

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

Categorical Exclusion

**Sangre de Cristo Electric Association Emergency Powerline
Maintenance — Wellsville, CO**

PREPARING OFFICE

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



Categorical Exclusion
Sangre de Cristo Electric Association Emergency
Powerline Maintenance — Wellsville, CO

DOI-BLM-CO-F020-2015-0008 CX

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

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A. Background

BLM Office:

LLCOF02000

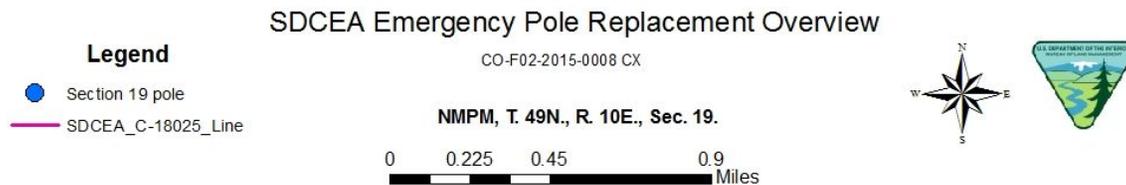
Lease/Serial/Case File No.: COC-18025**Proposed Action Title/Type:** SDCEA Emergency Powerline Maintenance — Wellsville, CO**Location of Proposed Action:** New Mexico PM, Fremont County, CO.

T. 49N., R. 10E., sec. 19, SE1/4NE1/4.

Applicant: Sangre de Cristo Electric Association

Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action from Sangre de Cristo Electric Association (SDCEA) is to replace one (1) power pole located on public lands authorized under serial number COC-18025, that has been determined to be rotten below ground level and is at risk of failing. The proposed action is located in Fremont County, CO, in the Wellsville, CO area. This electric transmission powerline provides service to residents of Wellsville, Howard, Coaldale, Cotopaxi and Texas Creek, Colorado. This transmission line is the only electric feed into this area. This pole was known to be at risk of failing prior to 2012. SDCEA would like to complete the pole replacement as soon as possible (Fall 2014) before snowfall can potentially impact the structure. This pole is located in T. 49N., R. 10E., sec. 19, and is accessible off of Fremont County Road 45. This pole is within 50 feet of Fremont County Road 45.

The pole to be replaced is a 60 feet tall wood pole, buried 8 feet in the ground, and the new pole will be the same size and same material. SDCEA will need to disturb an area about 2 feet wide by 10 feet long (approx. 20 square feet) to replace this pole. A new pole hole will be dug around the existing bad pole. The new pole will be placed alongside the old pole and connected to the existing cross arm. The old pole will then be removed, and the pole hole will be filled in and compacted with the existing material. Pole holes will be dug with a backhoe or auger truck. The new pole will be set with a boom truck and lines transferred using a bucket truck. The old pole will be removed from BLM lands.



B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision

Date Approved: May 13, 1996

Decision Number: C-115

Decision Language: Allow local purpose powerlines, pipelines, communication lines and sites, and other types of rights-of-way only when a clear need is demonstrated, and the beneficial environmental effects outweigh the costs.

Date Approved/Amended: May 13, 1996

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): C-115. Allow local purpose powerlines, pipelines, communication lines and sites, and other types of rights-of-way only when a clear need is demonstrated, and the beneficial environmental effects outweigh the costs.

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.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11 I (1). 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
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, 10/30/2014
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 11/3/14
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland, Weeds	JL, 11/03/2014
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 11/3/14
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	MJS, 10/31/2014
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 11/3/14
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	TW, 11/10/14
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 10/28/2014
Linda Skinner	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	LS, 10/28/2014
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 11/19/2014
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 11/18/14
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	11/17/2014
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	NA
Ty Webb	Fire Management Officer	Fire	TW, 11/10/14

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: No historic properties were found in the area of potential effect [see report CR-RG-04–13 P]. Therefore, the proposed undertaking will have no effect 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 other federally listed or BLM sensitive species within or near the project area.

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 (removal of vegetation such as timber, brush, or grass) 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.

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: /s/ Greg Valladares

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: /s/ Stephanie Carter for Jay Raiford

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 11/19/14

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/ Richard Valdez for Keith Berger

Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: