

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2010-0244-EA**

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**October 2010**

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**UINTAH COUNTY CLASS D ROAD  
#1710 RECTOR RIDGE  
UTU-69125-52**

***Location:***

T. 12 S., R. 25 E.,  
sec. 3, Lot 1, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 10, Lot 2, 3, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 15, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 22, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ E $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 27, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 28, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 33, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$ .

T. 13 S., R. 25 E.,  
sec. 4, Lots 2, 7;  
sec. 4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 9, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ .

***Applicant/Address:* Uintah County  
152 East 100 North  
Vernal Utah 84078**

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**Project Title  
UTU-69125-52  
Uintah County Road  
#1710 Rector Ridge**

**DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2010-0244-EA**

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**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

**INTRODUCTION**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze Uintah County's proposal to receive a Title V Right-of-Way on an existing Class D, as-is-where-is road, #1710. The EA is site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action. The EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any "significant" impacts could result from the analyzed actions. "Significance" is defined by NEPA and is found in regulation 40 CFR 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact statement (EIS) or a statement of "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI). A Decision Record (DR), which includes a FONSI statement, is a document that briefly presents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in "significant" environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 31, 2008). If the decision maker determines that this project has "significant" impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record may be signed for the EA approving the alternative selected.

**PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

Uintah County has proposed to receive a Title V Right-of-Way on a Class D, as-is-where-is road to continue to provide access for public purposes, enjoyment and infrastructure, including, but not limited to public travel, recreation and commerce.

The BLM's purpose and need is to consider approval of the application in a manner that avoids or reduces impacts on sensitive resource values associated with the project area and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands.

**CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLAN(S)**

The proposed road would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 31, 2008). The RMP/ROD decision allows for processing applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases on public lands in accordance with policy and guidance and allows for management of public lands to support goals and objectives of other resources programs, respond to public requests for land use authorizations, and acquire administrative and public access where necessary (RMP/ROD p.86). It has been determined that the proposed action and alternative(s) would not conflict with other decisions throughout the plan.

## RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

This EA was prepared by the BLM in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and in compliance with all applicable regulations and laws passed subsequently, including the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and the U.S. Department of Interior requirements and guidelines listed in the BLM *Manual Handbook H-1790-1*. This EA assesses the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

The proposed action is also consistent with the Uintah County General Plan as amended in 2007. The Uintah County General Plan contains specific policy statements addressing public and multiple-use resource use and development, access, and wildlife management. In general, the Plan indicates support for development proposals through its emphasis on multiple-use public land management practices and responsible use and optimum utilization of public land resources. The County, through the Plan, supports the development of natural resources as they became available as new technology allows.

## CHAPTER 2 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

### INTRODUCTION

This EA focuses on the Proposed and No Action Alternatives. The No Action Alternative is considered and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts of the proposed action.

### PROPOSED ACTION

Uintah County is proposing to receive a Title V Right-of-Way on an existing class D, as-is-where-is road, to provide access for public purposes, enjoyment, and infrastructure, including, but not limited to public travel, recreation and travel (See Exhibit B in the Appendix).

The table below references GPS numbers, and the disturbed width of the road at that point (see Exhibit C in the Appendix). The reference points were taken at the onsite on September 11, 2008.

GPS #	Disturbed Width in Feet		GPS #	Disturbed Width in Feet
74	9.84		83	9.84
75	16.4		86	9.84
76	13.12		87	9.84
77	16.4		88	9.84
78, 79	13.12		91	19.68
81, 82	9.84		92	22.96

The BLM considers an “as is where is” road right of way (ROW) to be one where the road will not vary from its original character or footprint and only minor, “as needed” work to maintain access occurs, e.g., repair of a wash-out from storm damage, etc. However, all road maintenance is required to stay within the existing disturbance identified by the ROW. For purposes of establishing length and width of an “as is where is” road ROW, measurements are taken at approximately ½ to 1 mile intervals, or whenever there is a visible change in width.

The total length of the existing road that crosses land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and that is included in the County’s Rector Ridge Road application, is approximately 46,833 feet in length (8.87 miles) with a representative width of 13.39 feet. (The representative width is to establish acreage only). This road would be identified as a variable width road (See Exhibit C: Variable Width Map).

The County’s discretion in managing and operating this road shall be consistent with the maintenance and operation applied to similar as-is-where-is County roads. It shall also be consistent with the BLM’s definition of an as-is-where-is road. Uintah County noxious weed control will be consistent with Uintah County’s ongoing program.

#### **NO ACTION**

The No Action Alternative would be to deny the application as proposed. With this alternative BLM would not approve the Title V Right-of-Way to Uintah County. The as-is-where-is road would continue to be used year round for public and recreational travel.

## **CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SETTING**

The Interdisciplinary Team Checklist provides a brief description of the affected environment. *For additional information refer to 43 CFR 46.125 and BLM Handbook H-1790-1 sections 6.7.1, 6.7.2, and 8.3.5.* The affected environment and environmental consequences of the alternatives were considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in Appendix A. The analysis indicates that no resources of concern, including elements of the human environment, would be impacted to a degree that a detailed analysis is required. The analysis and rationale for this conclusion is provided in Appendix A.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

There are no affected resources in this project area.

### **NO ACTION**

With this alternative Rector Ridge Road (CR# 1710) would continue to be used year round, for commerce (including transportation of fluids and maintenance of well site facilities), public travel, moving livestock, and recreational use.

## **CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS**

This chapter would describe the direct and indirect impacts that would be expected to occur upon the implementation of each of the considered alternatives. It would also disclose the expected cumulative impacts, which are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Since no impacts were identified by BLM, no impact analysis by resource follows.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

If the proposed action were selected, BLM would approve the application. The road is currently, and would continue to be used year round, for commerce (including transportation of fluids and maintenance of well site facilities), public travel, moving livestock, and recreational use.

### **NO ACTION**

The No Action Alternative would be to deny the application as proposed. With this alternative BLM would not approve the application. The road is currently, and would continue to be used year round, for commerce (including transportation of fluids and maintenance of well site facilities), public travel, moving livestock, and recreational use.

### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Cumulative impacts are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED**

The proposed action was posted to the public Environmental Notification Bulletin Board with its assigned NEPA number on 07 April 2010. ENBB was updated on May 19, 2010 to update the application to no gravel will be applied to the road. Also, verified that this is an Environmental Assessment (EA) not a CX.

On May 21, 2010 received and e-mail request from David Garbett with SUWA, requesting a 30 day public comment period, and to prepare an EA on the Uintah County's requested right-of-way on Rector Ridge Road #1710.

On June 7, 2010 received an e-mail from David Garbett with SUWA, for verification that the BLM office received the EA request from May 21, 2010.

On August 20, 2010, received an e-mail from David Garbett with SUWA, for reiteration that BLM prepare an EA for this right-of-way.

#### **Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted**

##### **List of Preparers**

See Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist

## **APPENDICES**

### **Exhibit A: INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST**

### **Exhibit B: Map of Road**

### **Exhibit C: Variable Width Map**

#### **List of Acronyms Used in this EA:**

AO	Authorized Officer
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
DR	Decision Record
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ENBB	Environmental Notification Bulletin Board
FLPMA	Federal land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
ID	Interdisciplinary
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RFA	Reasonably Foreseeable Action
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-Way

**Exhibit A:**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST**

**Project Title:** UINTAH COUNTY CLASS D ROAD #1710 RECTOR RIDGE

**NEPA Log Number:** DOI BLM-UT-G010-2010-0244-EA

**File/Serial Number:** UTU-69125-52

**Project Leader:** Margo Roberts

**DETERMINATION OF STAFF:** *(Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)*

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 relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section D of the DNA form. The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.

Determi- nation	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
<b>RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)</b>				
NI	Air Quality	Dust emissions currently occur from vehicles utilizing the subject roads. Those air quality impacts are encompassed within the Uinta Basin Air Quality Study (UBAQS) that was conducted in 2009. Overall, air quality in the Basin was modeled as being within attainment of the NAAQS. The 2012 horizon showed isolated modeled exceedences of the ozone NAAQS, which are thought to be residual effects from utilizing Wasatch Front monitors (which are 120 miles away in a non-attainment area) to calibrate the model. An additional model was run for the Greater Natural Buttes project. The results of that model correspond with the results of the UBAQS model. There are no regulatory monitoring data for the project area to verify and calibrate the results of either model, although monitoring is ongoing beginning in July 2009. Preliminary monitoring results are showing exceedences of the ozone NAAQS in the Uinta Basin during the winter when snow cover is present. However, ozone formation from its component parts (NOx and VOCs) is a non-linear, photo-reactive process, and no models exist for predicting winter-time ozone formulation. It is anticipated that the incremental change from this project's alternatives would be so small as to be undetectable by both models and monitors.	Stephanie Howard	7/28/2010
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	The proposed project area is not within an identified ACEC per the Vernal Field Office GIS data layers.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NP	BLM Natural Areas	The proposed project area is not within an identified BLM Natural Area per the Vernal Field Office RMP data.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NI	Cultural Resources	The area of potential effect (APE) is defined as the existing roadways exact footprint as defined in the attached map with width measurements.  The BLM considers an "as is where is" road right of way (ROW) to be one where the road will not vary from its original character or footprint and only minor, "as needed" work to maintain access occurs, e.g., repair of a	Kathie Davies	10/7/2010

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
		<p>wash-out from storm damage, etc. However, all road maintenance is required to stay within the existing disturbance identified by the ROW. For purposes of establishing length and width of an "as is where is" road ROW, measurements are taken at approximately 1/2 to 1 mile intervals, or whenever there is a visible change in width. Based on this definition there would be no additional impact on cultural material that may be present.</p> <p>The roadway has been inventoried except for the most northern 3 miles. Only one site was recorded in close proximity to the existing road. Site 42Un4835 is an historic trash scatter recommended as "not-eligible" to the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>A determination "no-effect" to cultural material is being made for the undertaking since disturbance cannot go beyond its current footprint.</p>		
NP	Environmental Justice	No minority or economically disadvantaged communities or populations are present which could be disproportionately adversely affected by the proposed action or alternatives.	Stephanie Howard	4/8/2010
NP	Farmlands (Prime or Unique)	Lands must be irrigated to be considered under this designation. No lands in the proposed project area are irrigated; therefore this resource is not present.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NI	Fish and Wildlife Excluding USFWS Designated Species	Elk Crucial Winter habitat however, no new surface disturbance will occur. There are 2 Golden Eagle and one Red-tailed hawk nests within .5 miles of this project however, no new surface disturbance is will occur.	Dan Emmett	4/13/10
NI	Floodplains	The road in T. 12 S., R., 25 E., Sec. 3, E1/2NE1/4, NE1/4SE1/4 is in an identified floodplain per the Vernal Field Office GIS Data Layer. This is a small portion of the project. The proponent is not intending to modify the road route and it is intended to be a Class D road under Title V authorization. No change will occur to the floodplain.	Stan Olmstead	8/6/2010
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	No Fuels/Fire projects or needs present.	Blaine Tarbell	8/04/2010
NI	Geology / Mineral Resources/Energy Production	The maintenance of a county road will enhance energy production and promote safety and will not adversely affect geological resources.	Robin L Hansen	4/12/2010
NI	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	No standards have been set by EPA or other regulatory agencies for greenhouse gases. In addition, the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is still in its earliest stages of formulation. Global scientific models are inconsistent, and regional or local scientific models are lacking so that it is not technically feasible to determine the net impacts to climate due to greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions associated with this action and its alternative(s) would be negligible.	Stephanie Howard	4/8/2010
NI	Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The road would be an As-Is/Where-Is. No change in surface water run-off or change in the Hydrologic Condition would be expected.	Stan Olmstead	8/6/2010
NI	Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds	There will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed project. Weeds would continue to be managed as per the county Weed Management Plan	Aaron Roe	4/16/2010
NI	Lands/Access	There are two right-of-way holders in the proposed project area, and they have been notified by letter.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
NI	Livestock Grazing	The project area is located within the Atchee Ridge AMP allotment. There will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed project. The road will remain in its current state therefore patterns of use should remain the same. Therefore, there will be no impacts to the livestock grazing operations and the vegetation community in the vicinity of the proposed project.	Dusty Carpenter	10/05/10
NI	Migratory Birds	Migratory birds are present in the project area; however, no new surface disturbance is proposed.	Dan Emmett	04/13/10
NP	Native American Religious Concerns	There will be no changes to the existing roadway or use of the right-of-way.	Kathie Davies	10/7/2010
NP	Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	The project area was inventoried in 2007 for wilderness characteristics as part of the Vernal land use planning effort. No wilderness characteristics were found to be present in the project area. (Vernal RMP FEIS pages 3-43 through 3-48.).	Jason West	4/8/2010
NI	Paleontology	PFYC class for the surface formations is 3A. Since no new surface disturbance is anticipated, this proposed action will not affect the paleontological resources.	Robin L Hansen	4/12/2010
NI	Rangeland Health Standards	The project area is located within the Atchee Ridge AMP allotment. Rangeland Health Assessments have not been completed for this allotment. There will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed project. The road will remain in its current state; therefore, patterns of use should remain the same. Due to the fact that there will be no changes to the road character there are no foreseeable impacts to the indicators of rangeland health and the vegetation community in the vicinity of the proposed project.	Dusty Carpenter	10/05/10
NI	Recreation	The level of impact to recreation would be minimal with primary recreation use occurring during fall/winter hunting and recreationists traveling at slower speeds to locate game along the 8.5 miles	Evan Glenn	4/30/2010
NI	Socio-Economics	Due to the small size of this project, the social and economic status of Uinta Basin communities would not be impacted.	Stephanie Howard	4/8/2010
NI	Soils	Since there is no new surface disturbing actions involved with the proposed action, no increases in erosion and sedimentation are expected to occur. Background erosion rates on the existing road are expected to continue at present rates.	Steve Strong	4/27/2010
NI	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species	MSO Fair habitat within .43 miles, If new disturbance is proposed two years of surveys for MSO need to be completed.. No water depletion is proposed.	Dan Emmett	04/13/10
NI	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species	There will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed project. Therefore there will be no impacts to the habitat for any Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species	Aaron Roe	7/28/2010
SSP: NI	Vegetation, Excluding USFWS Designated Species	SSP: There will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed project. Therefore there will be no impacts to the habitat for any Bureau-sensitive plant species	Aaron Roe	4/16/2010
Veg: NI		Veg: There will be no new surface disturbance associated with the proposed project. Therefore there will be no impacts to the vegetation community in the vicinity of the proposed project	Aaron Roe	4/16/2010

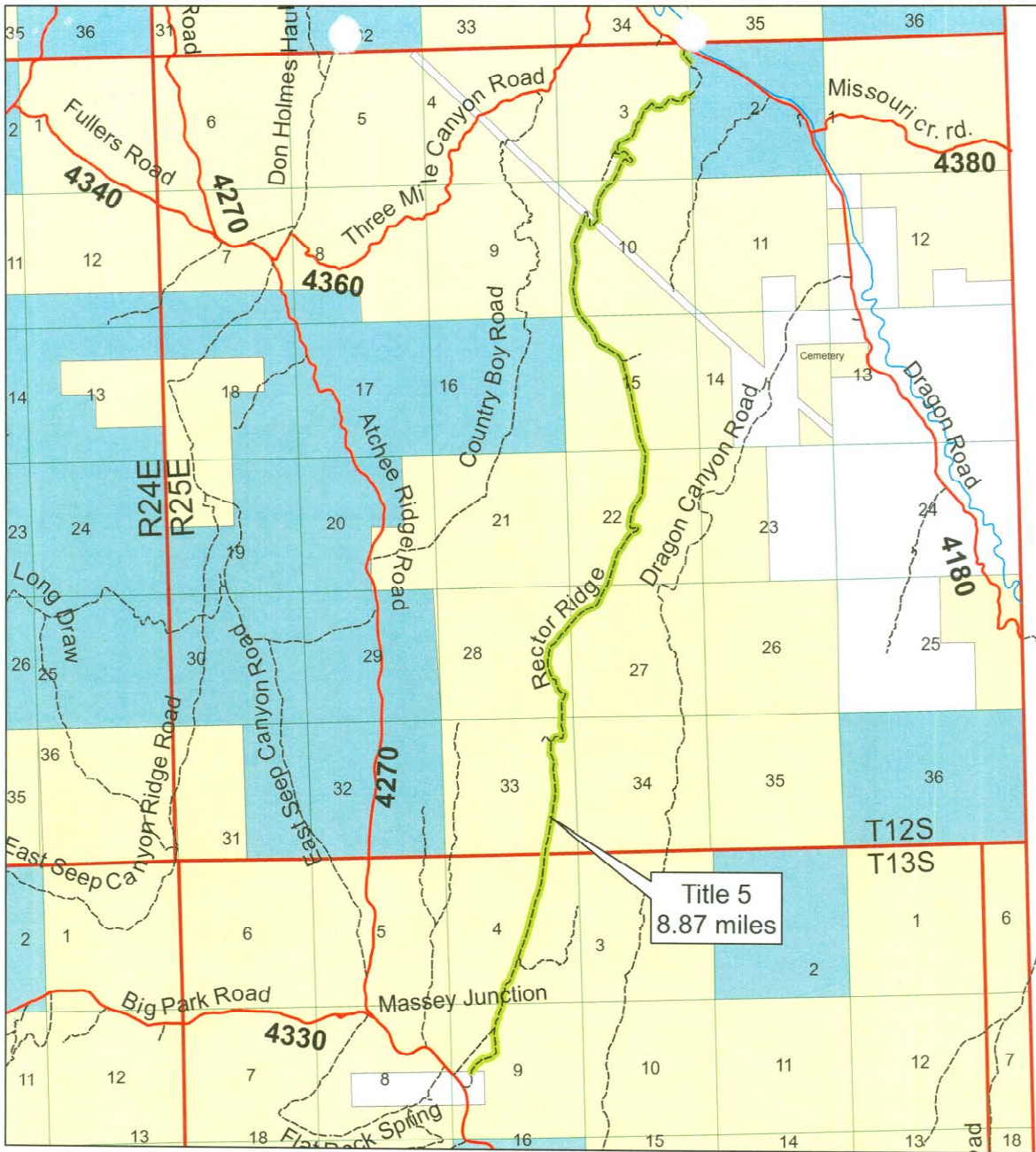
Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
NI	Visual Resources	VRM Class III inventory has been identified; Landscape is generally enclosed with horizontal and vertical broken lines. Vegetation is typically sagebrush steppe and Pinon Juniper with low to mid lying broken lines from mauve, and buff to darker pinion greens. Desert browns and reds are common soil colors, with desert grass brown breaks in the main vegetation types. Existing structures include oil pads in a limited amount with cylindrical and rectangular features, with contrasting vertical and horizontal lines and smooth textures which contrast the coarse texture of the landscape. Currently a road exists that follows straight lines and also where available contours the landscape. This area is not located in the identified sensitive class III zone and will not require a contrast rating worksheet. Maintaining the road "as is where is" as defined in the EA would not add a large amount of noticeable contrast to the casual passerby and therefore the proposed project meets the class III objectives which state: 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.	Jason West	4/30/2010
NI	Wastes (hazardous or solid)	No chemicals subject to reporting under SARA Title III in amounts greater than 10,000 pounds would be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of annually in association with the project. Trash and other waste materials would be cleaned up and removed immediately after completion of operations.	Stephanie Howard	4/16/2010
Surface: NI	Water Resources/Quality (surface)	Surface: The project is considered an As-Is/Where-Is proposal. No change in water quality would be expected from the existing situation.	Surface: Stan Olmstead	8/6/2010
Ground: NI	Water Resources/Quality Ground	Ground: The proposed action would not affect underground underground sources of drinking water.	Ground: Robin Hansen	4/12/2010
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	There are no identified Wetlands or Riparian Zones in the project area per the Vernal Field Office GIS Data base.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	There are no identified Wild and Scenic Rivers in the project area per the Vernal Field Office GIS Data bases.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NP	Wild Horses and Burros	There are no identified Wild Horses and Burros areas, in the project area per the Vernal Field Office GIS Data base.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NP	Wilderness/WSA	There are no identified Wilderness/WSA areas in the project area per the Vernal Field Office RMP.	Margo Roberts	4/8/2010
NI	Woodland / Forestry	Pinyon juniper woodlands are present in the area and is identified as an open wood cutting area per the Vernal Field Office GIS Data base. There is no new surface disturbing activities proposed, therefore there would be no impacts to forests and woodlands.	David Palmer	7/30/2010

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**FINAL REVIEW:**

<b>Reviewer Title</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Environmental Coordinator			
Authorized Officer			

**Exhibit B:**  
**Map of Proposed Road**



UTU-69125-52

- | Road Category        | Land Status                 | Reference    |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Class 1-B Paved      | Bureau of Land Management   | Title 5 Road |
| Class 1-B Gravel     | Ashley National Forest      | Township     |
| Class 1-B Native     | Ute Indian Tribe            | Section      |
| Class C City         | Water                       |              |
| Class D Unmaintained | Dinosaur National Monument  |              |
| Private              | USFWS Ourey Wildlife Refuge |              |
| US Forest Service    | Private                     |              |
| Ute Tribe            | Bureau of Reclamation       |              |
| Rail Road            | State of Utah               |              |
| Federal or State     | Utah Department of Wildlife |              |
| Unclassified         | Ute Tribe Deeded            |              |



1 inch equals 5,000 feet



Created by the Utah County G.I.S. Department

**Exhibit C:**  
**Map of Variable Width Road**

