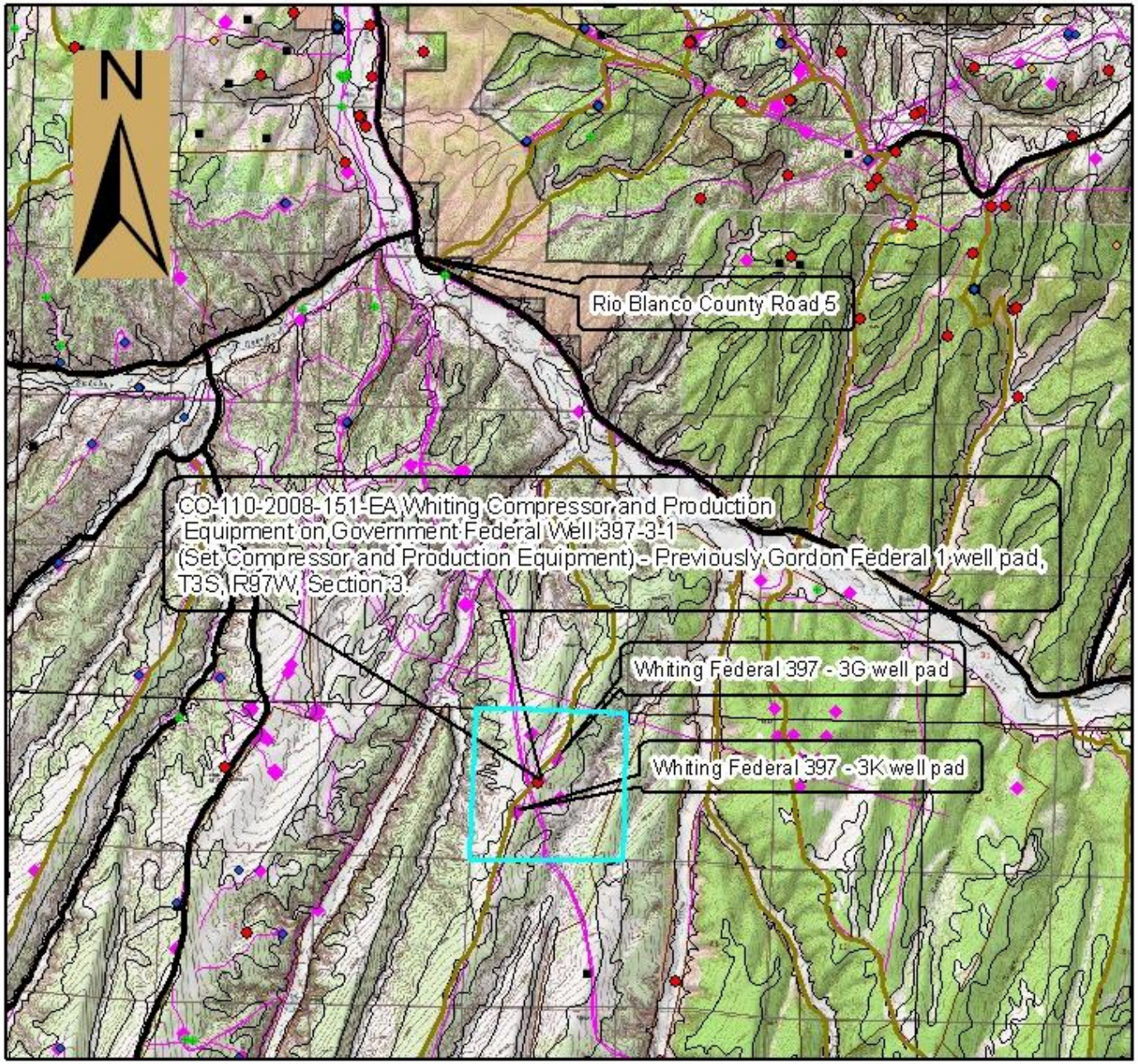
NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Kent F. Walter
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 11/03/08

ATTACHMENTS: General location map of the proposed action.

CO-110-2008-151-EA Whiting Compressor and Production Equipment on Government Federal Well 397-3-1
(Set Compressor and Production Equipment) - Previously Gordon Federal 1 well pad, T3S, R97W, Section 3.



- Abandoned Location
- Dry & Abandoned
- DM
- Injection
- Plugged&Abandoned
- Producing
- Shut In
- Temp& Abandoned
- Unknown
- Verbal Plugging
- Waiting on Completion
- XX
- RBC -Roads
- ACEC's
- Projects: line
- Projects: point
- Townships
- Sections
- BLM
- GC
- MC
- RBC
- State
- USFS

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09/16/2008