

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RECORD

1. **NUMBER** CO-110-2004-015
2. **CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:** COC67322
3. **PROJECT NAME:** 6" Temporary Surface Pipeline
4. **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado
T. 4 S., R. 97 W.,
Sec. 16, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 17, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 19, lot 1, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 20, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$;
Sec. 30, lot 2, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

T. 4 S., R. 98 W.,
Sec. 13, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 14, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
Sec. 24, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.
5. **APPLICANT:** Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc.
6. **NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:** Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc. has applied for a right-of-way for a temporary 6-inch surface pipeline for the Figure Four Wells that have been drilled.
7. **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:**

a. Proposed Action: The proposed action is for a 6-inch and 4-inch temporary surface natural gas pipeline together with related facilities (including valves, drips, metering equipment, dehydrator and compressor). The 4-inch line will come from the 8017 well and tie into the temporary 6-inch pipeline. The pipeline will be buried at road crossings. The proposed pipeline will connect various wells to an existing transportation pipeline. The temporary line will allow Encana to move gas from producing wells to market until their main line is authorized and constructed along Hunter Creek. Also, this pipeline will help provide the producing wells with gas gathering and processing services during the winter months.

The 6-inch pipeline route will cross approximately 26,977 feet of BLM land in an east-west direction, located in Rio Blanco and Garfield Counties. The right-of-way width will be 30 feet encompassing approximately 18.60 acres. The term of the right-of-way will be for three years.

The right-of-way will not be scalped to clear vegetation. A D-10 dozer will be used to drag the pipe along the proposed route with minimal disturbance to the surface. Staging areas along the route will need to be incorporated for welding the pipe string together. These staging areas will be located at T. 4 S., R. 98 W., Sec. 14, 24 and T. 4 S., R. 97 W., Sec. 17. The pipeline will be

pressure tested hydrostatically or with existing gas supplies prior to being placed in service. Except for instances already noted, all construction equipment and vehicles shall be confined to using existing roads and the right-of-way.

Erosion control structures such as water bars or “kicker dikes” will be constructed if necessary. Any drainages encountered during construction will be cleared of dirt and debris and back sloped as near as possible to their original condition to allow for continuance of the previous flow pattern. All above ground facilities will be painted with Carlsbad Canyon 2.5 Y 6/2 color or similar color to blend in with the surrounding area.

When the Hunter Creek main line is completed, the temporary surface pipeline will be removed and all disturbed areas will be reclaimed.

b. No Action Alternative: No temporary surface pipeline would be installed.

8. PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

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

b. Date Approved: July 1, 1997

c. Page/Decision: Pages 2-49 thru 2-52 “To make public lands available for the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations, in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of other resource values.”

d. The proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3). The action conforms to the decisions/pages of the plan listed above.

9. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NEPA DOCUMENTS: This environmental assessment is tiered to, and incorporates by reference the White River Resource Area Resource Management Plan (PRMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) approved May 29, 1996.

10. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/MITIGATION MEASURES:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

An X in the “Not Affected” column in the table below indicates that the critical element has been analyzed and will not be affected by the proposed action or the no action alternative. Affected elements are addressed in the paragraphs following the table.

Not Affected	Critical Element	Specialist Signature	Date
	Air Quality		
	Cultural Resources		
	Floodplains, Wetlands, Riparian Zones, and Alluvial Valleys		
X	Native American Concerns	Scott Pavey	12/16/03
X	Prime and Unique Farmlands	Scott Pavey	12/16/03
X	Threatened and Endangered Animals	Glenn Klingler	12-15-03
X	Threatened and Endangered Plants	T. Meagley	12-15-03
X	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	Marty O’Mara	12-15-03
	Water quality, Surface or Ground		
X	Wilderness Area, Wild and Scenic Rivers	Chris Ham	12/16/03
X	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	T. Meagley	12-15-03
X	Environmental Justice	Scott Pavey	12/16/03

AIR QUALITY:

Affected Environment: There are no special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas nearby that would be affected by the proposed action

Impact of Proposed Action: The proposed action would result in short term, local impacts to air quality during and after construction, due to dust being blown into the air. However, airborne particulate matter should not exceed Colorado air quality standards on an hourly or daily basis. Following successful seeding of the sites, airborne particulate matter should return to near pre-construction levels

Impact of No Action Alternative: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Signature of specialist: CHollowed 12/10/03

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Affected Environment: The proposed well tie pipeline route has been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Metcalf 2003, Compliance Dated 9/23/2003, Metcalf 2003, Compliance Dated 11/19/2003 and Metcalf 1994 Compliance Dated 8/02/1994) with one previously recorded cultural resource (5GR 2463) identified in the inventory areas.

Impact of Proposed Action: If mitigation measures are strictly adhered to there will be no new impacts to cultural resources.

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

Mitigative Measures: All construction through site 5GF 2463 must avoid all existing structures and remain within the existing recent construction disturbance.

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.

Signature of specialist: Michael Selle 11/19/2003

FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS, RIPARIAN ZONES, AND ALLUVIAL VALLEYS: (This includes all information related to Public Land Health Standard 2.)

Affected Environment: This project will cross two perennial streams, East and West Willow Creek. The pipeline also follows approximately 0.6 mile of West Willow Creek. Both of these streams have experienced extensive livestock grazing. Large portions of these streams are in non-functional condition with riparian character largely suppressed. Most areas involved highly impacted and eroded banks with a light cover of non-native grasses.

Impact of Proposed Action: This surface line should not impact these streams. There is a risk, however, of sediment from construction being deposited into these systems. Compaction from heavy equipment is also possible.

Impact of No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigative Measures: Avoid deposition of sediment or fill material into East and West Willow Creek where the surface line crosses or follows the stream. Heavy equipment use should be minimized to reduce or avoid compaction where possible.

Signature of specialist: Glenn Klingler 12-16-03

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE OR GROUND: (This includes all information related to Public Land Health Standard 5.)

Affected Environment: The proposed action is in tributaries to Hunter Creek and Willow Creek, which are both, tributary to Piceance Creek and the White River.

Impact of Proposed Action: Based on the proposed action, impacts to water quality are not anticipated since there will be no new surface disturbance.

Impact of No Action Alternative: None expected.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Signature of specialist: CHollowed 12/10/03

NOXIOUS WEEDS, INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES/RECLAMATION: (This includes vegetation information related to Public Land Health Standard 3.)

Affected Environment: The noxious weed houndstongue occurs in the project area and has potential to invade and proliferate on areas of earthen disturbance. The alien invasive species, cheatgrass also occurs in the project area in disturbed, unvegetated areas.

Impact of Proposed Action: There is potential for noxious weed establishment and proliferation at the road crossings where the pipeline will be buried.

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

Mitigation Measures: The applicant will revegetate all disturbed areas with Standard Seed mix #6 and monitor the project area for a minimum of three years post-disturbance. Eradicate all noxious and invasive species using materials and methods approved by the Authorized Officer.

Signature of specialist: Mark Hafkenschiel 12/17/03

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

An X in the “Not Affected” column in the table below indicates that the non-critical element has been analyzed and will not be affected by the proposed action or the no action alternative. Affected elements are addressed in the paragraphs following the table.

Not Affected	Non-Critical Element	Specialist Signature	Date
X	Access and Transportation	Scott Pavey	12/16/03
X	Forest Management	R. Fowler	12-8-03
X	Geology and Minerals	Paul Daggett	12/11/2003
X	Hydrology and Water Rights	CHollowed	12/10/03
X	Land Status/Realty Authorizations	Penny Brown	11/14/03
X	Fire Management	Ken Holsinger	11/19/03
	Paleontology		
X	Rangeland Management	Mark Hafkenschiel	12/17/03
X	Recreation	Chris Ham	12/16/03
	Soils		
	Visual Resources		

Not Affected	Non-Critical Element	Specialist Signature	Date
X	Wildlife Aquatic	Glenn Klingler	12-16-03
	Wildlife Terrestrial		
X	Wild Horses	Valerie Dobrich	11-14-2003

PALEONTOLOGY:

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in an area that is mapped as part of the Uinta and Green River Formations (Tweeto 1979). The BLM has classified the Uinta formation and the Parachute Creek Member of the Green River formation as Category I formations meaning that they are known to produce scientifically important fossil remains.

Impact of Proposed Action: Provided that there is no excavation into the underlying bedrock formation there will be no new impacts to fossil resources.

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

Mitigative Measures: If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AO). The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

Signature of specialist: Michael Selle 11/19/2003

SOILS:

Affected Environment: The soils in the staging area are of two types, Glendive fine sandy loam and Silas Loam. Both are relatively flat, deep and well drained. Erosion potential is low. Glendive fine sandy loam is susceptible to wind erosion.

Impact of Proposed Action: If procedures are followed as outlined in the proposed action, impacts are not anticipated.

Impact of No Action Alternative: None anticipated.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Signature of specialist: CHollowed 12/10/03

VISUAL RESOURCES:

Affected Environment: This pipeline project is in an area classified as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class 3. VRM Class 3 management allows for development as long as the development does not dominate the new landscape.

Impact of Proposed Action: These pipelines will be surface lines requiring minimal surface disturbance and thereby comply with the guidelines for VRM Class 3.

Impact of No Action Alternative: No impacts.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Signature of specialist: Max McCoy 12-05-03

WILDLIFE TERRESTRIAL:

Affected Environment: The terrain in the vicinity of the proposed action is dominated by mountain a shrub community (e.g., serviceberry, Gambel oak, bitterbrush, sagebrush and rabbitbrush) with some occurrence of pinyon juniper woodlands. Approximately 70% of the line will follow existing roads or rights-of-way. Pipeline segments will be dragged by heavy equipment, but not cleared. A pocket of aspen exists along Whiskey Gulch in NE, NE of Section 24 in T4S, R98W that has documented use by red-tailed hawks. The northeastern portion of the project area occurs in a Winter Concentration Area for elk. No stipulations or Conditions of Approval exist in the White River ROD/RMP for this designation. Elevation for the project area is 7,000-8,100 feet.

This project falls within Overall Range for greater sage-grouse as designated in the ROD/RMP. No leks are known to occur within at least a mile of the project area.

Impact of Proposed Action: There will be a short-term disturbance during the construction of this pipeline. However, the majority of this disturbance will be confined to existing roads and rights-of-ways. No substantial removal of vegetation will occur as a result of this pipeline. The construction of this project could result in disturbance to nesting raptors. Greater sage-grouse are not known to occur or derive important benefit anywhere within one mile of the length of this pipeline.

Impact of No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigative Measures: A current raptor survey must be conducted for the aspen stand in the NE, NE of Section 24, T4S, R98W if this project is not completed by March 1. It is the responsibility of EnCana to contact the BLM (970-878-3800) to have this survey conducted if necessary.

Signature of specialist: Glenn Klingler 12-16-03

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS: No cumulative impacts were identified. The White River PRMP/FEIS analyzed cumulative impacts of resource-area-wide oil and gas development.

Signature of specialist: Penny Brown 11/14/03

11. **PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:** BLM Resource Specialists

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/DECISION RECORD

FONSI: The environmental assessment, analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action, has 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 AND RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. All construction through site 5GF 2463 must avoid all existing structures and remain within the existing recent construction disturbance.
2. 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)
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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.

3. 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.

4. Avoid deposition of sediment or fill material into East and West Willow Creek where the surface line crosses or follows the stream. Heavy equipment use should be minimized to reduce or avoid compaction where possible.

5. The applicant will revegetate all disturbed areas with Standard Seed mix #6 and monitor the project area for a minimum of three years post-disturbance. Eradicate all noxious and invasive species using materials and methods approved by the Authorized Officer.

6. If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AO). The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

7. A current raptor survey must be conducted for the aspen stand in the NE, NE of Section 24, T4S, R98W if this project is not completed by March 1. It is the responsibility of EnCana to contact the BLM (970-878-3800) to have this survey conducted if necessary.

REMARKS: The proposed action will be authorized by Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended.

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER: *Penny Brown*

DATE SIGNED: *12/17/03*

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: *S. J. P.*

DATE SIGNED: *12/17/03*

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: *Therese E. Walter*

DATE SIGNED: *12/10/03*

ATTACHMENTS: Map of the Location of the Proposed Action