

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625-1129

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA-NUMBER: CO-100-2007-059EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER/LEASE NUMBER:

COC64879: Visintainer Federal # 9-6-8-90

PROJECT NAME: Visintainer Federal # 9-6-8-90

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: NENW Sec. 6, T8N, R90W, 6th PM, Moffat County, Colorado

APPLICANT: Nance Petroleum Corporation

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The proposed action is subject to the following plan:

Name of Plans: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (ROD) approved on April 26, 1989; and the Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing & Development Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the ROD signed on November 5, 1991.

Remarks: The proposed Visintainer Federal Well # 9-6-8-90 would be located within Management Unit 2 (Little Snake Resource Management Plan). The objectives of Management Unit 2 are to provide for the development of the oil and gas resource.

The proposed action was reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3). The proposed action is in conformance with the objectives for this management unit.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: To provide for the development of oil and gas resources and to supply energy resources to the American public.

PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS: The Notice of Staking (NOS) has been posted in the public room of the Little Snake Field Office for a 30-day public review period beginning March 7, 2007 when the NOS was received, and may be viewed during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES: The proposed action is to approve one Application for Permit to Drill (APD) submitted by Nance Petroleum Corporation. Nance Petroleum proposes to drill one natural gas well on private land located in Section 6, T8N, R90W. An APD has been filed with the LSFO for the well, the Visintainer # 9-6-8-90. The APD includes drilling, pipeline construction, and surface use plans that cover mitigation of impacts to vegetation, soil, surface water, and other resources. Mitigation not incorporated by Nance Petroleum in the drilling and surface use plans would be attached by the BLM as Conditions of Approval to the approved APD.

The proposed well is located approximately 16 miles southwest of Baggs, Wyoming. Construction work is planned to start in the summer of 2007 and the estimated duration of construction and drilling is 30 days.

The proposed well pad would be cleared of all vegetation and leveled for drilling. Topsoil and native vegetation would be stockpiled for use in reclamation. Approximately 4.5 acres would be disturbed for construction of the well pad. This would include the 375' by 420' well pad, the topsoil, and subsoil piles. A reserve pit would be constructed on the well pad to hold drill mud and cuttings. If the gas well is a producer, cut portions of the well site would be backfilled and unused portions of the well site would be stabilized and re-vegetated. If the gas well proves unproductive, it would be properly plugged and the entire well pad and access road would be reclaimed.

4,857' of new access road would be constructed. The proposed access road would be crowned and ditched with a running width of 16'. If the well is a producer a pipeline would be constructed and would parallel the road. The total area of disturbance for the pipeline and road would be 3.4 acres.

All construction of the well pad, road, and pipeline would be on private surface. The total area of disturbance for the project would be 7.9 acres.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE: The no action alternative is that the well would not be permitted and therefore the well would not be drilled. Nance Petroleum Corporation is the holder of a valid and current oil and gas lease for the area where the proposed well is located. Once an oil and gas lease is issued, the lessee/operator has already been given the right to drill on that oil and gas lease, subject to the conditions of the lease. Since the proposed action is consistent with the ROD and the Oil and Gas Leasing EIS, rejecting the APD for the well is not a reasonable alternative and will not be analyzed further in this EA.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

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

Environmental Consequences: Short term, local impacts to air quality from dust would result during and after well pad construction. Drilling operations produce air emissions such as exhaust from diesel engines that power drilling equipment. Air pollutants could include nitrogen oxides, particulates, ozone, volatile organic compounds, fugitive natural gas, and carbon monoxide. Gas flaring reduces the health and safety risks in the vicinity of the well by burning combustible and poisonous gases like methane and hydrogen sulfide. The proposed action would not adversely affect the regional air quality.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Cultural resources, in this region of Colorado, range from late Paleo-Indian to Historic. For a general understanding of the cultural resources in this area of Colorado, see *An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources, Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado*, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series, Number 20, *An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado*, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin*, Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed project, Nance Petroleum Visintainer Federal Well #9-6-8-90, has undergone a Class III cultural resource survey:

Guy Hays, Heidi and Steve Slessman

2007. Class III Cultural Resource inventory of the Nance Petroleum Corporation Visintainer Federal 9-6-8-90 Well Pad, and Associated Pipeline and Access Road, Moffat County, Colorado (BLM#127.1.07).

The survey identified no sites that would be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places cultural resources. The proposed project may proceed as described in this EA with the following mitigative measures in place.

Mitigative Measures:

The following standard stipulations apply for this project:

1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the 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 encountered or uncovered during any project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the find and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO) at (970) 826-5000. 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 identified area can be used for project activities again; and Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) (Federal Register Notice, Monday, December 4, 1995, Vol. 60, No. 232) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone at (970) 826-5000, and 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.

2. 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 costs. 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.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris 06/04/07

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The project would not directly affect the social, cultural, or economic well being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations. The project area is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts from the project.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Louise McMinn 06/04/07

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: Active floodplains and flood prone zones are avoided.

Environmental Consequences: No threat to human safety, life, welfare, or property would result from the proposed action.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy Mc Kinstry 05/21/07

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Invasive species and noxious weeds occur within the affected area. Downy brome (cheatgrass), yellow alyssum, blue mustard and other annual weeds are common along roadsides, on well pads and on other disturbed areas. Canada thistle and several species of biennial thistles are known to occur in this area. Russian knapweed, perennial pepperweed (tall whitetop), dalmation toadflax, leafy spurge and hoary cress (whitetop) exist in the vicinity of these proposed well pads. Other species of noxious weeds are not known to be a problem in this area, but could be introduced from other areas. The BLM, Moffat County, livestock operators, pipeline companies and oil and gas operators have formed the Northwest Colorado Weed Partnership to collaborate their efforts on controlling weeds and finding the best integrated approaches to achieve these results.

Environmental Consequences: The surface disturbing activities and associated traffic involved with drilling this well, constructing the access road, constructing the pipeline and other subsequent activities would create a favorable environment and provide a mode of transport for annual and noxious weeds to become established. These weeds can be spread through a variety of means including by vehicular travel, construction equipment, gravel applications on roads, wind, water, wildlife and livestock movement. The annual invasive weed species (yellow alyssum, blue mustard and other annual weeds) occur on adjacent

rangelands and will occupy the disturbed areas; the bare soils and the lack of competition from a perennial plant community will allow these weed species to grow unchecked and can affect the establishment of seeded plant species. Establishment of perennial grasses and other seeded plants is expected to provide the necessary control of invasive annual weeds within 2 or 3 years. Additional seeding treatments of the disturbed areas may be required in subsequent years if initial seeding efforts have failed.

Mitigation attached as Conditions of Approval to minimize disturbance and obtain successful interim reclamation of the unused areas of the well pad and the access road, as well as weed control utilizing integrated practices, including herbicide applications would help to control the noxious weed species. All principles of Integrated Pest Management should be employed to control noxious and invasive weeds on public lands.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 06/04/07

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Brewers sparrow and sage sparrows are two birds listed on the U.S. FWS's 2002 Birds of Conservation Concern list that could be found within the project area.

Environmental Consequences: Construction and drilling activities that are conducted outside of the nesting season would not impact either species. If conducted during the nesting season (May – August) there is a slight chance a nest could be present and impacted by these activities. Surface disturbing activities would be limited for much of the nesting season for both of these species in order to protect nesting sage-grouse. Chance of take is low.

Recent studies have indicated that birds have entered heater treater facilities through open vents. Birds have been entrapped and have died in these facilities as a result of gasses held in the facilities.

Mitigative Measures: All open vent stack equipment such as heater treaters, separators, dehydration units, and flare stacks shall be designed and constructed to prevent birds and bats from entering or nesting in or on such units, and to the extent practical, to discourage birds from perching on the stacks.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council, and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs on January 21, 1999. The letter listed the projects that the BLM would notify them on and projects that would not require notification. No comments were received (Letter on file at the Little Snake Field Office). This project requires no additional notification.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris 06/04/07

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

T&E SPECIES – ANIMALS

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered wildlife species or habitat for such species present in or near the project area. The project area does provide nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse, a BLM special status species. The closest lek site is located over one mile from the proposed well site. Significant topographic barriers exist between the well site and the lek as well.

Environmental Consequences: There would be no impact to threatened or endangered species or their habitat as a result of this project. The construction of the access road and well pad and the drilling of the well will not impact the integrity of the greater sage-grouse lek site. These activities could have an impact on nesting greater sage-grouse if conducted during the nesting season (March 1 – June 30). These activities would be conducted outside of the nesting season to insure greater sage-grouse are not impacted. The proposed project would result in approximately 7.9 acres of lost habitat. Greater sage-grouse would likely avoid the area surrounding the well once construction is completed if the well is brought into production.

Mitigative Measures: CO-30, No surface disturbing activities between March 1 and June 30 in order to protect nesting greater sage-grouse.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

T&E SPECIES – PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species within or in the vicinity of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 05/30/07

T&E SPECIES - SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no BLM sensitive plant species within or in the vicinity of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 05/30/07

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: If a release does occur, the environment affected would be dependent on the nature and volume of material released. If there are no releases, there will be no impact on the environment.

Environmental Consequences: Consequences would be dependent on the volume and nature of the material released. In most every situation involving hazardous materials, there are ways to remediate the area that has been contaminated. Short-term consequences would occur, but they can be remedied, and long-term impacts would be minimal.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

WATER QUALITY/HYDROLOGY – GROUND

Affected Environment: The surface formation is the Wasatch Formation. This formation has strong vertical fracturing and is known to produce useable groundwater. The water producing zones are ephemeral as the groundwater producing sandstones thicken and thin laterally. The operator needs to have enough mud on hand to control the well. The operator shall inform the LSFO of any shows of useable groundwater.

Environmental Consequences: Downhole procedures follow that of Onshore Order #2, and the operator would bring cement back to surface. Proper construction practices following Onshore Order #2 coupled with best management practices should result in no impact to groundwater aquifers. Minor runoff from construction activities could result in sediment input in to nearby drainages.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser 06/05/07

WATER QUALITY/HYDROLOGY – SURFACE

Affected Environment: The project area is located on rolling hills west of Fortification Creek. Runoff water affected by this project would flow into an unnamed tributary of Blue Gravel Creek which is a tributary of Fortification Creek, which eventually flows into the Yampa River. All stream segments within the affected environment are presently supporting their classified uses.

Environmental Consequences: Access to the well location from existing improved roads has been surveyed and designed appropriately to adequately handle the surface water drainage that would be intercepted and channeled down road ditches. The well location would require construction of one mile of access road across private surface. Construction of the road, well pad, pipelines, and installation of drainage features would follow the private landowner's specifications and the recommendations provided in the Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Development, 4th Edition.

Increased sedimentation to the Blue Gravel Creek, Fortification Creek, and the Yampa River during spring runoff or from high intensity summer/fall rainstorms would be the greatest potential impact to water quality. Although some sediment may be transported off site and eventually reach perennial waters, the mitigation provided in the Surface Use Plan and the Conditions of Approval would reduce the potential impacts caused by surface runoff.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: There are no wetlands or riparian zones present within the project area.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

WILDERNESS, WSAs

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

FLUID MINERALS

Affected Environment: The proposed action is in favorability zone 4 (highest for oil and gas potential). This well would penetrate the Wasatch, Fort Union, Lance, Lewis Shale, and Mesaverde Formations.

Environmental Consequences: None.

Mitigative Measures: The Drilling Plan follows Onshore Order #2. Operator committed measures in the Eight Point Drilling Plan will bring cement back to surface and cementing the production casing should prevent communication and commingling.

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser 06/05/07

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: Paleontological resources in Sec. 6, T8N, R90W are comprised of rocks of the Wasatch Formation, overlain by Quaternary alluvium. The Wasatch

Formation in the nearby Uintah Basin contains several members known to produce significant vertebrate fauna.

Environmental Consequences: *PYFC: Class 3b – Unknown Potential.* The units exhibit geologic features and preservational conditions that suggest significant fossils could be present, but little information about the paleontological resources of the unit or the area is known. The unit or area is poorly studied, and field surveys may uncover significant finds. It is the intent that the units in this Class will eventually be placed in another Class when sufficient survey and research is performed. The unknown potential of the units in this Class should be carefully considered when developing any mitigation or management approaches.

(1) Management concern for paleontological resources is moderate; or cannot be determined from existing data.

(2) Surface-disturbing activities may require field assessment to determine appropriate course of action.

Mitigative Measures: Unusual occurrences of vertebrate, plant and invertebrate fossils should be recorded, and representative examples may be collected by a BLM approved and permitted qualified paleontologist if appropriate. Concentrations of common plant or invertebrate fossils that may be suitable for public hobby collection areas should also be noted and reported to the Little Snake Field Office paleontology program coordinator or paleontology program lead. Additional mitigation measures may be appropriate in some cases for these types of localities.

If vertebrate fossil material is discovered during construction activities, surface disturbing actions shall halt until an assessment of the find is completed and appropriate protection measures taken. The Authorized Officer should be notified as soon as possible of the discovery and any mitigation efforts that were undertaken. If the find cannot be mitigated within a reasonable time, the concurrence of the Authorized Officer or official representative for a longer work stoppage must be obtained. Work may not resume until approval is granted from both the PI or Field Agent and the Authorized Officer.

Additionally: During operations, if any vertebrate paleontological resources are discovered, in accordance with Section 6 of Form 3100-11 and 43 CFR 3162.1, all operations affecting such sites shall be immediately suspended, and all discoveries shall be left intact until authorized to proceed by the Authorized Officer. The appropriate Authorized Officer of the Little Snake Field Office of the BLM shall be notified within 48 hrs of the discovery, and a decision as to the preferred alternative/course of action would be rendered.

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser 06/05/07

References:

Sears, J.D., and Bradley, W.H., 1924, Relations of the Wasatch and Green River formations in northwestern Colorado and southern Wyoming, with notes on oil shales in the Green River formation, IN Shorter contributions to general geology, 1923-24: U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper, 132-F, p. F93-F107.

Roehler, H.W., 1991, Revised stratigraphic nomenclature for the Wasatch and Green River Formations, IN Geology of the Eocene Wasatch, Green River, and Bridger (Washakie) Formations, greater Green River basin, Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado: U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper, 1506-B, p. B1-B38.

SOILS

Affected Environment: The proposed well site is found within the Styers-Pinelli-Taffom and the Forelle-Pinelli-Maysprings complex soil-mapping units. Slopes within this unit average 5 to 25 percent. The well pad has been staked on gently sloping ground. These moderately deep, well-drained soils are found on hills. Runoff is medium to very high and the hazard of water erosion is moderate.

Environmental Consequences: Increased soil erosion from wind and water would occur during construction of the well pad, pipeline, and access road. Erosion would continue throughout the operational life of the well. Loss of topsoil, soil compaction, and possible increases in sediment loads to drainages are impacts most likely to occur.

Erosion control measures would be utilized along the well pad embankments near the ephemeral drainages adjacent to the well pads. Soil erosion would be reduced by mitigation described in the Surface Use Plan and Conditions of Approval in the approved APD.

Mitigative Measures: Construction or other surface-disturbing activities will not be allowed when the soils are saturated to a depth of more than 3 inches. Vehicle use will be limited to existing roads. Before reserve pits, production pits, or emergency pits can be reclaimed all residue will be removed and trucked off site to an approved disposal site.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

SOLID MINERALS

Affected Environment: Coal seams encountered within the Fort Union Formation would be at a depth of approximately 5,179' feet below the surface. At this depth, the Fort Union coals would be too deep to be economically mined.

Environmental Consequences: The cementing and casing program would be adequate to protect any of the anticipated coals.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Jennifer Maiolo 06/04/07

VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The vegetation in the proposed action area is mostly Wyoming Big Sagebrush and grass species including Indian Ricegrass and needle and thread grass. Some cheatgrass is present but in low quantities. The population of forbs is healthy and shows high vigor including such species as sego lily, clover, and wild onion.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed action would remove 7.9 acres of vegetation. Removal, stockpiling, and replacement of topsoil in addition to seeding of the area would result in the eventual return of the native plant community. The high diversity and vigor of the native species in the surrounding area would allow the proposed action area to revegetate and return to its original state of production similar to the surrounding undisturbed area. The presence of noxious and invasive species is minimal with occasional cheatgrass plants and small patches of prickly pear cactus scattered on the drier sites. There would be little overall loss after reclamation, as long as noxious and invasive species are treated and all reclamation measures are applied and carried out to completion. This would be a localized disturbance within the larger landscape and will not affect the overall landscape health and productivity.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 06/05/07

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications for the proposed project area include: Class II (low levels of landscape change are allowed which should not attract the attention of casual observers. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant features of the landscape).

Environmental Consequences: The proposed action would impact existing VRM classifications.

Mitigative Measures: In addition to standard stipulations, low profile tanks to reduce the visual profile would provide sufficient mitigation.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 06/06/07

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: The proposed project area provides year round habitat for pronghorn antelope, mule deer and elk including severe winter range for mule deer and elk. A variety of small mammals, reptiles and songbirds may also be found in the project area.

Environmental Consequences: Construction of the well pad and access road would displace big game species. Activities occurring during the winter months (December - April) may cause increased stress to wintering mule deer and elk. During severe winters this could have negative impacts on mule deer and elk. If these activities force mule deer and elk to move out of the area into lesser quality habitat, individuals may have difficulty surviving hard winters. If these activities occur outside of the winter months, big game animals would still be displaced however, surrounding undisturbed habitat should be sufficient to support displaced animals.

Small mammals such as rabbits do not appear to have been impacted by the development which has occurred in the project area. Construction activities associated with access road and well pad development could result in the entrapment and death of burrowing mammals and reptiles. If conducted during the nesting period (February – August) these activities could result in nest abandonment or destruction. This would not result in any negative impacts to any species populations.

Mitigative Measures: CO-09, No surface disturbing activities between December 1 and April 30 in order to protect wintering big game.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Fluid Minerals			MW 06/05/07
Forest Management	RM 05/21/07		
Hydrology/Ground			MW 06/05/07
Hydrology/Surface			RM 05/21/07
Paleontology			MW 06/05/07
Range Management	RM 06/05/07		
Realty Authorizations	LM 06/04/07		
Recreation/Transportation	RM 06/06/07		

Socio-Economics		LM 06/04/07	
Solid Minerals		JAM 06/04/07	
Visual Resources			RM 06/06/07
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	RM 05/21/07		
Wildlife, Aquatic	TN 06/04/07		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts may result from the development of the well when added to non-project impacts that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. The potential exists for future oil and gas development throughout the Blue Gravel Oil & Gas Field. Currently numerous producing wells exist within a one-mile radius of the proposed well. Other past or existing actions near the project area that have influence on the landscape are wildfire, hunting, grazing, and ranching activities.

Surface disturbance associated with oil and gas activity would increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation. Only a small reduction in available forage would be anticipated. Some wildlife species may be temporarily displaced by construction at the well site, access road, and future pipeline routes, but should return once construction is completed. Contrasts in line, form, color, and texture from development would impact the visual qualities on the landscape.

The cumulative effects of projected oil and gas development are minimized through Best Management Practices identified in the Surface Use Plan of the APD and the BLM required mitigation in the Conditions of Approval for the APD. Proper construction and drilling practices must comply with federal and state environmental regulations. All oil and gas wells in the area would be completed in accordance with Onshore Order No. 2. Reasonably foreseeable mineral development would occur under the guidelines of the Little Snake Resource Management Plan and the Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS.

STANDARDS:

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD: The proposed project area provides productive habitat for a variety of wildlife species. As mitigated, this project would not negatively impact any species populations. This standard is currently being met and would continue to be met in the future.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD: There are no threatened, endangered species or habitat for such species present within the project area. The project does contain nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse, a BLM special status species. If construction and drilling activities occur outside of the nesting season,

greater sage-grouse should not be negatively impacted by this project. This standard would continue to be met in the future.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD: The plant communities impacted by the proposed action are currently meeting this standard. Plant diversity, vigor, abundance, and reproductive capability are currently at levels that ensure resilience in the plant community to human activities. Weeds, particularly halogeton, must be addressed and all principles of invasive weeds control should be employed. Given this mitigation measure, the proposed action would meet this standard.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 05/30/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant) STANDARD: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species within or in the vicinity of the proposed action. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 05/30/07

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD: There are no wetlands or riparian zones present within the project area. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 06/04/07

WATER QUALITY STANDARD: The proposed action would meet the public land health standard for water quality. Interim reclamation of the unused area on the well pad would be completed to minimize sheet and rill erosion from the well site. When the well pad is no longer needed for production operations, the disturbed area would be reclaimed to approximate original contours, topsoil would be redistributed, and adapted plant species would be reseeded. These Best Management Practices would help to reduce accelerated erosion of the site. No stream segments near this project are listed as impaired.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD: The proposed action would not meet the upland soil standard for land health, and it is not expected to while this well location and access road are used for operations. The drilling and production site, pipeline, and access road will not exhibit the characteristics of a healthy soil. Several Best Management Practices have been designed into the project or are attached as mitigating measures that would reduce impacts to and conserve soil materials. The pipeline corridor will exhibit unhealthy upland soil characteristics initially, but within one to two years following reclamation the soil health will be moving toward the upland soil standard. Upland soil health will return to the well pad and access road disturbances after well abandonment and reclamation practices have been successfully achieved.

Name of specialist and date: Roy McKinstry 05/21/07

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
EA CO-100-2007-059

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA and all other available information, I have determined that the proposal and the alternatives analyzed do not constitute a major Federal action that would adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is unnecessary and will not be prepared. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts have been disclosed in the EA. Analysis indicated no significant impacts on society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests, or the locality. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Little Snake Resource Area and adjacent land.
2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted. There are no known or anticipated concerns with project waste or hazardous materials.
3. There would be no adverse impacts to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, known paleontological resources on public land within the area, wetlands, floodplain, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas, or designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.
5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.
6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other actions that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives of adopted Federal, State, or local natural resource related plans, policies, or programs.
7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.
8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys, and through mitigation by avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated. There are no known American Indian religious concerns or persons or groups who might be disproportionately and adversely affected as anticipated by the Environmental Justice Policy.

9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act were identified. If, at a future time, there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or new analysis would be conducted.

10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for the protection of the environment.

DECISION AND RATIONALE:

I have determined that approving the Visintainer # 9-6-8-90 Well APD is in conformance with the approved land use plan. It is my decision to implement the project with the mitigation measures provided in the Application for Permit to Drill and the Conditions of Approval. The project will be monitored as stated in the Compliance Plan outlined below.

MITIGATION MEASURES: The mitigation measures for this project are found in the file room of the Little Snake Field Office. The APD 13-point surface use plan, well location map, and the Conditions of Approval are found in the well case file labeled COC64879, Visintainer # 9-6-80-90 Well.

COMPLIANCE PLAN(S):

Compliance Schedule

Compliance will be conducted during the construction phase and drilling phase to insure that all terms and conditions specified in the lease and the approved APD are followed. In the event a producing well is established, periodic inspections as identified through the Inspection and Enforcement Strategy and independent well observations will be conducted. File inspections will include a review of all required reports and the Monthly Report of Operations will be evaluated for accuracy.

Monitoring Plan

The well location and access road will be monitored during the term of the lease for compliance with pertinent Regulations, Onshore Orders, Notices to Lessees, or subsequent COAs until final abandonment is granted; monitoring will help determine the effectiveness of mitigation and document the need for additional mitigative measures.

Assignment of Responsibility

Responsibility for implementation of the compliance schedule and monitoring plan will be assigned to the Fluid Mineral staff in the Little Snake Field Office. The primary inspector will be the Petroleum Engineering Technician, but the Petroleum Engineer, Natural Resource Specialist, Realty Specialist, and Legal Instruments Examiner will also be involved.

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED: