

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Glenwood Springs Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2010-0006 EA

PROJECT NAME: King Mountain Cabin Replacement

LOCATION: T1N, R84W, Sec. 30, NW4SE4, 6th Principal Meridian. Refer to attached location map.

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would be to dispose of the old King Mountain Cabin and replace it with a manufactured energy efficient park model cabin with dimensions of approx. 12' x 40' (480 square feet). Heavy equipment including a trackhoe excavator, and front end loader would be used to demolish the existing cabin and all rubble would be hauled by dump trucks to a landfill. The new "park model" cabin would be located in the existing parking area just south of the old cabin (between the old cabin and the storage sheds). This was determined to be a more suitable location for the new facility as the old cabin lies in a low spot and would create drainage issues. A concrete pad (approx. 45' long x 15' wide x 6" deep) would be poured to serve as the foundation of the new cabin. Minor excavation and leveling would be required for installation of the concrete pad. Three trenches would have to be excavated to tie into existing water, sewer, and electrical power lines. Trenches for power would be 120 feet long, and sewer would be approx. 150' long, with approximately 80 feet of common trench for both lines. The trenches are assumed to be 2.5' wide x 3' deep. The septic system and power source are located northeast of the planned location of the new cabin. Tapping into the existing water well would require excavation of a trench (approx. 15' long x 2.5 wide x 3' deep). The water well is located north of the new cabin. After the utility lines are installed, the trenches would be backfilled using the excavated trench material. A parking area/turn around (approx. 60' x 60') would also be excavated (approx. 335 cubic yards of cut) on the east side of the road near the old cabin. The fill material from the parking area/turn around would be placed where the old cabin is located. As part of the project above, new stairs with rails will be installed to the storage shed located east of the old cabin. Refer to the attached drawing for more details.

Design Features of the Proposed Action:

- All persons in the area who are associated with this project must be informed that if anyone is found disturbing historic, archaeological, or scientific resources, including collecting artifacts, the person or persons will be subject to prosecution.

- Pursuant to 43CFR10.4(g), the BLM authorized officer must be notified, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43CFR10.4 (c) and (d), activities must stop in the vicinity of the discovery and the discovery must be protected for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
- If in connection with operations under this contract the project proponent, his contractors, subcontractors, or the employees of any of them, discovers, encounters or becomes aware of any objects or sites of cultural or paleontological value or scientific interest such as historic ruins or prehistoric ruins, graves or grave markers, fossils, or artifacts, the proponent shall immediately suspend all operations in the vicinity of the cultural or paleontological resource and shall notify the BLM authorized officer of the findings (16 U.S.C. 470h-3, 36CFR800.112). Operations may resume at the discovery site upon receipt of written instructions and authorization by the authorized officer. Approval to proceed will be based upon evaluation of the resource. Evaluation shall be by a qualified professional selected by the authorized officer from a federal agency insofar as practicable. When not practicable, the holder shall bear the cost of the services of a non-federal professional.
- Within five working days the authorized officer will inform the holder as to:
 - whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
 - the mitigation measures the holder will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary); and,
 - a time frame for the authorized officer to complete an expedited review under 36CFR800.11, or any agreements in lieu thereof, to confirm through the State Historic Preservation Officer that the findings of the authorized officer are correct and the mitigation is appropriate.
- The proponent may relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, as long as the new area has been appropriately cleared of resources and the exposed materials are recorded and stabilized. Otherwise, the proponent will be responsible for mitigation costs. The authorized officer will provide technical and procedural guidelines for relocation and/or to conduct mitigation. Upon verification from the authorized officer that the required mitigation has been completed, the proponent will then be allowed to resume construction.
- Antiquities, historic ruins, prehistoric ruins, paleontological or objects of scientific interest that are outside of the authorization boundaries but directly associated with the impacted resource will also be included in this evaluation and/or mitigation.
- Antiquities, historic ruins, prehistoric ruins, paleontological or objects of scientific interest, identified or unidentified, that are outside of the authorization and not associated with the resource within the authorization will also be protected. Impacts that occur to such resources, that are related to the authorizations activities, will be mitigated at the proponent's cost including the cost of consultation with Native American groups.

- To aid in restoring a native plant community to the site, the fill material and other disturbed areas not part of the new parking lot will be recontoured to the natural topography and seeded to native grasses adapted to the site immediately following construction. Slender wheatgrass var. San Luis is recommended since it is adapted to the conditions found at the site, is available in Glenwood Springs BLM's seed warehouse, and is certified weed-seed free. Substitutions may be allowed if they are native species adapted to the site and are certified weed-seed free.
- The seeding rate for Slender wheatgrass would be 25 PLS lbs/ac. The seed may be applied by broadcast-seeding, followed by raking or harrowing to provide 0.25 to 0.5 inch of soil cover, or by drill-seeding, using one-half the application rate above and drilled to a depth of 0.25 to 0.5 inch.
- The exterior wood siding of the new cabin will be similar in color to "Sudan Brown" from the Standard Environmental Colors. The color of the metal roof shall be green. The closest color for the metal roof from the Standard Environmental Colors chart is "Beetle".
- The equipment operator is to ensure equipment involved in land disturbing actions be clean of noxious weed seeds or propagative parts prior to entry on site. When working in areas with noxious weeds, equipment should be cleaned prior to moving off site.
- The GSFO weed staff will enforce EDRR at the project site. The project area will be monitored for the presence and/or establishment of noxious weeds. If noxious weeds are found, the appropriate treatment and reclamation methods will be enacted. Actions associated with weed treatments in the GSFO were analyzed and approved in Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2009-0078 signed in June of 2009.
- Consult with Yampa Valley Electric Association to ensure line specifications conform to their electrical regulations.

No Action Alternative: The King Mountain Cabin would not be replaced.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED:

None.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: The King Mountain Cabin serves as an important work outpost for employees from the Glenwood Springs Field Office managing BLM public lands in northern Eagle and southern Routt Counties. The long term need for an employee outpost in this area has been determined to be vital and important in order to safely and efficiently manage a significant part of GSFO's BLM public lands in the northern part of the resource area that requires a 2 ½ hour commute each way. With the GSFO moving further west to Silt Colorado in 2009 this facility will become more vital for employees whose jobs are predominantly in Eagle and Routt Counties.

The Final CASHE Audit Report of 2/9/07 identified a number of environmental and safety liabilities relating to the aging cabin. The existing structure has structural concerns relating to the foundation, roof, electrical concerns and health concerns relating to mice and flies. Many items have or will be addressed through 1652 budget for the interim to keep the cabin open in a safe condition, however long term needs relating to the aging structure needs to be addressed.

In addition to safety concerns this project would upgrade this government facility to a more energy efficient facility. The facility would have upgraded insulation, windows, doors, and improved heating and ventilation systems.

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: Glenwood Springs Resource Management Plan.

Date Approved: January, 1984, revised 1988, amended in November 1991 - Oil and Gas Leasing and Development - Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended Nov. 1996 - Colorado Standards and Guidelines; amended in August 1997 - Castle Peak Travel Management Plan; amended in March 1999 - Oil and Gas Leasing & Development Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended in November 1999 - Red Hill Plan Amendment; amended in September 2002 – Fire Management Plan for Wildland Fire Management and Prescriptive Vegetation Treatment Guidance; amended in June 2007 – Record of Decision for the Approval of Portions of the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment; and amended in March 2009 - Record of Decision for the Designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan.

Decision Number/Page: The action is in conformance with Administrative Actions (pg. 5) of the Glenwood Springs Resource Management Plan.

Decision Language: Administrative actions states, “Various types of actions will require special attention beyond the scope of this plan. Administrative actions are the day-to-day transactions required to serve the public and to provide optimal use of the resources. These actions are in conformance with the plan. They include...facility maintenance...”

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH:

The Colorado Standards for Public Land Health consist of 5 standards: upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, special status species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. The BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office is in the process of conducting formal land health assessments on a landscape basis.

The King Mountain Landscape Unit, which encompasses the Proposed Action, is scheduled for a land health assessment in 2011. A determination on achievement of the standards will be deferred until such time as the land health assessment has been completed.

However, the impact analysis below must address whether the Proposed Action or any alternatives being analyzed would result in any impacts that would maintain, improve, or deteriorate land health conditions for each of the five standards. These analyses are located in specific elements listed below:

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section provides a description of the human and natural environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative. In addition, the section presents comparative analyses of the direct and indirect consequences on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the various actions.

A variety of laws, regulations, and policy directives mandate the evaluation of the effects of a proposed action and alternative(s) on certain critical environmental elements. Not all of the critical elements that require inclusion in this EA are present, or if they are present, may not be affected by the proposed action and alternative (Table 1). Only those mandatory critical elements that are present and affected are described in the following narrative.

In addition to the mandatory critical elements, there are additional resources that would be impacted by the Proposed Action and alternative. These are presented under **Other Affected Resources**.

Critical Elements

Table 1. Critical Elements of the Human Environment									
<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Affected</i>		<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Affected</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
Air Quality	X		X		Prime or Unique Farmlands		X		X
ACECs		X		X	Special Status Species*	X		X	
Cultural Resources	X			X	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X		X	
Environmental Justice	X			X	Water Quality, Surface and Ground*		X		X
Floodplains		X		X	Wetlands and Riparian Zones*		X		X
Invasive, Non-native Species	X		X		Wild and Scenic Rivers		X		X
Migratory Birds		X		X	Wilderness/ WSAs		X		X
Native American Religious Concerns		X		X					

* Public Land Health Standard

Air Quality

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action area (Routt County) has been described as an attainment area under CAAQS (Colorado Ambient Air Quality Standards) and NAAQS (National Ambient Air Quality Standards). An attainment area is an area where ambient air pollution amounts are determined to be below NAAQS standards. For more information on

existing air quality in the area, refer to the Roan Plateau RMPA and EIS which describes potential effects from oil and gas development (BLM 2006:4-26 to 4-37).

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would result in short-term localized vehicle emissions from dozer operations. Additionally, there is a potential for some dust generation if these activities occur in dry conditions. These effects would be minor, of short duration, and overall would have little or no effect on air quality.

No Action Alternative:

The No Action Alternative would have no effect on air quality.

Cultural Resources

Affected Environment: A reconnaissance of the cabin and associated structures was undertaken in 2007. While the original part of the cabin is considered an historic era structure, the numerous modifications that have taken place in modern times have resulted in the destruction of the historic integrity. Additionally, the cabin is considered a vernacular type construction that is commonplace throughout the GSFO. The sheds in the vicinity of the cabin are also considered modern.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

The cabin is considered not eligible for listing on the National Historic Preservation Act (NRHP) and is therefore, not an “historic property” as defined by the NHPA.

A determination of “**No Historic Properties Affected**” was made in concurrence with the SHPO for the Proposed Action in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NRHP), as amended (16 USC 470f), National BLM/SHPO Programmatic Agreement (1997), and Colorado Protocol (1998). The Education /Discovery stipulation needs to be added to the permit for the removal and placement of the new structure.

No Action Alternative:

Under this alternative the cabin would not be removed and there would still be safety and health issues with its use as a habitation structure. This alternative would not be beneficial or detrimental to cultural resources.

Invasive, Non-native Species

Affected Environment: Heavy infestations of Canada thistle occur in and around the proposed project area. Canada thistle is a “B” list species on Colorado’s Noxious Weed List which includes plants whose continued spread should be stopped. The entire area was sprayed with a selective herbicide in the summer of 2009.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action:

Surface disturbing activities like those described in the Proposed Action create a niche for noxious and invasive plant species to become established and spread. Canada thistle is a long lived perennial weed that reproduces through seed and vegetative tillers. The surface disturbance would initially reduce the density of Canada thistle but would result in an increase of density in a few years. Other weeds could be introduced at the site through weed seed and reproductive vegetative parts attached to heavy equipment and vehicles. However, through EDRR (Early Detection Rapid Response) and using a selective herbicide in combination with establishing desirable vegetation cover would sufficiently mitigate the effects described above.

No Action Alternative:

Under this alternative the surface disturbing activities associated with the Proposed Action would not take place. Canada thistle would continue to be treated as scheduled by the Glenwood Springs Field Office.

Migratory Birds

Affected Environment: BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-050 provides guidance toward meeting the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Executive Order (EO) 13186. The guidance directs Field Offices to promote the maintenance and improvement of habitat quantity and quality. To avoid, reduce or mitigate adverse impacts on the habitats of migratory bird species of conservation concern to the extent feasible, and in a manner consistent with regional or statewide bird conservation priorities. The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to "identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973." The "*BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN 2008*" (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2008) is the most recent effort to carry out this mandate.

The conservation concerns may be the result of population declines, naturally or human-caused small ranges or population sizes, threats to habitat, or other factors. Although there are general patterns that can be inferred, there is no single reason why any species was is on the list. Habitat loss is believed to be the major reason for the declines of many species. When considering potential impacts to migratory birds the impact on habitat, including: 1) the degree of fragmentation/connectivity expected from the proposed project relative to before the proposed project; and 2) the fragmentation/connectivity within and between habitat types (e.g., within nesting habitat or between nesting and feeding habitats. Continued private land development, surface disturbing actions in key habitats (e.g. riparian areas) and the proliferation of roads, pipelines, powerlines and trails are local factors that reduce habitat quality and quantity for many species.

The Glenwood Springs Field Office is within the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau Bird Conservation Region (BCR). The 2008 list of Birds of Conservation include the following: Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*), American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Golden Eagle (*Aquila*

chrysaetos), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrines*), Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus/tenuirostris*), Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*), Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*), Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), Juniper Titmouse (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), Bendire's Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*), Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*), Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*), Black Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte atrata*), Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte australis*), and Cassin's Finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*).

The GSFO planning area provides both foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory birds that summer, winter, or migrate through the area. The habitat diversity provided by the broad expanses of sagebrush, mixed mountain shrub, oakbrush, aspen, pinyon-juniper woodlands, other types of coniferous forests and riparian and wetland areas support many bird species. The Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Lewis's Woodpecker and Grace's Warbler are characteristically found in pinyon/juniper woodlands and the Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) is found within sagebrush habitats. Many species of raptors (red-tailed hawks, northern goshawks, Cooper's hawks, kestrels and owls) not on the Fish & Wildlife Service's Birds of Conservation Concern list also could occur in the area. Raptor surveys have not been conducted in the area.

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Bald eagles are known to winter along portions of the Colorado, Eagle and Roaring Fork Rivers and its major tributaries. Wintering bald eagles are generally present from mid-November to mid-April. Large mature cottonwood trees along the the rivers and their major tributaries are used as roosting and perching sites, and these waterways provide the main food sources of fish and waterfowl. Upland habitats adjacent to these waterways are used as scavenging areas primarily for winter killed mule deer and elk. Major threats include habitat loss, human disturbance and illegal shooting. Bald eagles are increasing in numbers throughout their range and were removed from the federal threatened and endangered species list in 2007 however bald eagles are still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

Since the new cabin would be placed where the existing parking lot is located, very little habitat would be affected. Thus Proposed Action should have little to no effect on any migratory bird species.

No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing cabin would not be removed and a new cabin would not be installed. No surface-disturbing activities would occur and there would be no new impacts on migratory birds.

Native American Religious Concerns

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action is in an area considered the ancestral homeland of the Ute Tribes. At present, no areas of Native American concern are known or were identified during the cultural resource survey. No formal consultation was initiated since no areas of Native American concern were identified. Additionally, the Ute Tribes have indicated that consultation is not necessary for small projects or where no areas of Native American concern were identified.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action and No Action Alternative: These alternatives would be neither beneficial nor detrimental to areas of Native American concerns. However, the Educational/Discovery stipulation needs to be added to the permit to cover the contingency of discovered remains.

Special Status Species (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Plant Species

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/endspp/CountyLists/COLORADO.pdf>), there are no Federally listed, proposed or candidate plant species that may reside, have habitat, and/or be impacted by actions occurring in Routt County.

BLM Sensitive Plant Species

The only BLM sensitive plant species with habitat and/or occurrence records in Southern Routt County is Harrington’s penstemon (*Penstemon harringtonii*). Harrington’s penstemon is found in open sagebrush communities or sagebrush/mixed mountain shrub communities between 6,400 and 10,000 feet. No occurrences of Harrington’s penstemon have been found near the King Mountain cabin or the surrounding area.

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Animal Species

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/endspp/CountyLists/COLORADO.htm>), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate plant and animal species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring in Routt County:

Species		Status
Terrestrial Species		
Canada lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	Threatened
Yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Candidate
Aquatic Species		
Greenback cutthroat trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarki stomias</i>	Threatened
Bonytail	<i>Gila elegans</i>	Endangered
Colorado pikeminnow	<i>Ptychocheilus lucius</i>	Endangered
Humpback chub	<i>Gila cypha</i>	Endangered

Razorback sucker	Xyrauchen texanus	Endangered
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These species, their status, and their distributions and habitat associations in the region are summarized below:

Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Federally listed as threatened. Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) was listed as a federally threatened species, effective April 24, 2000 (Federal Register Volume 65, No. 58). Canada lynx occupy high-latitude or high-elevation coniferous forests characterized by cold, snowy winters and an adequate prey base (Ruggiero et al. 1999). The preferred prey of Canada lynx throughout their range is the snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*). In the western United States, lynx are associated with mesic forests of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, and quaking aspen in the upper montane and subalpine zones, generally between 8,000 and 12,000 feet in elevation. Although snowshoe hares are the preferred prey in Colorado, lynx in also feed on other species such as the mountain cottontail (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*), pine squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), and blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*).

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has mapped suitable denning, winter, and other habitat for lynx within the White River National Forest (WRNF). The mapped suitable habitat in the WRNF comprises several areas known as Lynx Analysis Units (LAUs). Lynx analysis units (LAUs) are management areas that contain suitable lynx habitat and approximate the size of a female home range. Several LAUs border BLM lands however no areas large enough to be considered LAUs occur within the GSFO. BLM lands within the GSFO area generally support the movement of lynx dispersing to a new area or, potentially, moving to lower elevations during severe winter weather in search of prey.

The project area is immediately north of a small, isolated area of mapped habitat that is not adjacent to the large blocks of habitat on the Routt or White River National Forests that are within a LAU. The project area is also immediately north of the mapped Egeria linkage area from the Flattops (White River Plateau) east to the Routt National Forest (USDA 2008).

Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*). Candidate for Federal listing. This secretive species occurs in mature riparian forests of cottonwoods and other large deciduous trees with a well-developed understory of tall riparian shrubs. Riparian areas in the project area do not provide suitable habitat for this species. It also is not known to occur in the cottonwood corridor along the Colorado River; occurrence there is unlikely due to the patchy nature of the stands and the general lack of a tall-shrub understory.

Greenback Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*). Federally listed as threatened. The greenback cutthroat trout was not identified on the USFWS list for Garfield County; however, recent surveys have identified a population in Cache Creek, located several drainages east of the project area. The greenback is the subspecies of cutthroat trout native to the Platte River drainage on the Eastern Slope of Colorado, while the Colorado River cutthroat trout is the subspecies native to Garfield County and throughout the Western Slope of Colorado. Although the occurrence of greenbacks in Cache Creek and potentially elsewhere in the GSFO and WRNF areas is apparently the result of human intervention (e.g., sanctioned or *ad hoc* transplantation of fish from the Eastern Slope), its status as threatened applies to Western Slope populations. However, because drainages within the project area do not support this species, it is not considered further.

Razorback Sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Colorado Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), Humpback Chub (*Gila cypha*), and Bonytail (*G. elegans*). Federally listed as endangered. These four species of Federally listed big-river fishes occur within the Colorado River drainage basin downstream from the project area.

Bonytail. This large chub is a member of the minnow family. Their current distribution and habitat status are largely unknown due to its rapid decline prior to research into its natural history. Historically, bonytails were present in the Colorado River system, which includes the Yampa, Green, Colorado and Gunnison rivers. The bonytail is extremely rare in Colorado and no self-sustaining population exist throughout the Colorado River basin. Only one has been captured in the state since 1980. Restoration stocking of bonytail in the wild to develop adult populations is the priority recovery action in Colorado.

Colorado Pikeminnow. The Colorado pikeminnow (formerly Colorado squawfish) Colorado pikeminnow were once abundant in the main stem of the Colorado River and most of its major tributaries in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California and Mexico. Now, they exist primarily in the Green River below the confluence with the Yampa River, the lower Duchesne River in Utah, the Yampa River below Craig, Colo., the White River from Taylor Draw Dam near Rangely downstream to the confluence with the Green River, the Gunnison River in Colorado, and the Colorado River from Palisade, Colo., downstream to Lake Powell. Biologists believe Colorado pikeminnow populations in the upper Colorado River basin are now relatively stable and in some areas may even be growing. Designated Critical Habitat for the Colorado pikeminnow includes the Colorado River and its 100-year floodplain west (downstream) from the town of Rifle.

Humpback Chub. The nearest known habitat for the humpback chub and bonytail is within the Colorado River approximately 70 miles downstream from the project area. Only one population of humpback chub, at Black Rocks west of Grand Junction, is known to exist in Colorado.

Razorback Sucker. The razorback sucker was once widespread throughout most of the Colorado River Basin from Wyoming to Mexico. In the upper Colorado River Basin, they are now found only in the upper Green River in Utah, the lower Yampa River in Colorado and occasionally in the Colorado River near Grand Junction. Because so few of these fish remain in the wild, biologists have been actively raising them in hatcheries in Utah and Colorado and stocking them in the Colorado River. Designated Critical Habitat for the razorback sucker includes the Colorado River and its 100-year floodplain west (downstream) from the town of Rifle.

BLM Sensitive Animal Species

Table 1 lists the Colorado BLM sensitive animal species with geographic and elevational ranges and habitat requirements potentially including the project area. These species include the following:

Table 1. BLM Sensitive Animal Species Potentially Present or Potentially Affected

Common Name	Habitat	Potential for Occurrence
Fringed myotis	Breeds and roosts in caves, trees, mines, and buildings; hunts over pinyon-juniper, montane conifer, and semi-desert shrubland habitats.	Potential in the existing structures
Townsend’s big-eared bat	Breeds and roosts in caves, trees, mines, and buildings; hunts over pinyon-juniper, montane conifer, and semi-desert shrubland habitats.	Potential in the existing structures otential
Northern goshawk	Predominantly uses spruce/fir forests but also use Douglas-fir, various pines, and aspens.	Unlikely – Seasonal
Ferruginous hawk	Hunts in grasslands and semi-desert shrublands; nests on cliffs or trees.	Unlikely – Outside normal range

Table 1. BLM Sensitive Animal Species Potentially Present or Potentially Affected

Common Name	Habitat	Potential for Occurrence
Bald eagle	Nests and roosts in mature cottonwood forests along rivers, large streams, and lakes.	Unlikely - Present along Eagle & Colorado River
Brewer’s sparrow	Sagebrush shrublands, mountain parks; may be found in alpine willow stands.	Present
Northern leopard frog	Wet meadows and the banks and shallows of marshes, ponds, glacial kettle ponds, beaver ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams, and irrigation ditches.	Has been found in perennial wetlands on the east/northeast side of King Mountain
Bluehead sucker	Variety of areas from headwater streams to large rivers.	Not present - Not known from GSFO
Flannelmouth sucker	Generally restricted to rivers and major tributaries.	Not present - occurs in the Colorado River
Roundtail chub	Generally restricted to rivers and major tributaries.	Not present - occurs in the Colorado River
Colorado River cutthroat trout	Occurs in clear, cool headwaters streams with coarse substrates, well-distributed pools, stable streambanks, and abundant stream cover.	Not present in the vicinity of cabin

The following paragraphs address species with a habitat potential to be present in the project area.

Fringed Myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*) and Townsend’s Big-eared Bat (*Plecotus townsendii*). Both of these species hunt for aerial insects over pinyon-juniper woodlands, montane conifer woodlands, and semi-desert shrublands. Although they commonly roost in caves, rock crevices, mines, or buildings, they also may roost in tree cavities. No bats have been known to roost in the existing cabin or structures.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). The Northern Goshawk is the largest North American accipiter. The goshawk is a forest habitat generalist that uses a variety of forest type, forest ages, structural conditions and successional stages. Goshawks prey on small-medium sized birds and mammals. It breeds in coniferous deciduous and mixed forests. The nest is typically located on a northerly aspect in a drainage or canyon and is often near a stream. Nest areas contain one or more stands of large, old trees with a dense canopy cover. A goshawk pair occupies its nest area from March until late September. The nest area is the center of all movements and behaviors associated with breeding from courtship through fledging. No known nests are located near the cabin site.

Brewer’s Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*). The neotropical migrant Brewer's sparrow is dependent on a shrub-dominated plant community that provides protective cover, song perches, and nest sites. Invertebrates comprise most of the diet of nesting Brewer’s sparrows during late spring and summer. Grass and forb seeds are an important component of the diet from autumn to early spring. Brewer's Sparrows are sometimes found in flocks, especially after the young fledge. They forage on the ground and in low shrubs. The abundance of the Brewer's sparrow in its breeding range has been shown to be positively correlated with the percent cover that is bare ground, the percent cover of forbs, the percent cover of shrubs and cacti, and negatively correlated with the percent cover of grasses, and the percent cover of litter. The Brewer's sparrow uses tall shrubs and small trees as roosting sites and cover at times other than the breeding season. No known nests have been documented near the cabin site.

Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*). This species differs from toads and salamanders by being almost completely limited to perennial aquatic sites. Also unlike toads and salamanders, the northern leopard frog requires areas of good water quality and abundant aquatic vegetation for breeding and of adjacent semi-aquatic vegetation for cover when adults disperse short distances to feed. Leopard frogs feed primarily on emergent adults of aquatic insects or on terrestrial insects attracted to the water. They mostly are associated with areas of standing water (ponds and pools). Use of streams is generally limited to slow-flowing reaches and adjacent overflow areas. Leopard frogs seldom occur in ponds that contain fish, which may feed on their egg masses or larvae (tadpoles). Many ponds that appear otherwise suitable are not occupied by leopard frogs because of their isolation from other such areas and the limited ability of the frogs to disperse across upland habitats. Northern leopard frogs have been documented in perennial wetlands a couple miles to the east of the cabin.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Plant Species

Due to the absence of any known occurrences or suitable habitat for any listed, proposed or candidate plant species, the Proposed Action should have “No Effect” on these species.

BLM Sensitive Plant Species

Due to the absence of any known occurrences or suitable habitat for Harrington’s penstemon within or adjacent to the project area that could be impacted by the action, the Proposed Action should have no impact on BLM sensitive plant species.

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Animal Species:

The proposed project does not involve the disruption or disturbance of any Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Animal Species habitat, thus Proposed Action should have no effect on any migratory bird species.

BLM Sensitive Animal Species:

The proposed project only involves the disruption and disturbance of a small amount of sagebrush. No disturbance of any BLM Sensitive Species habitat is involved in the Proposed Action. Thus Proposed Action should have little to no effect on any migratory bird species.

No Action Alternative (All Special Status Species):

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing cabin would not be removed and a new cabin would not be installed. No surface-disturbing activities would occur and there would be no new impacts on Special Status Species.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Special Status Species: A formal land health assessment has not been completed for this area. The Proposed Action is expected to have negligible impacts on plants and terrestrial wildlife species and would not preclude standard 4 from being met.

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid

Affected Environment: Vehicle fuel and lubricants would be used for dozer operations and transportation during project implementation.

Proposed Action:

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Fuels and lubricants would be stored in appropriate containers and refueling would occur in designated areas. Based on the distance of the proposed activities from area drainages, the existing slope angles, and good vegetative cover; it is unlikely that fuels or lubricants would be transported to area drainages.

No Action Alternative

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative there would be no fuel or lubricants present associated with vehicles.

Other Affected Resources

In addition to the critical elements, the resources presented in Table 2 were considered for impact analysis relative to the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative. Resources that would be affected by the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative are discussed below.

Table 2. Other Resources Considered in the Analysis.			
<i>Resource</i>	<i>NA or Not Present</i>	<i>Present and Not Affected</i>	<i>Present and Affected</i>
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire/Fuels Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Law Enforcement	X		
Paleontology	X		
Noise	X		
Range Management			X
Realty Authorizations	X	X	
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics	X		
Soils*			X
Vegetation*			X
Visual Resources			X
Wildlife, Aquatic*		X	
Wildlife, Terrestrial*		X	

*Land Health Standard

Range Management:

Affected Environment: The King Mountain Cabin serves as a work outpost for employees (Rangeland Management Specialist and Technicians) managing BLM public rangelands in northern Eagle and South Routt Counties. This area contains approximately 40 allotments encompassing 100,000 acres and 20 grazing permits/leases.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would provide housing for employees engaged in rangeland management duties in the northern Eagle and southern Routt Counties. Overnight stays at King Mountain Cabin would save three to four hours travel time per each night stay. This would allow for more time spent conducting field work such as rangeland monitoring, compliance and range improvement construction/maintenance. As a result, rangeland management of the area would be more efficient and additional work would be accomplished.

No Action Alternative:

There would not be an outpost to conduct rangeland management field work in northern Eagle and southern Routt Counties. BLM employees engaged in rangeland management duties would most likely commute from the current BLM office location in Silt, Colorado. This would add three to four hours of travel time per day resulting in less field work being accomplished and reduced efficiency in the rangeland management program.

Realty Authorizations:

Affected Environment: The King Mountain Cabin was acquired through a land exchange; with that, several existing uses needed to be authorized through a right-of-way (these were mainly access authorizations to private parcels). However, there were also two existing utility infrastructure that were not adjudicated, these were a telephone and power. There is no telephone service to the cabin and the company is unknown at this time. The power is serviced by Yampa Valley Electric Association (YVEA). The short distribution line which services the cabin is owned by the BLM, however, YVEA has requested to review the specifications of the proposed relocation of the line.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Realty authorizations would not be affected by either of the Proposed Action or No Action alternatives.

Recreation:

Affected Environment: The King Mountain Cabin serves as a work outpost for employees (Recreation Planners, Recreation Technicians, and Law Enforcement) managing recreation on BLM public lands in northern Eagle and South Routt Counties. This area contains 12,000 acres of public land that is open to outdoor recreation activities such as camping, hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking and mountain biking.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action would provide housing for employees engaged in recreation management duties in the northern Eagle and southern Routt Counties. Overnight stays at King Mountain Cabin would save three to four hours travel time per each night stay. This would allow for more time spent conducting field work and making user contacts. As a result, recreation management of the area would be more efficient and additional work would be accomplished.

No Action Alternative:

There would not be an outpost to conduct recreation management field work in northern Eagle and southern Routt Counties. BLM employees engaged in recreation management duties would most likely commute from the current BLM office location in Silt, Colorado. This would add three to four hours of travel time per day resulting in less field work being accomplished and reduced efficiency in the recreation management program.

Soils (includes a analysis on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The project area would occur on soils that are part of the Routt County Soil Survey that has not yet been completed and limited soil data is available. Slope conditions in the area are generally of low gradient with good vegetative cover.

Proposed Action:

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Proposed activities would result in soil compaction and displacement associated with dozer operations. This could result in an increase in erosion and sediment available for transport to area drainages. These impacts would be short term and minor prior to vegetation reestablishment. Based on the distance of the proposed activities from area drainages, the existing slope angles, and good vegetative cover; it is unlikely that sediment would be transported to area drainages.

No Action Alternative:

Environmental Consequences: The No Action Alternative would have no effect on soil resources.

Analysis on Public Land Health Standard 1 for Upland Soils: The BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office is scheduled to conduct a land health assessment of the area in 2011. The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would not likely prevent Standard 1 for Upland Soils from being met.

Vegetation (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Much of the project area has been previously disturbed or is an existing parking area with sparse ground cover. Vegetation in the project area consists primarily of perennial grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), Columbia needlegrass (*Achnatherum nelsonii*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) and mountain brome (*Bromus marginatus*). Scattered mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. pauciflora*) shrubs are also present in the project area.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

Since the new cabin would be placed where the existing parking lot is located, very little vegetation would be lost in this phase of the project. Several hundred square feet of sagebrush and grasses would be lost as part of the construction of a new parking lot to the east of the cabin. Fill material from the parking area would be placed where the old cabin sits. This fill material and other surface disturbing activities associated with the project would provide a niche for the invasion of noxious weeds and other invasive plant species.

No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing cabin would not be replaced with a new cabin. No direct impacts to vegetation would occur.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial):

Visual Resources:

Affected Environment: The proposed location is in VRM Class II which must “Retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.”

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

The proposed cabin and site plan are consistent with the existing landscape. In order to insure that the existing character is maintained, the exterior wood siding of the new cabin will be similar in color to “Sudan Brown” from the Standard Environmental Colors. The color of the metal roof shall be green. The closest color for the metal roof from the Standard Environmental Colors chart is “Beetle”. The recontouring and seeding specified in the Proposed Action will mitigate any impacts to the form, line, color, and texture of disturbed vegetation and landform.

No Action Alternative:

There would be no change to the visual resources if the existing cabin was not replaced.

Wildlife, Aquatic (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3):

Affected Environment:

The Proposed Action/project site does not impact any wetland or aquatic species habitat.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action/project site does not directly impact any wetland or aquatic species habitat. Based on the distance of the proposed activities from area drainages, the existing slope angles,

and good vegetative cover; it is unlikely that sediment would indirectly be transported to area drainages.

No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing cabin would not be removed and a new cabin would not be installed. The No Action Alternative also does not directly impact any wetland or aquatic species habitat. Based on the distance of the proposed activities from area drainages, the existing slope angles, and good vegetative cover; it is unlikely that sediment would indirectly be transported to area drainages.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): A formal land health assessment has not been completed for this area. The Proposed Action is expected to have negligible impacts on terrestrial wildlife species and would not preclude standard 3 from being met.

Wildlife, Terrestrial (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

The surrounding sagebrush stands provide important habitat for a variety of obligate species of birds, and are particularly important as food and cover for wintering big game. Woodlands provide important foraging and nesting habitat for some raptor species and many migratory song birds, and provide security, foraging, and thermal cover for a variety of small game, big game, and nongame wildlife. The King Mountain cabin site does not provide critical habitat for any terrestrial wildlife species.

The current condition of wildlife habitats varies across the landscape. Upland habitats have been altered by roads (both authorized and unauthorized), powerlines, pipelines, fences, public recreation use, residential and commercial development, vegetative treatments and livestock and wild ungulate grazing. These human uses contribute to degradation of habitat quality, fragmentation of habitat for several species and the expansion of areas supporting noxious and exotic vegetative species.

Species of High Public Interest. Mule deer and elk usually occupy higher elevations, forested habitat, during the summer and then migrate to sagebrush-dominant ridges and south-facing slopes at lower elevation in the winter. BLM lands provide a large portion of the undeveloped winter range available to deer and elk. The area is mapped by the Colorado Division of Wildlife as big game summer range.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Proposed Action:

Since the new cabin would be placed where the existing parking lot is located, very little habitat would be affected. Thus Proposed Action should have little to no effect on any terrestrial wildlife species.

No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, the existing cabin would not be removed and a new cabin would not be installed. No surface-disturbing activities would occur and there would be no new impacts on terrestrial wildlife species.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): A formal land health assessment has not been completed for this area. The Proposed Action is expected to have negligible impacts on terrestrial wildlife species and would not preclude standard 3 from being met.

SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

No cumulative impacts have been identified.

PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Yampa Valley Electric Association

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Michael Kinser	Rangeland Management Specialist	NEPA Lead, Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Range Management
Cheryl Harrison	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Religious Concerns
Jeff O’Connell	Hydrologist/Geologist	Soil, Air, Water, Geology
Brian Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Terrestrial Wildlife, T/E/S Wildlife, Aquatic Wildlife
Dereck Wilson	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-native Species
Carla DeYoung	Ecologist	ACEC, T/E/S Plants, Vegetation, Land Health Stds
Greg Wolfgang	Outdoor Recreation Planner	WSR, Wilderness, VRM, Recreation
Carole Huey	Realty Specialist	Lands & Realty

NAME OF PREPARER: Michael R. Kinser

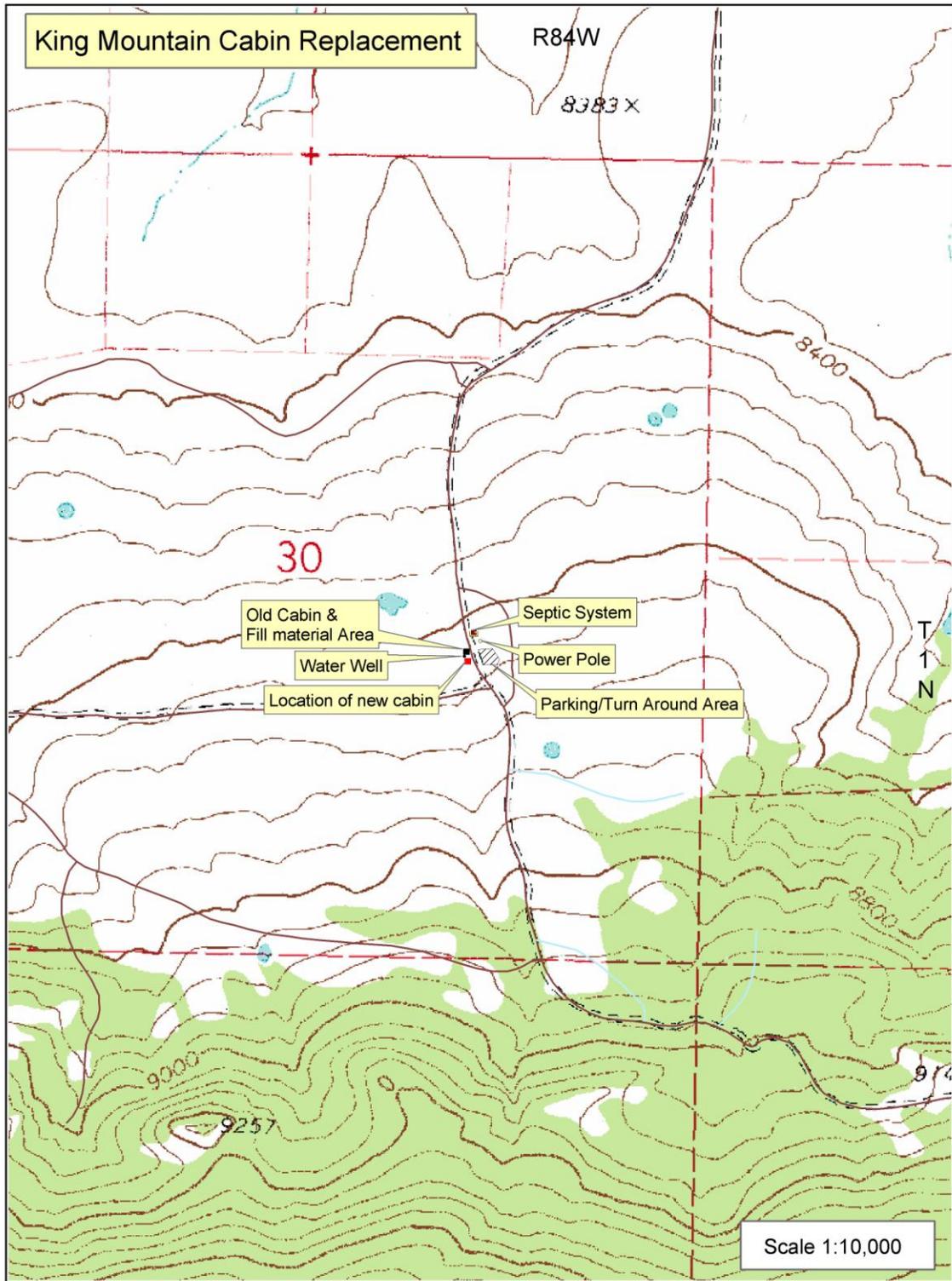
DATE: January 4, 2010

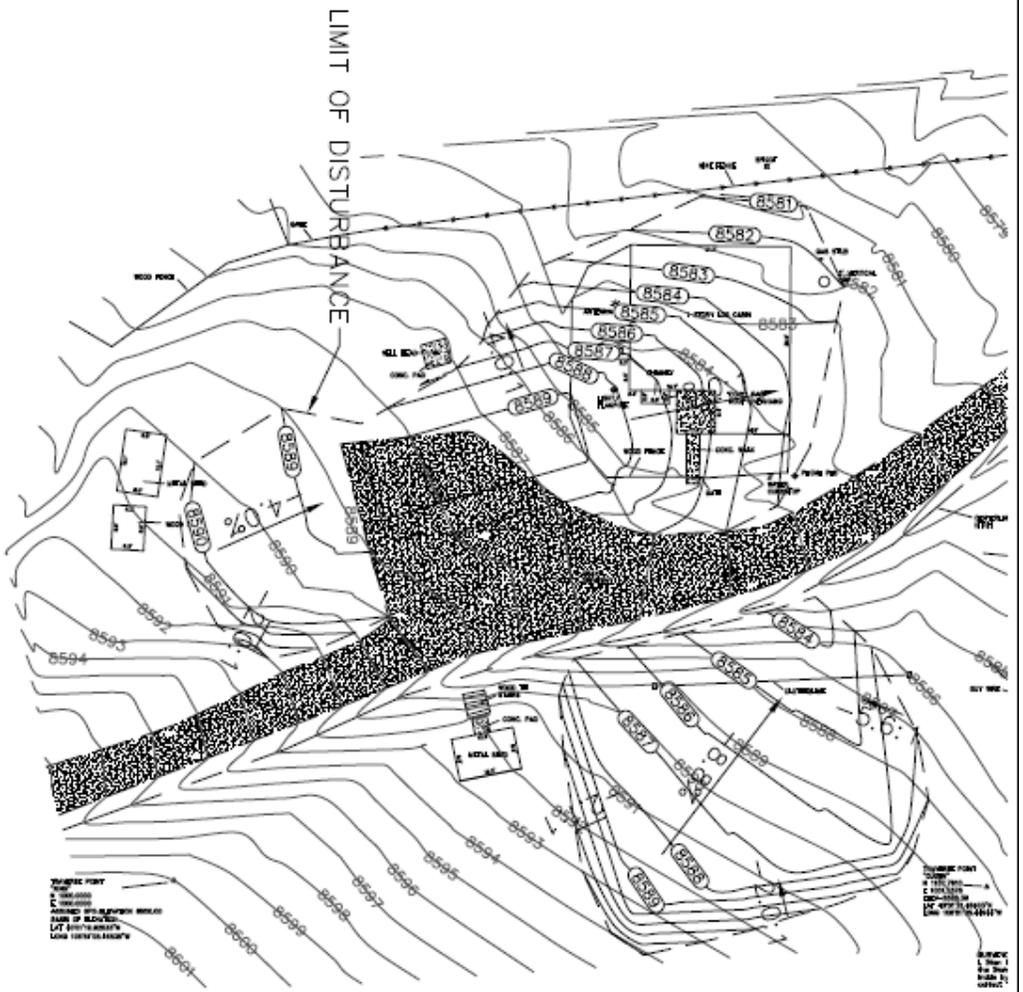
REFERENCES:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008. Birds of Conservation Concern 2008. United States Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Arlington, Virginia. 85 pp. [Online version available at <<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/>>]

APPENDICES: None

ATTACHMENTS: Location map and engineering drawing.





Index	Base Surface	Comparison Surface	Cut	Fill
1	ex	fg	24.63 Cu. Yd.	211.14 Cu. Yd.
2	ex	fg-borrow	335.44 Cu. Yd.	0.01 Cu. Yd.
3	EXISTING BUILDING FOUNDATION		0	~100 CY
NET			360 CY	312 CY (48 CY CUT)

FONSI
DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2010-0006 EA

The following environmental assessment analyzing the environmental effects of the Proposed Action has been reviewed. Proposed Action including design features result in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to analyze further the environmental effects of the Proposed Action.

DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to approve the Proposed Action.

RATIONALE:

1. This decision will resolve issues identified in the The Final CASHE Audit Report of 2/9/07 which identified a number of environmental and safety liabilities relating to the aging cabin. The existing structure has structural concerns relating to the foundation, roof, electrical concerns and health concerns relating to mice and flies. My decision will address the long term needs relating to the aging structure.
2. The Proposed Action would provide an important work outpost for employees from the Glenwood Springs Field Office managing BLM public lands in northern Eagle and southern Routt Counties. The long term need for an employee outpost in this area has been determined to be vital and important in order to safely and efficiently manage a significant part of GSFO's BLM public lands in the northern part of the resource area that requires a 2 ½ hour commute each way. With the GSFO moving further west to Silt Colorado in 2009 this facility will become more vital for employees whose jobs are predominantly in Eagle and Routt Counties.
3. In addition to safety concerns this project would upgrade this government facility to a more energy efficient facility. The facility would have upgraded insulation, windows, doors, and improved heating and ventilation systems.
4. The environmental impacts have been mitigated with design features included in the Proposed Action.

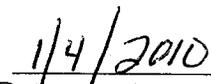
MITGATION MEASURES: Design features that would reduce or eliminate adverse effects are incorporated into the Proposed Action.

NAME OF PREPARER: Michael R. Kinser

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Authorized Officer



Date