

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0025-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: East Pinto Gulch Well

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T 1 N R 98 W
Sec 13 SE

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management (BLM)/Burke Brothers

ISSUES AND CONCERNS: None

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: Burke Brothers contacted the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Water Resource Division (WRD) in Grand Junction about pumping water from an existing (shallow) USGS monitoring well in Yellow Creek southeast of the mouth of Pinto Gulch. The USGS has tentatively agreed to turn the well over to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) so that it can be used for livestock watering. BLM would file for water rights on the well, apply for a water well permit with the Colorado Division of Water Resources, and the USGS and BLM would continue to monitor the well. This well was not included the right-of-way (ROW) COC-49117 authorizations for USGS monitoring wells, which included a total of 40 USGS monitoring wells throughout the White River Field Office (WRFO).

Proposed Action: Burke Brothers have applied to equip and pump an existing well with a submersible pump powered by solar panels. The well would be pumped seasonally, in May and again in November to provide water for their cattle. Two buried pipelines would be constructed from the well totaling approximately 365 feet:

1. In order to eliminate any potential impact to the Dudley Bluffs twinpod habitat (a listed threatened plant species) approximately 175 feet of buried HDPE pipeline would be constructed from the well SW toward Yellow Creek and a stock tank would be placed at the termination of the pipeline.

2. In addition, 190 feet of buried HDPE pipeline would be installed to provide water to a tank in the SE corner of the Yellow Creek enclosure which is immediately NW of the well.

The Burkes use this enclosure as a gathering pasture in the late fall and it would be very useful to have a short term water source in the SE corner of this pasture. Project development would be authorized under a Cooperative Agreement for Range Improvement(s).

All areas of earthen disturbance will be promptly revegetated with Native Seed mix #5 listed in the table below:

Seed Mix #5	Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per Acre	Ecological Sites
5	Basin Wildrye (Magnar, Trailhead)	2	Foothill Swale, Sandy Swale, Swale Meadow
	Western wheatgrass (Rosanna)	3	
	Beardless wheatgrass (Whitmar,)	2	
	Thickspike wheatgrass (Critana)	1	
	Fourwing saltbush (Wytana)	1	

The BLM and Burke Brothers will adhere to the following additional design features/ mitigation measures:

1. The stock tanks will be located in stable vegetation and soils that will withstand the concentrated use of livestock. If impacts are observed due to trailing to or around the stock tanks, move the stock tanks or improve the area around the tanks with gravel or other methods that will protect soils and would reduce fugitive dust production.
2. If minor spills occur from vehicles and equipment used for the installation of the pipeline and the pump, they will be cleaned up immediately, and contaminated soil will be contained and removed for disposal in a suitable waste disposal facility such as the Rio Blanco landfill. The BLM will be notified if any spills require the removal of more than 2 square feet of soil.
3. Water flow to one or both tanks will be curtailed and the tanks removed, if trailing, trampling, or significant herbivory to the Dudley Bluffs twinpod or its habitats is observed as a result of the proposed action.
4. Wildlife ramps will be used on livestock water developments (per IM 2007-178). All water tanks serviced by the well must have permanent wildlife escape ramps installed prior to the first use. Escape ramps must include vertical sides that extend all the way to the edge of the inside wall of the tank (to prevent wildlife from swimming under the ramp) and must extend into the water.
5. The applicants would be responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project 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 uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). 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 site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the applicant 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 cost. 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.

6. The applicants will be responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood, or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands. If significant paleontological resources are discovered during surface disturbing actions or at any other time, the operator or any of his agents must stop work immediately at the site, immediately contact the Authorized Officer (AO), and make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage.
7. The BLM will evaluate the discovery and take action to protect or remove the resource within 10 working days. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the official BLM representative.

If the applicants wish, 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, significant delays may occur while the AO enacts mitigation procedures. The operator may elect to contract an approved paleontologist to execute site mitigations in order to expedite proceedings. 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.

No Action Alternative: In the no-action alternative, the Burke Brothers would not be permitted to develop and pump from the East Pinto well.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: The purpose of the proposed action is to manage multiple uses on Public Lands in a manner that avoids, minimizes, reduces, or mitigates potential impacts to other resource values.

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: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: LG-1; P 2- 23

Decision Language: Identify range improvements to enhance rangeland productivity and management.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

NATURAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: This proposed action is located in rural northwest Colorado in the White River Basin. The White River Field Office (WRFO) resource area has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all air pollutants, and most of the area has been designated for the prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) class II for Dinosaur National Monument. Regional air quality parameters including dust are being measured at monitoring sites located at Meeker, Rangely and Ripple Creek Pass and near the Flat Tops Wilderness Area to monitor regional air quality.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There will be short-term disturbance of soils to install 365 feet of pipeline and dust generation due to vehicle travel to install equipment and maintain the pump. Adding water sources could change the way cattle in the allotment move between water, nutrient and food sources and could increase or decrease

trailing and associated dust impacts. Mitigation would require tanks to be placed in such a way to avoid negative impacts and the allotment will be evaluated for increased trailing or other impacts and additional measures such as gravel around the stock tanks could be employed.

Environmental Consequences of the No-Action Alternative: Current impacts from trailing and grazing would continue to produce fugitive dust, especially during dry times and due to trailing during periods of the day (typically morning and evening) when cattle move to water, forage and/or to nutrient sources, between pastures and onto and off of the allotment.

Mitigation: Incorporated into the proposed action.

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: Soils in the project area are in the Barcus channery sandy loam map unit. Soils at the site are deep, coarse textured, excessively drained, formed in alluvium from sandstone and shale parent material. The corresponding ecological site is Foothill Swale.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Soil disturbance at the proposed well site will be less than 0.1 acre. Soils at the site have been previously disturbed when the well was drilled (circa 1968). Prompt and effective revegetation will offset any potential negative impact as a result of well equipping and pipeline trenching and installation.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: Incorporated into the proposed action.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Soils in the project area currently meet the Standard on a site, watershed and landscape scale and are expected to meet or exceed the Standard in the future following project implementation.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of and there are no known solid waste dump sites in the allotment. No hazardous chemicals have been proposed for use for the pump or pipeline installation, nor would any be needed for these types of installations.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials are proposed for use in this project. All applications of pesticides would be in compliance with BLM requirements. Vehicles and other equipment used during the installation could potentially leak fluids such as anti-freeze or oil. Based on the mitigation if any spills occur they will be cleaned up upon detection and contaminated soil will be removed. Since this is a solar pump, there is no need to store fuel for the pump on site.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative.

Mitigation: Incorporated into the proposed action.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: This well and the proposed stock-tanks are in the Yellow Creek drainage away from the main channel and in an area that is in upland vegetation and previously disturbed. The USGS well is named the Yellow Creek Colorado #1 or USGS-35 and was drilled as part of a monitoring network in 1965. The well was completed in the B-Groove, which is a saline aquifer below the Mahogany in the Parachute Member of the Green River Formation. The well was sampled and the conductivity was 2,280 microsiemens per centimeter, with the standard conversion factor of (0.64) for total dissolved solids (TDS), this would be 1,459 mg/L which is below 3,000 mg/L standard considered to be satisfactory or good for most livestock. The depth of this well bore was reported at 3,133 feet with the casing and the bottom of the well at 1,050 feet. This well is not in the State Engineers database and the average static water level was 41 feet based on 14 observations from 1965 to 1978.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will provide additional water sources in the allotment. Trailing along intermittent or ephemeral streams such as Yellow Creek in this allotment disturbs riparian vegetation important for holding the stream banks together during storm events and can cause direct erosion that can cause streams to down-cut and/or widen stream profiles. Reducing the direct trailing alongside streambeds and by providing developed water sources can pull cattle away from the streambed, thus reducing direct impacts stream channels.

Installing the stock tanks and pipelines will result in surface disturbance that could increase sediment delivered to Yellow Creek. However the location of these features are removed from the Yellow Creek channel and on upland soils on a sediment delta formed by a tributary to Yellow Creek. No direct impacts are expected from these activities to the water quality of Yellow Creek. There will be additional hoof action and grazing around the stock tanks since and this will result in additional vegetation and soils impacts that could impact water quality in Yellow Creek. With the mitigation to identify and correct erosion problems related to livestock these impacts are not expected to be persistent.

The BLM-WRFO manages grazing on public lands according to the 1997 RMP for the WRFO that outlines Standards and Guidelines for Public Land Health and Colorado Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines. These Standards include guidelines for upland soils, riparian systems, healthy desirable plant species, and water quality (both surface and ground). The Water Quality may improve indirectly from the improved condition of the riparian areas and springs but should be evaluated for standards to maintain the beneficial functions of these areas for water quality.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Degradation of stream channels would continue at the same rates due to the lack of upland water sources.

Mitigation: Incorporated into the proposed action.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: This range improvement would not cause the exceedance of the Colorado water quality standards and will likely improve water quality in general.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Vegetation at the project site is dominated by basin big sagebrush, green rabbitbrush, greasewood, winterfat, perennial grasses and cheatgrass (see site photo). The ecological site is Foothill Swale and it is classified as mid seral.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Equipping of the well will require auguring of a hole of about 12” in diameter to install a steel post on which the solar panels will be mounted. Some vegetation will be crushed by the small pickup type well workover truck. A 10’ x 10’ area would be cleared for placement of a stock tank at the end of each pipeline. No stock tank will be placed at the well head. The approximately 175 feet of pipeline southwesterly and the 200 feet of pipeline to be constructed to the corner of the Yellow creek pasture would be trenched using a “ditchwitch” trencher or backhoe. If a ditchwitch is used, the trench will be no more than 10” wide. If a backhoe is used the trench will be no more than 2.5 feet wide and 4 feet deep. There will be a short term loss of vegetation on about .1 acres. With proper revegetation there will be no long term loss of vegetation.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: see design features of the Proposed Action

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Upland plant communities in the project area currently meet the Standard and are expected to meet or exceed the Standard in the future following project implementation.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no known noxious weeds in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is not expected to have any measureable effect or create additional sites for noxious or invasive species.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: see design features of the Proposed Action

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: The proposed action and location of the two stock tanks is approximately 174 feet (53 meters) from suitable habitat and approximately 268 meters from occupied habitats for the Dudley Bluffs twinpod. The twinpod is found on the west-facing side slopes of Yellow Creek where the Green River geological formation is exposed. The proposed southern-most stock tank, outside of the enclosure, was located 200 feet southwest, out into the drainage, to allow cattle to use the area at and surrounding the water source at a distance further away from the threatened plant suitable habitats. Due to the limited nature of the disturbance necessary to install and maintain the well, small pipelines, and stock tanks, fugitive dust aerosolization is expected to be limited from the proposed action and is not expected to exceed levels produced from daily local traffic on BLM road 1257, which separates the action from the threatened plant habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action may draw cattle and/or wild horses to an area of threatened plant species habitats, however, several similar stock tanks are located in other drainages somewhat proximate to these habitats, and are being utilized without trailing, trampling or significant herbivory to the Dudley Bluffs twinpod, if season of use, herbivory levels, and cattle routes to and from the water source have remained largely in the drainage. Water flow to one or both tanks should be curtailed, if trailing, trampling, or significant herbivory to the Dudley Bluffs twinpod is observed as a result of the water source. Ocular monitoring for these effects should occur for at least five years, twice a year, following the installation of the tanks.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: This action would have no potential to influence special status species or associated habitats.

Mitigation: Are incorporated into the proposed action and design features.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The proposed and no-action alternatives should have no influence on plants associated with the Endangered Species Act or BLM sensitive species and, as such, should have no influence on the status of applicable land health standards.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered animal species that inhabit the immediate project area. Several BLM sensitive species may be present in either the immediate area or the adjacent uplands. Brewer's sparrows (*Spizella breweri*) nest in sagebrush within the project area. Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), big free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*), and northern goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*) may inhabit the adjacent upland pinyon-juniper woodlands.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Installation of two new stock tanks in the drainage bottom is not expected to have any influence on BLM sensitive species that may inhabit adjacent pinyon-juniper uplands. Brewer's sparrows would be the only special status animal species that would be influenced by the proposed action. The defunct Pinto well is approximately ¾ of mile south of the proposed East Pinto Gulch well. While the Pinto well is located within the Barcus-Pinto pasture and the East Pinto Gulch well is located in the Rocky Ridge pasture, there would be no substantial change in grazing distribution from historic use since there is not a fence to separate the pastures. There would be minor changes from current conditions since the Pinto well has been non-operational since at least 2006. Additionally, livestock use within ¼ mile of the stock tanks would increase as these areas are typically considered areas of common congregation and result in concentrated use. Brewer's sparrows are common and well distributed in suitable habitats across the Whiter River Field office. Concentrated use around a new water development may degrade local habitat conditions but would not noticeably alter habitat conditions within the pasture from current conditions.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no change from current conditions.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The project area currently meets Public Land Health Standards for special status animal species and would continue to do so with implementation of the proposed action.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The well and proposed stock tanks are located in the drainage bottom. It is expected that livestock influences on surrounding habitats would not extend more than two miles from the site (and likely much less depending on terrain). Within this area, the Barcus-Pinto and Rocky Ridge pastures (there is no fence to physically separate the pastures) contain approximately 2,634 acres of sagebrush and greasewood habitat and approximately 3,193 acres of pinyon-juniper habitat. Species such as Brewer's sparrows, vesper sparrows (*Pooecetes gramineus*), spotted towhees (*Pipilo maculatus*), and blue-gray gnatcatchers (*Poliophtila caerulea*) will nest in the sagebrush and greasewood communities. Species such as pinyon jays (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), juniper titmouse (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*), and black-throated gray warblers (*Dendroica nigrescens*) nest in pinyon-juniper woodlands.

There are no specialized or narrowly endemic species known to inhabit the project area. However, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recognizes Brewer's sparrows, juniper titmouse, and pinyon jays as being "birds of conservation concern". The BCC list identifies birds that, without conservation actions, may become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Brewer's sparrows are also a BLM sensitive species and were discussed in more detail in the Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animal Species Section.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There would likely be very little disturbance to nesting songbirds due to the construction of the water pipeline and tank installation since it is adjacent to a well-traveled road (less than a 1/10 of mile from the road) and since the amount of vegetation clearing or disturbance is expected to be about 0.1 acre. There may be some disturbance simply due to the construction activities but such disturbance will be localized and of short duration.

Indirectly, changes in livestock distribution could affect nesting habitat by reducing available understory vegetation. Livestock are expected to have little to no influence on birds nesting in pinyon-juniper woodlands but may influence birds using sagebrush bottoms. The proposed tank locations are less than a mile away from the defunct Pinto well. While the Pinto well has been nonfunctional since at least 2006, it was a historic livestock water source over the past 70 years. There would be negligible changes in livestock distribution within the pastures and approval of this water development would not be expected to substantially alter current conditions.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no change from current conditions.

Mitigation: None.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: There are no aquatic wildlife species that would be directly impacted by construction of the pipelines and installation of the two stock tanks or indirectly impacted due to concentrated livestock use on Yellow Creek. While Yellow Creek is within ¼ mile of the stock tanks and thus within an area of concentrated livestock use, it is a stretch that lacks riparian vegetation and flow is only associated with intense storm events (PFC evaluation 7/16/08).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There would be no impact to aquatic wildlife from the construction of the pipelines and installation of the two stock tanks.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no disturbance at the site and no change in current conditions.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): There is no habitat for aquatic wildlife species within the project area, thus a finding on Public Land Health Standards is not necessary.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The Colorado Division of Wildlife delineates the project area as severe winter range for mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and winter range habitat for elk (*Cervus canadensis*). There are no narrowly endemic or highly specialized wildlife species known to occur within the immediate area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Installation of the water pipelines and stock tanks is expected to have minimal impacts to terrestrial wildlife populations. There would be very little temporary habitat loss with only approximately 0.1 acre disturbed due to construction activities. Wildlife may be displaced during construction activities but such disturbance would be short-term and localized. Since the tanks are located less than a mile from a historic livestock water source, there will be no substantial change in livestock distribution or forage use within the pastures.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no change from current conditions.

Mitigation: Has been incorporated into the proposed action.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The project area currently meets Public Land Health Standards for terrestrial wildlife species and would continue to do so with implementation of the proposed action.

WILD HORSES

Affected Environment: This well is located within the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (HMA) of the approximate 190,130 acre or more specifically located on the eastern boundary of the geographic region within the HMA known as Barcus-Pinto. The movement of wild horses in the HMA is influenced by seasonal factors, access to water supplies, and available forage. During summer and early fall, water availability influences wild horse movement.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed project would be a benefit to the wild horse herd by allowing wild horses to use this water source during the months of availability when the permittee pumps the well for their livestock. The water source at the Pinto windmill was previously available to them but has not been functional for the last several years. It is anticipated that the wild horses will make adjustments during times of availability of the water and when the water is not available. Depending on the other available water sources in

the area throughout the year, that wild horse use in the area, up to several miles away, may experience an increase while a reliable water source is available.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: None.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed East Pinto Gulch Well project lies in an area that has been covered by a previous Class III (100% pedestrian) level inventory (Selle 1992). The inventory did not record any cultural resources.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will not adversely impact any known cultural resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no surface disturbance resulting in no impacts to cultural resources.

Mitigation: Is incorporated into the proposed action.

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in an area mapped as Modern Alluvium (Hail 1988) which the BLM, WRFO has classified as a potential fossil yield classification (PFYC) 3a. The PFYC 3a formations are considered moderate potential; units are known to contain significant fossil resources, but those occurrences are widely scattered. No visible fossil resources were recorded during the cultural survey of this area which was conducted by the White River Field Office Paleo Lead (Selle 1992).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will not adversely impact any known fossil resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no surface disturbance resulting in no impacts to fossil resources.

Mitigation: Is incorporated into the proposed action.

ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No flood plains, riparian, or prime and unique farmlands, exist within the area affected by the proposed action. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

OTHER ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Other Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, Not Brought Forward for Analysis	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Visual Resources		X	
Fire Management		X	
Forest Management	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights			X
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation		X	
Access and Transportation	X		
Geology and Minerals		X	
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X		
Wilderness	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X		
Cadastral	X		
Socio-Economics		X	
Law Enforcement	X		

HYDROLOGY AND WATER RIGHTS

Affected Environment: The range improvement is located in the Yellow Creek drainage. This well is unlikely to impact existing water rights in the Yellow Creek drainage or downstream.

Water Rights within Yellow Creek and the Project Area

Name	Location	Adjudication Date	Case No.	Use Type	Absolute Rate
Yellow Ck Water Gap 6027	1N 98W Section 25 SWNE	31-Dec-95	95CW0156	Stock	0.047
Yellow Ck Wt Gap 6035a	2N 98W Section 36 SWNW	31-Dec-95	95CW0156	Stock And Wildlife	0.016
Yellow Ck Wt Gap 6035b	2N 98W Section 35 SENW	31-Dec-95	95CW0156	Stock And Wildlife	0.016
Yellow Creek Res	2N 98W Section 23 SWNW	21-Nov-66	661	All	0
Yellow Creek Res No 1	1N 98W Section 36 NWSE	31-Dec-77	W3458-77	Recreation And Stock	0
Yellow Creek Spg	2N 98W Section 26 NWNE	31-Dec-77	W3457	Stock	0.04

Name	Location	Adjudication Date	Case No.	Use Type	Absolute Rate
No 1					
Yellow Creek Spg No 2	2N 98W Section 35 NESW	31-Dec-77	W3462	Stock And Irrigation	0.18
Yellow Creek Well 1	1N 98W Section 24 NESW	31-Dec-77	W3460-77	Domestic And Stock	0.033

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No impacts are expected to existing water rights and the hydrology of Yellow Creek is not likely to be impacted from this minor use. Assuming the cattle use only these stock tanks for water, with evaporation from the tanks the consumptive use is expected to be about 2.8 acre-feet of water annually.

Depletion issues in the Colorado River Basin would be protected by the programmatic state-wide environmental impact statement (EIS) for threatened and endangered (T&E) species and these water developments will be included in the annual submittal for these uses.

Mitigation: None

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The well that is to be equipped is within the Barcus- Pinto unit of the Yellow Creek allotment (06030). The Barcus- Pinto unit is primarily spring- fall range for the Burke Brothers cattle operation. Barcus- Pinto is permitted to Burkes for the following use:

Allotment	Permit Nr.	Livestock	Period of Use	Percent Public Land	Authorized Use (AUM)
06030	Barcus-Pinto	240 Cattle	5/1-5/15	100	118
		340 Cattle	5/16- 6/30	100	514
		340 Cattle	10/16- 12/30	100	850

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will not materially change current grazing distribution patterns in the Barcus-Pinto pasture. Equipping of this well will provide a dependable water source in close proximity to the now defunct Pinto well/windmill which had been the historical water source for this area for at least the past 70 years. Providing a water source within the Yellow Creek pasture will enhance fall livestock gathering and will generally provide for improved livestock management on the range.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: see design features of the proposed action.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Development of this well will provide a replacement for the existing, non-functional Pinto Gulch well/windmill and is not expected to materially change livestock and wild horse patterns of grazing distribution in the Barcus-Pinto/Rocky Ridge pasture(s) of the Yellow Creek allotment.

REFERENCES CITED:

Hail, William J. Jr.

1988 Geologic Map of the Barcus Creek SE Quadrangle, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior.

Selle, Michael

1992 A Cultural Resource Inventory of the Proposed Yellow Creek Seeding Project. BLM White River Resource Area, Meeker, Colorado.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Colorado Division of Wildlife, Rio Blanco County

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Wastes (Hazardous or Solids), Water Quality (Surface and Ground), Hydrology and Water Rights
Maggie Marston	Botanist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Kristin Bowen	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Soils, Vegetation , Rangeland Management, Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Heather Sauls	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife
Andrew Burrows	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation,
Jim Michels	Forester /Fire / Fuels Technician	Fire Management, Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Linda Jones	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Andrew Burrows	Natural Resource Specialist Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources
Melissa Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horses

**Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record
(FONSI/DR)**

DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0025-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to issue a Cooperative Agreement to Burke Brothers to equip the East Pinto Gulch Well. The dependable water source provided by the well will aid in providing for proper livestock distribution on the Yellow Creek allotment during the spring and fall grazing periods.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. All recommended mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposed action. It is the responsibility of the BLM Range staff (Rangeland Management Specialist) and Burke Brothers (joint applicant) to adhere to those measures brought forward by BLM resource specialist (refer to the proposed action for a list of design features/mitigation measures).

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Yellow Creek allotment (06030) rangeland monitoring studies

NAME OF PREPARER: Mark Hafkenschiel Rangeland Management Specialist

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:


Acting Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 5/4/2010

ATTACHMENTS: Photo of well site



USGS Yellow Creek well Looking west toward the mouth of Pinto Gulch