

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Categorical Exclusion
Adobe Creek Geophysical Project**

PREPARING OFFICE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management



Categorical Exclusion

Adobe Creek Geophysical Project

DOI-BLM-CO-F02-2014-0057 CX

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Canon City, CO

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A. Background

Dawson Geophysical has applied on behalf of Unit Petroleum Company, for a permit to conduct a conventional 3D Vibroseis Survey (geophysical exploration) on Public Lands in Lincoln County, CO.

BLM Office:

Royal Gorge Field Office

LLCOF02000

Applicant: Dawson Geophysical

Lease/Serial/Case File No.:

COC 076689

Proposed Action Title/Type:

Adobe Creek Geophysical Project

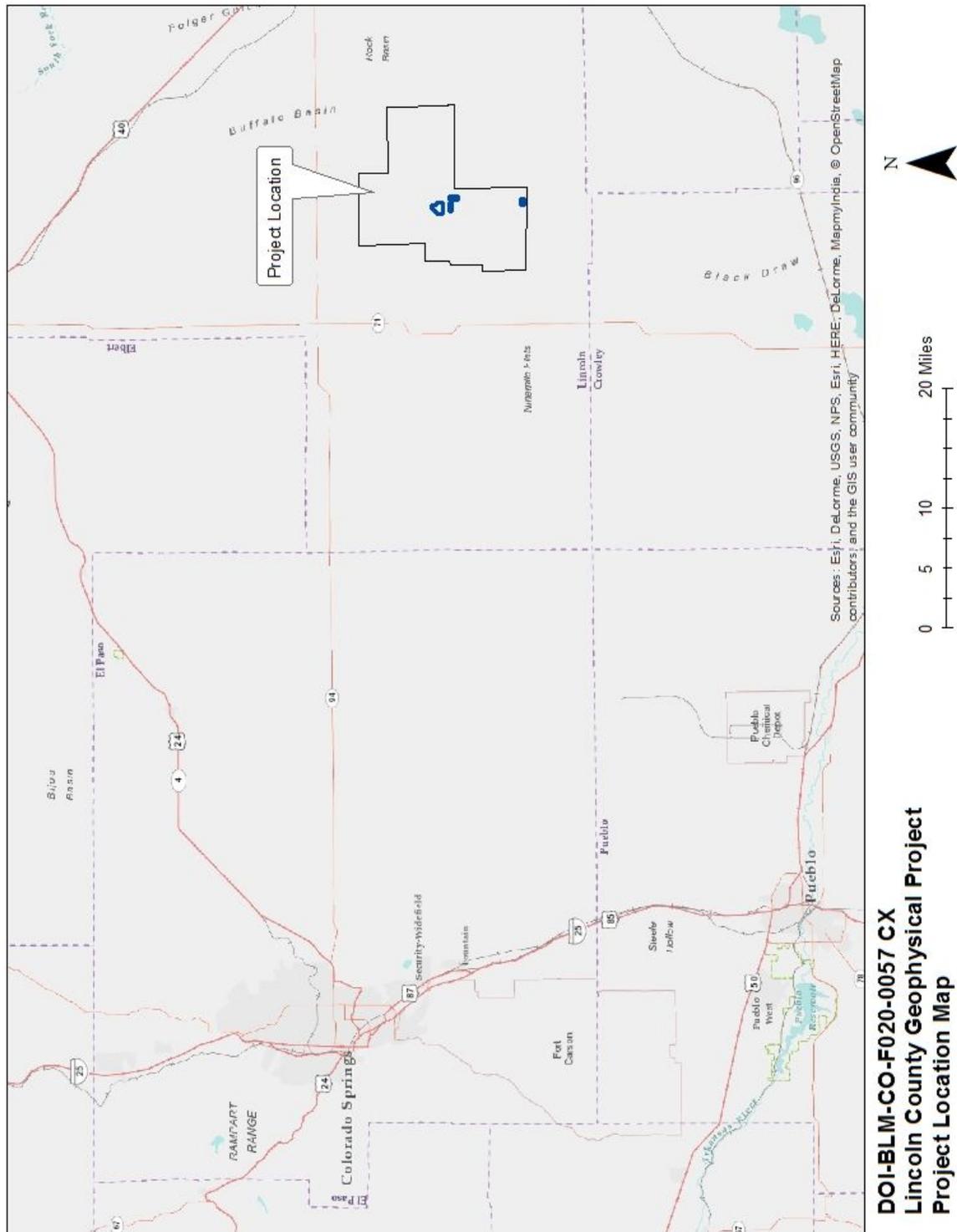
Location of Proposed Action:

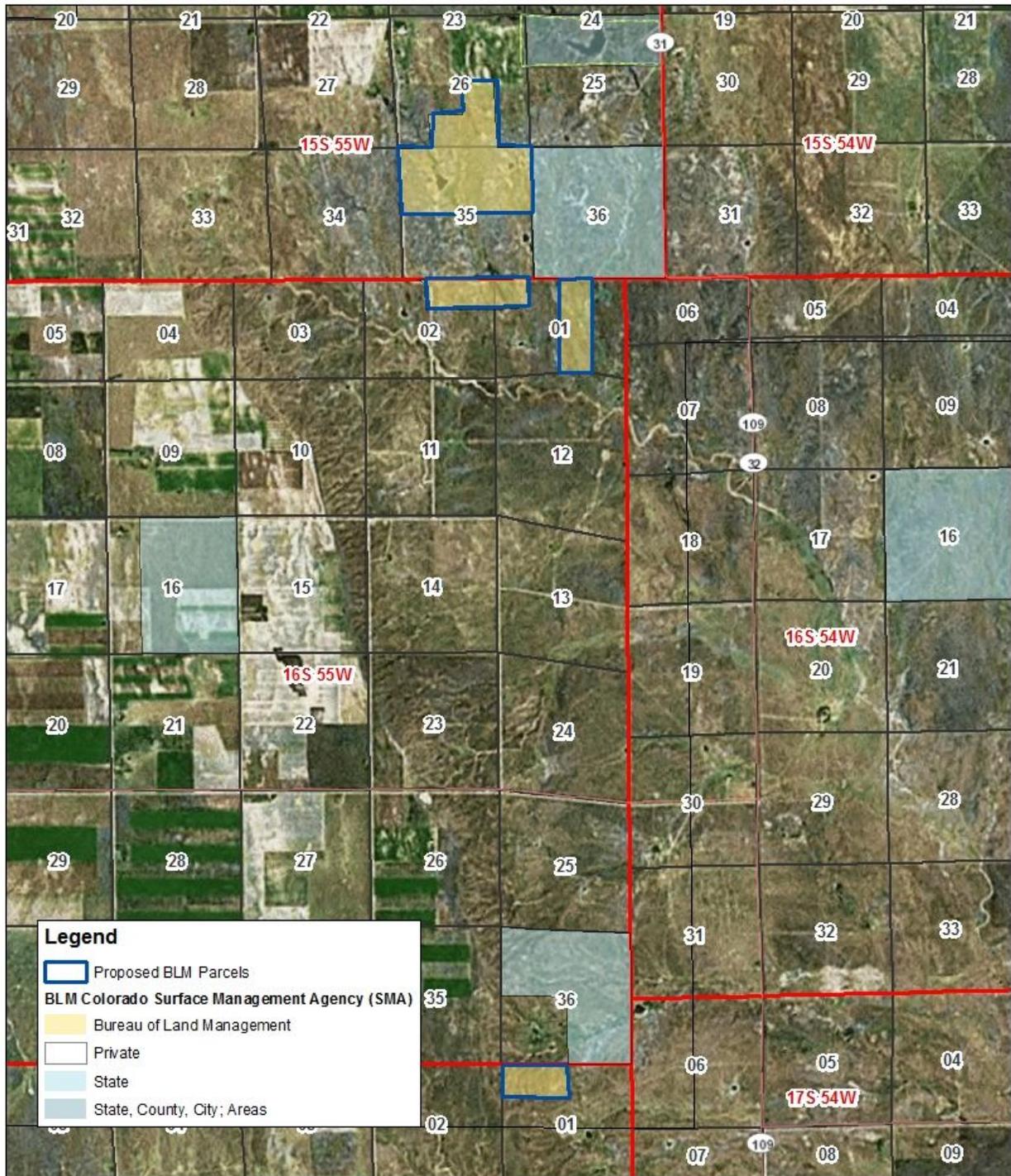
Lincoln County, CO

6th PM, T 17S, R55W, Section 1 Lots 3 and 4

T 16S, R 55 W, Section 2, Lots 1 and 2 and Tracts 38, 39, 40, and 42

T 15S, R 55W, Section 35 N1/2, Section 26 W1/2SE1/4 and SE1/4SW1/4





DOI-BLM-CO-F020-0057 CX
Lincoln County Geophysical Project
Project Detail Map

Description of Proposed Action:

Up to 2 sets of 3 vibrator source vehicles-Vibrators will traverse source lines with a single pass.

Dawson Geophysical will be using 2 sets of 3 Buggy vibroseis units weighing 62,000 pounds to generate the source. Vibrators will traverse source lines with a single pass. The vibroseis units are approximately 34 feet in length, with a width of 8.5 feet. The Vibrators will have all terrain tires and will be used to cover all types of terrain within the 3D area. The units are equipped this way to help minimize surface disturbance. There will also be 8 one ton line trucks and 9 ATVs for support. The buggy vibes would travel off road and follow the path for the source line as modified by archaeological and biological surveys and obstacles. No clearing or grading by heavy equipment of routes for the off-road program would be conducted. Vegetation beneath the tires would be compressed; perennial grasses and herbaceous species would be flattened but would typically recover within the current or next growing season. More woody species, such as sagebrush, may be damaged, particularly the older, more brittle stems, but the younger more flexible parts of the plant would likely bend under the pressure and typically recover within the current or next growing season. Where possible, the vibrators buggy would proceed from one source location to the next with a single pass per source line. Existing roads and trails would be used where possible to access the next seismic line.

In order to minimize surface impact, the company will limit vehicular traffic to existing roads and approved seismic lines, and no work will be conducted in inclement weather. No construction of any new roads will be necessary for this project. Permitted archaeologists would conduct a Class III survey for cultural resources of all areas to be disturbed by source generation activities including source access routes, geophones lines and staging areas. All cultural sites identified in the Class III cultural resources field survey would be flagged for avoidance from source generation activities. Permitted archaeologists would also be responsible for assisting with protection, identification, and assessment of any cultural resources.

For all slopes, we will use the USGS digital elevation model to determine elevation profiles in excess of 25% slope. All steep terrain will be avoided with the vibroseis units, these points will be offset. All pin flags and survey flagging will be removed upon completion of the project. Dawson Geophysical would comply with wildlife protection measures. Project activities would be conducted in compliance with applicable requirements of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Project personnel would be subject to the following requirements: no harassing or shooting of wildlife or wild horses; no dogs may be brought to the project area; no firearms permitted; and no littering. Vehicles would be instructed to travel at slow speeds to limit disturbance to soils and vegetation. We will incorporate a buffer around all wetlands.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name:

Northeast Resource Management Plan

Date Approved/Amended:

September 1986

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Management Unit 215

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B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions) :

21 (A) These acres of surface and subsurface may be leased and developed for oil and gas with the standard stipulations included in leases and other standard site-specific stipulations included in any use authorization.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9,

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

I considered:

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11 9 (B) 6. None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Table 1.1. Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

Table 1.2. Interdisciplinary Team Review

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 8/6/2014
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	NA
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	NA
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland, Weeds	JL, 8/15/2014
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 8/14/14
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 8/22/14
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	MJS, 9/03/2014
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 8/5/14
Ty Webb	Fire Management Officer	Air Quality	TW, 8/14/14
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 8/28/14
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 8/15/2014
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	N/A
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 8/8/14
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 9/3/14
Michael Troyer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	NA
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	GV, 8/21/2014
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	NA
Ty Webb	Fire Management Officer	Fire	TW, 8/14/14

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: Although cultural resources were found near the area of potential effect [see report CR-RG-15-02 (P)], no sites determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were found. Therefore, the proposed project will have no impact on any historic properties (those eligible for the NRHP).

Native American Religious Concerns: No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

Threatened and Endangered Species: There are no records of any federally listed or BLM sensitive species within or near the project area. The Proposed Action will not result in impacts to TES species.

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C. Compliance with NEPA:

Migratory Birds: To be in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and USFWS required by Executive Order 13186, BLM must avoid actions, where possible, that result in a “take” of migratory birds. Pursuant to BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-050, to reduce impacts to Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC), no habitat disturbance is allowed during the periods of May 15 - July 15, the breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds. The provision will not apply to completion activities in disturbed areas that were initiated prior to May 15 and continue into the 60-day period.

An exception to this timing limitation will be granted if nesting surveys conducted no more than one week prior to vegetation-disturbing activities indicate no nesting within 30 meters (100 feet) of the area to be disturbed. Surveys shall be conducted by a qualified breeding bird surveyor between sunrise and 10:00 a.m. under favorable conditions.

Paleontological Resources: Although the project area does not contain any known fossil resources, there is a possibility that ground disturbing work in the area may uncover fossil resources. In order to prevent potential impacts to paleontologic resources, a condition of approval will be attached to the permit that directs the holder to notify the BLM RGFO immediately if any vertebrate fossils or their traces are discovered during operations on public lands. Operations may continue as long as the fossil specimen would not be damaged or destroyed by the activity. Within 5 working days of notification, the BLM RGFO shall evaluate or have evaluated such discoveries and shall notify the operator what action shall be taken with respect to such discoveries

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: If the project involves oil or fuel usage, transfer or storage, an adequate spill kit and shovels are required to be onsite during project implementation. The project proponent will be responsible for adhering to all applicable local, State and Federal regulations in the event of a spill, which includes following the proper notification procedures in BLM’s Spill Contingency Plan.

D. Approval and Contact Information

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: Melissa Smeins

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Jay Raiford

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 9/9/14

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

/s/ Melissa K.S. Garcia for

Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 9/9/14