

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-110-2010-0125-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: Fee (Crossing over COD-032703 & COD-032675)

PROJECT NAME: 10" North Loop Water Injection Replacement

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: 6th PM
T2N, R102W, Sections 17 & 18,
T2N, 103W, Section 13,

APPLICANT: Chevron USA, Inc.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS: None

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: This proposal is located in part within the original 40 ft right-of-way that was approved, and partially in an area of new disturbance due to an off-set of 15-20 ft. The actions are essentially similar to those analyzed in CO-110-2006-047-EA, which analyzed 5 single well pad Applications for Permit to Drill (APD) and associated roads and pipeline disturbances, as well the installation of new water injection and CO₂ lines.

Proposed Action: Chevron USA, Inc. proposes to install a replacement water injection line, called the '10" North Loop line', from a location near the Fairfield Kitti A-001 well (T2N, R102W, Section 17, SWNW) to a three-way valve near the McLaughlin Unit A1 well (T2N, R103W, Section 13, NWNW). Currently, the existing line has many small leaks which necessitate the replacement of this line. The existing line would be left in place, and the new line would be installed approximately 15-20 ft offset from the existing line to minimize disturbance. The old line will be flushed with fresh water and capped on each end and any other openings.

The line would consist of 10 inch steel pipe with a 40 poly pipe internal lining. The line would be buried within a new typical right-of-way of 40 ft to a depth of 42 inches. The total length of the line would be approximately 10,660 ft; of which **7,550 ft is on BLM surface**, 3150 ft is on Private surface.

Desired start date is June 1st, with a completion date of August 10th, yielding a project duration of slightly over 2 months.

The right-of-way will be fully reclaimed to BLM specifications and stipulations.

No Action Alternative: The proposed injection line replacement would be denied.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: Alternative:

Original Proposal, Line North of Lease Roads in Section 13, T2N, R103W – A sundry notice was received by the BLM White River Field Office on March 03, 2010 from Chevron USA, Inc requesting to replace a water injection line from a location near the Fairfield Kittie A-001 well (T2N, R102W, Section 17, SWNW) to a three-way valve near the McLaughlin Unit A1 well (T2N, R103W, Section 13, NWNW). The original proposal for the “10 inch North Loop Line” crossed into Section 13, T2N, R103W, near well Gary B 26X and left the lease road. The line ran northwest for approximately 550 ft, then continued west for approximately 4,000 ft to its terminus at the three-way valve near the McLaughlin Unit A1 well.

An onsite inspection of the injection line was conducted on March 25, 2010. Based on this onsite inspection, it was discovered that the line intersected, or passed near two Burrowing owl nests. Upon BLM wildlife biologist request, the portion of the line in Section 13, T2N, R103W was relocated south approximately 200-300 ft so that it would be installed adjacent to the existing lease road rather than along the existing right-of-way which potentially interferes with the Burrowing owl nests.

PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION: The purpose of the proposed action is to manage the exploration and development of mineral resources on Public Lands in a manner that avoids, minimizes, reduces, or mitigates potential impacts to other resource values.

The purpose of the action is to provide the opportunity to transport injection water across BLM surface. The need for the action is established under the authority of Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) to respond to the request to transport injection water across BLM surface.

Decision to be made: The BLM will decide whether or not to approve the water injection line replacement, and if so, under what conditions.

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: 2-5

Decision Language: “Make federal oil and gas resources available for leasing and development in a manner that provides reasonable protection for other resource values.”

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:

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS RECORD CHECKLIST

DETERMINATION OF STAFF:		
Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*
Natural, Biological and Cultural Resources		
PI	Air Quality	See discussion below
PI	Soils	See discussion below
PI	Wastes (hazardous or solid)	See discussion below
PI	Water Quality (Surface/Ground)	See discussion below
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	The nearest known system which supports riparian vegetation is the White River which is separated from the project area by over five miles of ephemeral channel.
PI	Vegetation	See discussion below
PI	Invasive, Non-native Species	See discussion below
NP	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species	There are no plant species listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act, nor plants considered sensitive by the BLM, that are known to inhabit areas potentially influenced by the proposed action.
PI	Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive Animal Species	See discussion below.
NI	Migratory Birds	The proposed pipeline route will follow existing disturbance (i.e., pipeline corridors or roads) and will involve minimal vegetation removal. Much of the vegetation within the existing corridor is in a degraded state and generally does not provide adequate forage or cover resource for nesting birds.
NP	Wildlife, Aquatic	The nearest known system which supports aquatic wildlife is the White River which is separated from the project area by over five miles of ephemeral channel.
NI	Wildlife, Terrestrial	This heavily developed portion of Coal Oil Basin is inhabited year-round by a small resident herd of pronghorn which are acclimated to

DETERMINATION OF STAFF:		
Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*
		routine oil and gas production activities. The proposed pipeline, which will parallel either an existing ROW or roadway, will involve minimal disturbance. See discussion regarding reclamation in TES Animal Species section. Raptors may opportunistically forage throughout the project area however; there are no known nests within several miles of the pipeline corridor.
NP	Wild Horses	The proposed action is not located within a designated wild horse management area.
NP	Cultural Resources	There are no known resources in the project area, the area is covered by an inventory (Larralde 1981) and much of the line is located within previous disturbance.
NP	Paleontology	The proposed action is in areas mapped as Mancos Shale and Quaternary Alluviums neither of which are considered significant fossil bearing formations. (Tweto 1979, Armstrong and Wolny 1989)

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions
 NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required
 PI = present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA

NATURAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: This proposed action is located in rural northwest Colorado in the White River Basin, more than ten miles from special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. Industrial facilities in White River Basin include coal mines, soda ash mines, natural gas processing plants and power plants. The White River Basin has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all air pollutants (NAAQS and CAAQS standards), and most of the area has been designated for the prevention of significant deterioration class II for the PSD areas nearby at Dinosaur National Monument. Because the historic air quality in the White River Basin has been good, small changes in air quality may have noticeable localized effects, especially on visibility.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Pipeline installation would require removing topsoil over the trench, trenching and soil storage, installation of the pipeline, refilling the trench, spreading the topsoil, reclamation and installation of stormwater BMPs as needed. As vegetation establishes in the reclaimed areas, the only dust production that is likely is due to vehicles traveling into sites for pipeline maintenance.

The proposed action would result in very minor increases in the level of inhalable particulate matter during installation and construction, specifically particles ten microns or less in diameter (PM₁₀) associated with fugitive dust. In addition, increases in the following criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone (secondary pollutant), nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide would also occur due to combustion of fossil fuels during installation and recoat activities. Non-criteria pollutants such as visibility, nitric oxide, air toxics (e.g. benzene) and total suspended particulates (TSP) may also experience slight, temporary increases as a result of the proposed action (no national ambient air quality standards have been set for non-criteria pollutants). Even

with these increased pollutants, this project is unlikely to result in an exceedance of NAAQ and CAAQ standards and is likely to be under PSD thresholds.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impacts would occur.

Mitigation: None Identified

SOILS

Affected Environment: This area is almost entirely in soils identified as saline and there is extensive disturbance in and near the proposed pipeline ROW. Many of these areas have poor and saline soils that would likely be difficult to reclaim, soil types are shown below.

Soil Classifications within 30 Meters of the Project (greater than 1 Acre in size)

Soil Classification	Range Site Description	Potentially Impacted
Billings-Torrifluvents complex, gullied, 0-5% slopes	Alkaline Slopes	6
Billings silty clay loam, 0-5% slopes	Alkaline Slopes	4
Chipeta silty clay loam, 3-25% slopes	Clayey Salt-desert	41

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The installation of the pipeline re- would result in the loss of vegetative cover, increasing the potential for water erosion and soil loss during excavation. Compaction due to construction activities would reduce aeration, permeability and water-holding capacities of the soils. An increase in surface runoff could be expected from these areas and they are likely to be less resilient to erosion from surface runoff, potentially causing increased sheet, rill and gully erosion. During reclamation activities surface runoff should be minimized through the site or the soils would become destabilized before reclamation succeeds.

Potential impacts to soils from the pipeline installation would include removal of vegetation, mixing of soil horizons, soil compaction, increased susceptibility to erosion, loss of topsoil productivity and possible contamination of soils with petroleum constituents. If reclamation is successful, impacts from this project would be minor and localized to disturbed areas. Many of these areas have saline and unstable soils that would likely be more difficult to reclaim. The use of the BLM seed mix given in the vegetation section for reclamation activities would increase the likelihood of success.

Contamination of surface and subsurface soils can occur from leaks or spills of chemicals during activities, fuels and lubricants and could also result in soil contamination. Such leaks or spills could compromise the productivity of the affected soils. Depending on the size and type of spill, the impact to soils would primarily consist of the loss of soil productivity. Typically contaminated soils would be removed and disposed of in a permitted facility or would be bioremediated in place.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Not replacing the surface line would result in continued and/or increased leaks from the existing injection line. Contamination of surface and subsurface soils can occur from leaks or spills of chemicals during activities, fuels and lubricants and could also result in soil contamination. Such leaks or spills could compromise the productivity of the affected soils. Depending on the size and type of spill, the impact to soils would primarily consist of the loss of soil productivity. Typically contaminated soils would be removed and disposed of in a permitted facility or would be bioremediated in place.

Mitigation: The following should be attached as conditions of approval.

1. All construction and drilling activity shall cease when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless there are safety concerns or activities are otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer.
2. If salt is observed on the surface of soils during reclamation activities the AO will be notified and a plan will be developed with approval of the BLM to improve reclamation on the site.
3. If erosion features such as riling, gulying, piping and mass wasting occur on disturbed surfaces subject to reclamation, the erosion features will be addressed immediately after observation by contacting the AO and submitting a plan to assure successful soil stabilization with BMPs to address the erosion problems.
4. When installing the pipeline, the soil shall be backfilled in such a manner so that there is no excessive mounding of the soil when backfilling and reclamation is complete.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: With mitigation this action is unlikely to reduce the productivity of soils impacted by surface disturbing activities.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored, or disposed of at sites included in the project area. The operator does not identify in their APD submissions any hazardous substances to be used during operations associated with this project.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this project. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants proposed for use may contain some hazardous constituents, they would be stored, used, and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws such that generation of hazardous wastes is not anticipated. All left-over chemicals and materials will be hauled off-site for use or disposal. Solid wastes would be properly disposed of off-site at an approved facility.

Accidental releases associated with equipment failures, equipment maintenance and refueling, and storage of fuel, oil, other fluids, and chemicals could cause soil, surface water, and/or

groundwater contamination. With implementation of the mitigation measures described below, impacts would likely be temporary.

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

Mitigation: The release of any chemical, oil, petroleum product, produced water, or sewage, etc, must be contained immediately, cleaned up as soon as possible, and reported by the project proponent to the Bureau of Land Management recording requirements specified in the Notice to Lessees and Operators of Onshore Federal and Indian Oil and Gas Leases (NTL-3A).

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

Affected Environment: All the sites for this project are the Stinky Water Creek which is a tributary to the White River. Stinky Water Creek is in Segment 22 which includes all tributaries to the White River from a point above Douglas Creek to the Utah border. This section is use protected and is classified for the protection of aquatic life warm 2, primary contact recreation, and agriculture.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Potential impacts to the surface waters include increased runoff; erosion and sedimentation due to soil disturbance associated with construction activities. The magnitude of the impacts to surface water resources would depend on the proximity of the disturbance to drainage channels, slope aspect and gradient, degree and area of soil disturbance, soil character, duration of construction activities, and the timely implementation and success/failure of mitigation measures.

The last section of the pipeline follows the existing location of the pipeline in the headwaters of Stinking Water Creek. Although this is not the ideal location for this pipeline and if there was no existing disturbance it would be better to follow the access road to the south. However, since this pipeline follows the existing disturbance it may provide an opportunity to repair some existing disturbance. With the mitigation below that requires the pipeline to be installed at least 4 feet below the existing channels and to repair any erosion on these channels caused by the old pipeline.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impacts identified.

Mitigation: Provide for erosion-resistant surface drainage by adding necessary drainage facilities and armoring prior to fall rain or snow. When erosion is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site. In addition, straining or filtration mechanisms may also contribute to sediment removal from runoff.

Install the pipeline at least 4 feet below the existing channel bed in the tributaries to Stinking Water Creek and repair any erosion in these channels that may have been caused by the old pipeline route.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: It is unlikely that the pipeline installation would result in an exceedence of state water quality standards. Cumulative impacts from this activity and others may eventually impact sediment yields to the degree that they impact listing.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within Alkaline Slope and Clayey Salt Desert ecological sites, which are dominated by salt tolerant vegetation. The dominant plant community for these sites consists of greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) and various saltbrushes such as shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), Gardner saltbrush (*Atriplex gardneri*), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugate*), and fourwing saltbrush (*Atriplex canescens*). Other brushes intermixed in the area are rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*) and big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*). The understory of these shrubs is dominated by western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), Colorado wildrye (*Elymus salinus*), and squirreltail (*Sitanion hystrix*). Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is an undesirable, invasive, and alien plant species that is present within the locality of the proposed action.

Drought conditions are very prevalent within the Coal Oil Basin area, which has hampered the successful establishment of reclaimed plant species of other projects in this area. Therefore, undesirable and invasive annual plant species (i.e. halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), cheatgrass) have become dominant in portions of previously disturbed areas which provide little resource value and hinder efforts to meet Public Land Health Standards.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would disturb a mid to low seral class of desert shrub community for a total of 6.9 acres. The short-term soil and vegetation disturbances would be offset in the long-term by reclaiming the disturbed area with a seed mix that is suited for this ecological site. As this area has a component of cheatgrass and halogeton within the plant community, successful re-vegetation efforts would slightly increase desirable plant species within the rangelands.

Previously this area has entailed considerable impacts from oil and gas activities from a network of well pads, pipeline corridors, and access roads, which have resulted in a fragmentation and reduction of available, productive ecological sites.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas associated with the proposed action, including all cut and fill slopes and topsoil stockpiles, with Standard Seed Mix #1 of the White River Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) (B-19, Appendix B). Seeding rates in the RMP are shown as pounds of Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre and apply to drill seeding. For broadcast application, double the seeding rate and then harrow to insure seed coverage. Applied seed must be certified and free of noxious weeds and seed certification tags must be submitted to the Area Manager within 30 days of seeding. The applicant will be responsible for eradicating

cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. The applicant will use materials and methods as outlined in the RMP or authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): The proposed action would disturb a small segment of the Alkaline Slope and Clayey Saltdesert ecological sites. Therefore, the action would further fragment these areas to a minimal degree.

Early seral ecological sites associated with the proposed action lacks desirable plant species at an appreciable density and frequency level, thus are not meeting standards. This is due to the prevalence of cheatgrass and halogeton within the vegetative understory. A slight positive benefit would be received through a successful re-vegetation effort, thus increasing preferred plant species within this low producing rangeland. Mid seral ecological sites at the proposed action locality have acceptable components within the plant community and are meeting standards.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within Alkaline Slope and Clayey Saltdesert ecological sites, which are dominated by salt tolerant vegetation. The dominate plant community for these sites consist of greasewood, and various saltbrushes such as shadscale, gardner saltbrush, mat saltbush, and fourwing saltbrush. The understory of these shrubs is dominated by western wheatgrass, Colorado wildrye, and squirreltail. Cheatgrass is an undesirable, invasive, and alien plant species that is present within the locality of the proposed action.

Noxious/invasive weeds which occur in the area include halogeton and cheatgrass. Both of these species are highly adapted to disturbed soils.

Drought conditions are very prevalent within the Coal Oil Basin area, which has hampered the successful establishment of reclaimed plant species of other projects in this area. Therefore, undesirable and invasive annual plant species (i.e. halogeton, cheatgrass) have become dominate in portions of previously disturbed areas which provide little resource value and hinder efforts to meet Public Land Health Standards.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Both of the weed species found in the area are effectively controlled by establishment of seeded species within disturbed areas. The proposed seed mix, which includes non-native species, is recommended because its associated plant species are highly adapted to this site and offer the greatest opportunity to establish vegetation cover and the resultant soil stabilization, thereby providing a competitive interaction between seeded species and noxious/invasive weeds.

There is always the opportunity for other noxious weed species to be transported onto the proposed action locations by construction and support equipment

Prompt reclamation with successful establishment would prevent cheatgrass and halogeton from establishing on disturbed sites. If other noxious weeds were to invade the site, prompt control would prevent movement to the adjacent plant communities.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Use standard seed mix #1 for reclamation. The applicant will be responsible for eradicating cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. The applicant will use materials and methods as outlined in the RMP or authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

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

Affected Environment: The project area is broadly encompassed by white-tailed prairie dog habitat. White-tailed prairie dogs, a BLM sensitive species, and their burrow systems are important components of burrowing owl habitat, as well as potential habitat for reintroduced populations of black-footed ferret. Burrowing owls, also a BLM sensitive species are uncommon in this Resource Area. These birds return to occupy a maintained burrow system in early April and begin nesting soon after. Most birds have left the area by September. There are two known burrowing owl nest sites along the western edge of the pipeline. Both sites were active in 2009. As originally proposed, the pipeline route would have run roughly 50 to 100 meters from the nest sites. After discussions, Chevron agreed to move the pipeline corridor to the south side of the existing road (located south of the nest sites), thereby distancing the nests locations approximately 200 meters from the pipeline. Both sites were visited in April 2010. No owls were observed, however, the sites would need to be revisited in mid-May to determine activity. Should the sites be active, appropriate timing stipulations would be applied.

Under the auspices of a non-essential, experimental population rule, black-footed ferrets have been released annually in Coyote Basin (eight miles southwest) and Wolf Creek (13 miles northeast) of Rangely Oil Field since 1999 and 2001, respectively. The rule applies to any ferrets that may occupy or eventually be released in northwest Colorado and northeast Utah. Although there is no direct continuity between Coyote Basin or Wolf Creek and the project site (i.e., lesser physical barriers and habitats unoccupied by prairie dog), there is potential for ferrets to colonize and successfully breed in Rangely Oil Field. Ferrets are wholly reliant on prairie dogs for food and shelter. Ferret breeding activities begin in early March, with birthing beginning in early May. Young ferrets generally begin to emerge by mid-July. There have been no verified sightings of ferrets, nor any known reproduction occurring in Rangely Oil Field.

Brewer's sparrow, a BLM sensitive species, are common throughout the oil field where appropriate habitat exists (sagebrush communities). The vegetation communities that are

involved with the proposed action are predominately salt desert shrub types which typically do not provide suitable nesting habitat for this species. Any involvement with sagebrush types would be nominal.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: This project would have no short or long term influence on prairie dog abundance or distribution by itself or as habitat for black-footed ferret or burrowing owl. The pipeline route was surveyed by BLM biologists in March 2010 and was found to have relatively minor involvement with prairie dog burrows/mounds. It is highly unlikely that any subsurface disturbance associated with this proposed action would intersect a prairie dog burrow system occupied by a ferret.

Moving the pipeline route to the south side of the road (on the west end) effectively eliminates any direct involvement with the nest burrows. Both nests are in close proximity (38 m and 160 m) to road systems that likely experience low to moderate vehicle travel. Activities (noise, human disturbance etc.) associated with pipeline installation while being short term, would be more continuous and would have greater potential to temporarily displace birds should construction take place during the nesting season. Chevron has agreed to start construction on the east end of the pipeline (located 1.2 miles from the nearest nest site) and work west. Based on the construction schedule, this would put them in the vicinity of the nest sites near the end of July to early August. In general, most birds have fledged or are nearing the end of the nesting season by this time.

Prompt and effective pipeline reclamation would provide an herbaceous component that would benefit white-tailed prairie dogs, their associates and other resident wildlife.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no potential influence on prairie dogs or their burrowing systems as habitat for burrowing owl and black-footed ferret in the case of a no action alternative.

Mitigation: Both nest sites will be revisited by BLM biologists prior to construction. Should one or both nest be found to be active, there would be no development allowed within 0.5 miles of the nest locations until the young have left the area (TL-01 WRRR ROD).

All flowlines and rights-of-way involved in this action will be reclaimed and reseeded with the appropriate seed blend recommended by the Authorized Officer.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Public Land Health Standards for those special status species associated with white-tailed prairie dogs, including black-footed ferret and burrowing owl, in the Rangely Oil Field are currently met. As conditioned, this project would have no adverse influence on populations, available extent of suitable habitat, or the reproductive activities of these three species. Thus, there would be no influence on meeting the land health standard. Small incremental gains in perennial grass cover associated with successful reclamation and subsurface tillage associated with flowline installation may be expected to bolster local populations of prairie dogs and potentially benefit individual burrowing owl and black-footed ferret—effects consistent with continued meeting of the Land Health Standards.

ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED: No flood plains, 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 Elements	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	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 Environmental Concern	X		
Wilderness	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X		
Cadastral	X		
Socio-Economics			
Law Enforcement			

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in the Artesia Allotment (06308), which is authorized for sheep use by Morapos Sheep Company during the late fall to early spring periods.

The soils within the project area are principally a Billings Silty Clay Loam (Alkaline Slope ecological site) and Chipeta Silty Clay Loam (Clayey Salt-desert ecological site), which are dominated by a salt tolerant desert shrub and grass community. These brush/grass communities are utilized by sheep for meeting forage requirements, particularly during winter months. These soil types have a high clay content that are moderate to highly erosive and receives low precipitation with rapid runoff, thus limiting forage production and hampering re-vegetation efforts.

Drought conditions are very prevalent within the Coal Oil Basin area, which has hampered the successful establishment of reclaimed plant species of other projects in this area. Therefore, undesirable and invasive annual plant species (i.e. halogeton, cheatgrass) have become dominant in a portion of these disturbed areas which provide little forage value for livestock.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The individual proposed action would have minimal impacts on the authorized grazing use because the amount of new surface disturbance (6.9 acres) is nominal in regards to the scale of the allotment (43,347 total acres). However, previously this allotment has entailed considerable impacts from oil and gas activities, which have resulted in a reduction and fragmentation of available rangelands and in a loss of forage for grazing use.

A portion of the short-term soil and vegetation disturbances would be offset in the long-term by reclaiming the disturbed area with a seed mix that is suited for this ecological site. As this area has a component of cheatgrass and halogeton within the plant community, successful re-vegetation efforts would slightly increase desirable forage species within the rangelands.

Grazing use by sheep in the allotment can be authorized from November 28th through April 20th. If the proposed action was authorized during this timeframe, it would have some limited impacts while sheep are grazing. This is due to the increased activity associated with the development of the proposed action and temporary decrease in rangelands available for grazing. Impacts to livestock grazing may include such influences as a modification in sheep distribution, reduction in available forage, and impediments to livestock grazing and movement.

Overall, this individual proposed action would have no significant direct impact on the authorized Animal Unit Months (AUMs) in the allotments. A slight positive benefit would be received through a successful re-vegetation effort, thus increasing preferred forage plants within this mid to low producing rangeland. However, the cumulative impacts from past, present, and possible future oil and gas activities may have a long-term effect on the native range's carrying capacity, thus influencing the authorized AUMs. This possible affect would be determined during the grazing permit renewal process.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Any livestock control facilities and/or rangeland improvements impacted during this operation will be replaced or repaired to their prior condition.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This action is consistent with the scope of impacts addressed in the White River ROD/RMP. The cumulative impacts of energy-related development are addressed in the White River ROD/RMP for each resource value that would be affected by the proposed action. The short-term duration of activity and of impacts would result in negligible cumulative impacts for most resources and no long-term cumulative impacts following cessation and reclamation of the proposed project.

REFERENCES CITED:

Armstrong, Harley J, and David G. Wolny

1989 Paleontological Resources of Northwest Colorado: A Regional Analysis. Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Larralde, Signa L.

1981 Cultural Resource Inventory of a Sample of BLM Lands in the Rangely Oil Field, Rio Blanco County, Northwestern Colorado. Nickens and Associates Consulting Archaeologists, Montrose, Colorado.

Tweto, Ogden

1979 Geologic Map of Colorado. United States Geologic Survey, Department of the Interior, Reston, Virginia.

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

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: The proposed action was presented to, and reviewed by the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on 03/23/2010.
Date

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Soils, Wastes, Hazardous or Solid, Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights	5/24/2010
Maggie Marston	Botanist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species	6/4/2010
Michael Selle	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources	6/14/2010
Matthew Dupire	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation , Rangeland Management	6/14/2010
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Wetlands and Riparian Zones	6/14/2010
Jim Michels	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation	06/09/2010
Jim Michels	Forester/ Fire / Fuels Technician	Fire Management, Forest Management	06/09/2010
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	05/12/2010
Linda Jones	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations	6/7/2010
Jim Michels	Natural Resource Specialist / Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources	06/09/2010
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horse Management	04/20/10

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

DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0125-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analysis of 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 approve the implementation of the pipeline as described proposed action with the addition of the mitigation measures listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

Soils

1. All construction and drilling activity shall cease when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless there are safety concerns or activities are otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer.
2. If salt is observed on the surface of soils during reclamation activities the AO will be notified and a plan will be developed with approval of the BLM to improve reclamation on the site.
3. If erosion features such as riling, gullyng, piping and mass wasting occur on disturbed surfaces subject to reclamation, the erosion features will be addressed immediately after observation by contacting the AO and submitting a plan to assure successful soil stabilization with BMPs to address the erosion problems.
4. When installing the pipeline, the soil shall be backfilled in such a manner so that there is no excessive mounding of the soil when backfilling and reclamation is complete.

Wastes, Hazardous and Solid

5. The release of any chemical, oil, petroleum product, produced water, or sewage, etc, must be contained immediately, cleaned up as soon as possible, and reported by the project proponent to the Bureau of Land Management according requirements specified in the Notice to Lessees and Operators of Onshore Federal and Indian Oil and Gas Leases (NTL-3A).

Water Quality, Surface/Ground

6. Provide for erosion-resistant surface drainage by adding necessary drainage facilities and armoring prior to fall rain or snow. When erosion is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site. In addition, straining or filtration mechanisms may also contribute to sediment removal from runoff.

7. Install the pipeline at least 4 feet below the existing channel bed in the tributaries to Stinking Water Creek and repair any erosion in these channels that may have been caused by the old pipeline route.

Vegetation

8. Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas associated with the proposed action, including all cut and fill slopes and topsoil stockpiles, with Standard Seed Mix #1 of the White River Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) (B-19, Appendix B). Seeding rates in the RMP are shown as pounds of Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre and apply to drill seeding. For broadcast application, double the seeding rate and then harrow to insure seed coverage.
9. Applied seed must be certified and free of noxious weeds and seed certification tags must be submitted to the Area Manager within 30 days of seeding.
10. The applicant will be responsible for eradicating cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. The applicant will use materials and methods as outlined in the RMP or authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager.

Invasive and Non-native Species

11. Use standard seed mix #1 for reclamation.
12. The applicant will be responsible for eradicating cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. The applicant will use materials and methods as outlined in the RMP or authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animal Species

13. Both nest sites will be revisited by BLM biologists prior to construction. Should one or both nest be found to be active, there would be no development allowed within 0.5 miles of the nest locations until the young have left the area (TL-01 WRRRA ROD).
14. All flowlines and rights-of-way involved in this action will be reclaimed and reseeded with the appropriate seed blend recommended by the Authorized Officer.

Rangeland Management

15. Any livestock control facilities and/or rangeland improvements impacted during this operation will be replaced or repaired to their prior condition.

Notifications, Information Sharing, & Policy

16. See COA document standard conditions regarding Notifications, Information Sharing, & Policy

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by the BLM White River Field Office staff during and after construction. Specific mitigation developed in this document will be followed. The operator will be notified of compliance related issues in writing, and depending on the nature of the issue(s), will be provided 30 days to resolve such issues.

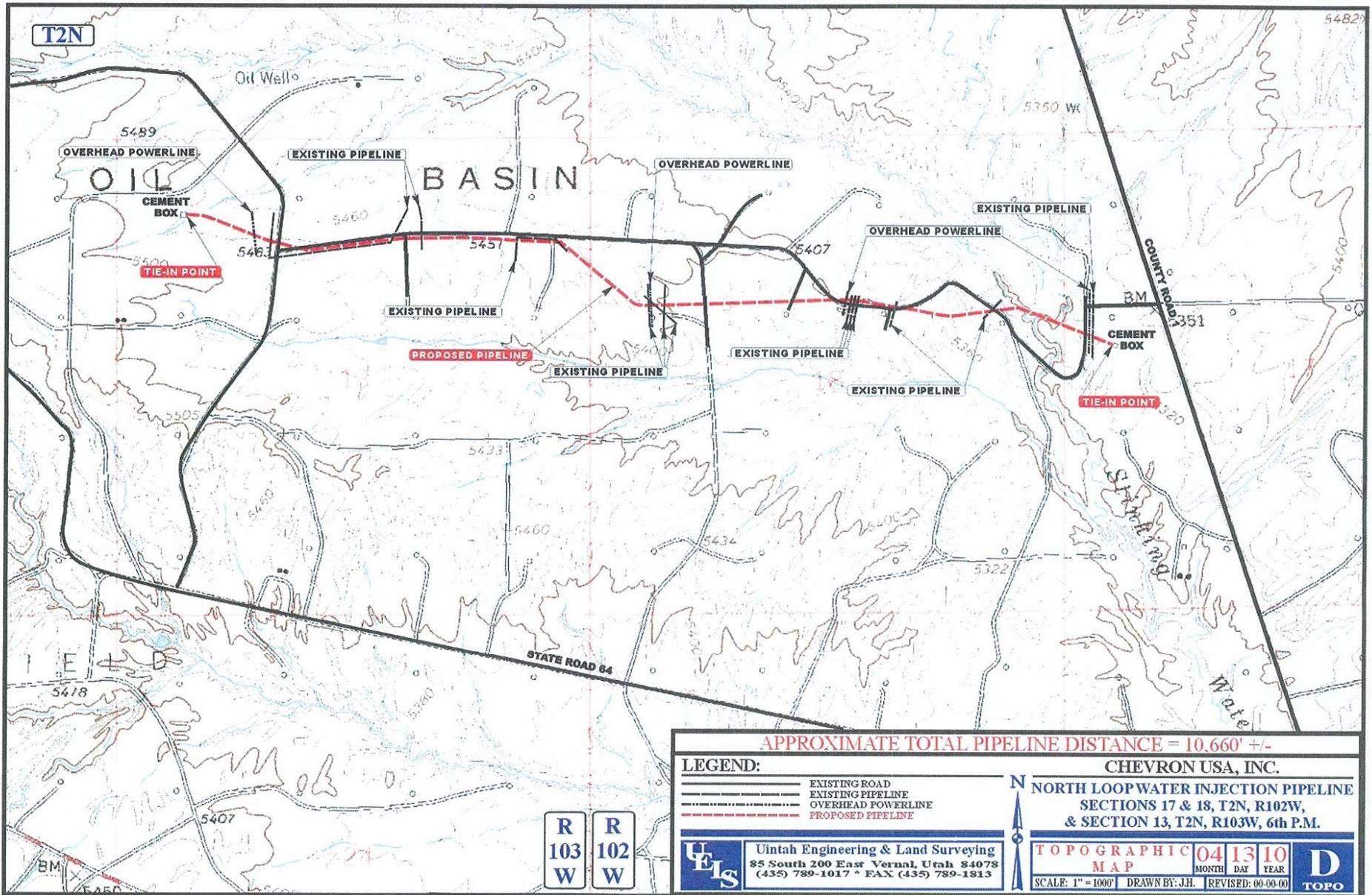
NAME OF PREPARER: Briana Potts

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: 
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 06/22/10

ATTACHMENTS: Two Project Maps



RECEIVED
APR 30 2010