

**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-110-2010-0239-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC74615

PROJECT NAME: Power line to Bargath's Ryan Gulch Plant

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian
T. 1 S., R. 98 W.,
sec. 35, lots 1, 8, and 9;
sec. 36, lots 12 and 13.
T. 2 S., R. 98 W.,
sec. 1, lots 24, 25, 26, 31, 34, and 35;
sec. 12, lots 11 and 12.

APPLICANT: White River Electric Association, Inc. (WREA)

ISSUES AND CONCERNS : WREA is currently designing a 138-kV power line to be constructed from the WREA McBryde Substation to the WREA Black Sulphur Substation. An application for a ROW grant is forthcoming. The 138-kV line will close the open loop in WREA's transmission infrastructure. The 138-kV power line will parallel this proposed 25-kV power line.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: WREA proposes to build a new 25-kV, three-phase overhead distribution power line to Bargath's Ryan Gulch Plant (see Exhibit A). The power line will begin at the existing power line (ROW COC50047) in T. 2 S., R. 98 W., section 35 near the Natural Soda facility. The proposed power line will be 11,668 feet long. The permanent ROW would be 25 feet (containing 6.70 acres, more or less) and all construction and maintenance would occur within this ROW. The power line will be overhead except for the buried portion from RBC Road #24 into the Ryan Gulch Plant site.

The recent construction of Bargath's Pitcher's Mound pipeline (analyzed in CO-110-2009-105-EA) created a corridor that will allow WREA access along the entire length of the proposed power line both for construction and future maintenance. WREA's proposed ROW would be a

safe and effective distance from the buried gas lines and constructed outside of Bargath's 50 feet wide natural gas pipeline and water line ROWs.

WREA intends to utilize BLM Road #1019, which was used during construction of the Pitcher's Mound pipeline, for construction of the power line and maintenance activities necessary during the lifetime of the project. The road runs from RBC Road #83 to RBC Road #24 adjacent to the pipeline ROW and the proposed power line ROW.

WREA would need to clear trees with chainsaws and hydro-ax for placement of approximately 45 poles and also where the trees would impede wire stringing efforts and future electrical clearances. On the steep slopes near RBC Road #24, a tracked vehicle would be necessary for accessing pole locations. Equipment to be used would be a backhoe, a 4-wheel drive 2-ton digger truck, a tracked vehicle, and standard utility line truck. The construction is expected to take 6 weeks to complete. WREA's Plan for Surface Reclamation of Disturbed Power Line Right-of-Way is contained in case file COC74615 and is available for review at BLM WRFO.

No Action Alternative: Under the no action alternative, this proposal would not be approved, the application would be denied, and the power line would not be built.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: The originally proposed power line route was close to a known raptor nest. After discussions with BLM White River Field Office (WRFO) wildlife biologists, WREA agreed to re-route the power line to the east in T. 2 S., R. 98 W., sections 35 and 36 and T. 2 S., R. 98 W., section 1 in order to avoid the raptor nest. This re-route moved the line closer to an existing well pad and road.

PURPOSE & 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.

The purpose of the action is to provide the opportunity to construct an overhead power line 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 for a right-of-way across BLM surface.

Decision to be Made: The BLM will decide whether or not to authorize the power line right-of-way 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: 2-49

Decision Language: “To make public lands available for the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations, in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of 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:

NATURAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The 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. Due to these industrial uses, increased population, and oil and gas development, emissions of air pollutants in the White River Basin due to exhaust and dust are likely to increase into the future. Despite increases in emissions, overall air quality conditions in the White River Basin are likely to continue to be good for some time due to effective atmospheric dispersion and limited transport of air pollutants from outside the area.

Although specific air quality monitoring data is not available for the project area, data has been collected in the region. BLM recently established two regional air quality monitoring sites, one in Rangely and one in Meeker, that measure criteria pollutants, specifically ozone, dust and nitrogen oxides. The cities of Grand Junction (southwest), Steamboat Springs (northeast), Rifle (southeast) and Parachute (south) all host air quality monitoring stations. Available monitoring data at these stations indicate that the area is likely to be in the attainment category, meaning that the ambient concentrations of criteria pollutants are less than the applicable air quality standards (National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and Colorado Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS)). However, it should be noted that not all criteria pollutants have been monitored at each station, and there is not continuous monitoring of all criteria pollutants at any of the stations. Also differences in the atmospheric conditions, proximity to emissions, and climate at any of these monitoring sites can make data from these sites less relevant to estimating air quality at the project's location.

The White River Basin and the nearby portions of the Colorado 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 (PSD) Class II. 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: The proposed action includes construction of a power transmission line. Visible dust may increase locally due to construction and vehicle traffic during installation of the electrical line. Non-criteria pollutants such as visibility, nitric oxide, and total suspended particulates (TSP) may experience slight, temporary increases as a result of the Proposed Action (no national ambient air quality standards have been set for non-criteria pollutants). Any potential increase in emissions would likely fall within NAAQ and CAAQ standards.

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

Mitigation: None.

SOILS

Affected Environment: There are no fragile soils, steep slopes, or landslide areas within the power line route. There is one section of poor soils north of County Road 24; this soil is Torriorthents-Rock outcrop complex soils. Most of the route is in the Rentsac channery loam soils. These soils have the potential for erosion, especially if they are accessed when soils are saturated.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: When placing power poles, rubber-tired vehicles are used to access the pole location and place the pole. An auger is used to drill a hole, the pole is placed, and the soil is replaced. Ground disturbance is typically limited to the location of the pole. Additional disturbance could occur to access the power pole locations for installation and/or maintenance. These impacts would be more pronounced when soils are saturated.

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

Mitigation: The following should be applied as conditions of approval:

All construction or maintenance will be postponed when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches or more, unless otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer (AO). Emergency maintenance may occur when saturated soil conditions exist without prior approval of the AO. Timely notification is required after emergency maintenance occurs.

If access to pole locations for construction and/or maintenance result in ruts that are 3 inches or deeper, the holder will notify the AO and initiate reclamation activities including seeding with a

BLM approved seed mix, mulching, and installation of water bars or other means to reduce the concentration of storm water along tire ruts.

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: WREA would place the transmission lines overhead along the existing Bargath pipeline corridor, but bury a portion (from RBC Road #24 into the Ryan Gulch Plant site) of the line parallel with the Bargath pipeline. The buried pipelines transport natural gas and produced water generated from Williams Production RMT gas wells; no other materials with hazardous characteristics are known to have been used, stored, or disposed of on the subject lands within the project area beyond the natural gas and produced water contained in Bargath's buried pipelines.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The operator does not identify any hazardous substances to be used during operations associated with this project, or any solid or hazardous wastes which would be generated as a result of the project. There is potential to rupture Bargath's existing buried pipeline when excavating the soil to construct the trench to bury the proposed transmission line; the potential for such an accident is minimized by the proponent's required use of Colorado One Call and responsibility to cooperate with existing right-of-way holders prior to construction. Produced water, condensate, or natural gas could be released in volumes potentially harmful to human health or the environment if the nearby Bargath line were compromised and the released wastes were not contained before encountering biological receptors through soil, water, or air exposure pathways.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Natural gas and produced waters contained in the buried Bargath pipelines would not be compromised due to excavation of soil within the right-of-way.

Mitigation: Comply with all Federal, State and/or local laws, rules, and regulations addressing the emission of and/or the handling, use, and release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment.

Report all emissions or releases of any quantity of any substance that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment to the Bureau of Land Management's White River Field Office at (970) 878-3800.

Construction sites and all facilities shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times; any waste materials shall be disposed of promptly at an appropriate waste disposal site. "Waste" means all discarded matter including, but not limited to, human waste, trash, garbage, refuse, oil drums, petroleum products, ashes, and equipment.

Regardless of a substance's status as exempt or non-exempt and regardless of fault, provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any quantity of a substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment. Where the lessee/operator fails, refuses, or neglects to provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground), and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any quantity of a substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, the Bureau of Land Management's White River Field Office may take measures to clean-up and test air, water (surface and/or ground), and soils at the lessee's expense. Such action shall not relieve the lessee/operator of any liability or responsibility.

With the acceptance of this authorization or the running of thirty calendar days from its issuance, whichever occurs first, the lessee/operator, and through the lessee/operator, its agents, employees, subcontractors, successors and assigns, stipulates and agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the United States Government, its agencies, and employees from all liability associated with the emission or release of substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment.

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

Affected Environment: This project is mostly within the Ryan Gulch watershed which drains into Piceance Creek and then into the White River. The water quality classification of all tributaries to Piceance Creek (segment 16) is Aquatic Life Warm 2, Primary Contact Recreation, and Agriculture.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action includes the new construction of 11,668 feet of electrical line and the installation of 45 electrical poles. The pole installation is not likely to impact surface waters due to the localized nature of the disturbance. Access to the pole installation points and maintenance could result in surface disturbance that is linear and might concentrate runoff in locations and cause erosion. Any erosion that would occur could result in increased sedimentation to downstream waters. All the drainages in the area of the project are ephemeral, so any impacts would be indirect to segment 16 of the White River drainage.

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

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: It is extremely unlikely that this project would result in an exceedence of state water quality standards since the classification of receiving waters is Warm Water 2 and Ryan Gulch has intermittent flow.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: The proposed power line begins at an existing power line just north of County Road (CR) 83 and follows an unnamed ridge south to the Ryan Gulch Gas Plant located in the bottom of Ryan Gulch (south of CR 24). Ryan Gulch is an ephemeral system

which generally contains water during spring run-off. Vegetation in the Ryan Gulch drainage is comprised of basin big sagebrush and greasewood, with an herbaceous understory of cheatgrass intermixed with some perennial species. The nearest system which supports riparian vegetation is privately-owned portions of Piceance Creek, which is separated from the project area by over 2.5 miles of ephemeral channel.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Installation of the proposed power line would have no direct impact on riparian habitats. The project area is well removed from any riparian habitat. Ridgeline access and pole placement would have no measurable influence on sediment contribution to Ryan Gulch and would, therefore, preclude any reasonable potential for indirectly affecting the condition of downstream channel (Piceance Creek) or riparian resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have any direct or indirect influence on downstream riparian habitats.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The nearest BLM administered reach is located over a dozen channel miles from the proposed power line. Neither the proposed nor the no action alternative would have any reasonable potential to influence the function or condition of the Piceance Creek channel or its riparian values.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Starting from the south, the proposed power line traverses approximately 1,100 feet of foothill swale ecological site. The majority of the proposed power line (7,100 feet) then crosses a pinyon-juniper woodland site which varies from sparse middle age to mature. The remainder of the route (3,400 feet) crosses a portion of a chained pinyon-juniper woodland site and a rolling loam ecological site which are dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush with an understory of western wheatgrass, needle and thread, and a variety of annual and perennial forbs. The rolling loam site is being actively invaded by pinyon and juniper and is in stage one of the invasion process.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action could create up to 6.7 acres of vegetation disturbance. The principal impact to vegetation will be partial or complete removal of vegetation along the right of way and the earthen disturbance associated with removing vegetation and placement of poles. Disturbance associated with construction and tree clearing along the right of way may provide sufficient disturbance to allow for establishment of cheatgrass. In terms of plant community composition, structure, and function, the principal negative impact over the long term would occur if cheatgrass or noxious weeds are allowed to establish and proliferate on the disturbed areas resulting from power line construction and the associated tree clearing.

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

Mitigation: Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas with Native Seed Mix # 3 listed below. Seed mixture rates are Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre. Drill seeding is the preferred method; however, if disturbed areas are not accessible to drill seeding equipment, seed should be applied using a broadcast method at double the rate listed below, followed by harrowing to provide adequate soil cover.

Native Seed Mix # 3		
Western wheatgrass (Rosanna)	2	Gravelly 10"-14", Pinyon/Juniper Woodland, Stony Foothills, 147 (Mountain Mahogany)
Beardless Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar)	2	
Thickspike wheatgrass (Critana)	1	
Indian ricegrass (Rimrock)	2	
Fourwing saltbush (Wytana or VNS N Lat)	1	
Utah sweetvetch	.5	

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Vegetation in the project area currently meets the Standard on a site, watershed, and landscape basis and is expected to continue to meet the Standard in the future following implementation of the proposed action.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The noxious weeds bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), and houndstoung (*Cynoglossum officinale*) occur in the vicinity of the project area but are not known to be at the specific project site(s). The invasive annual cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) occurs throughout the project area primarily on areas of unvegetated earthen disturbance in association with roads, pipelines, and well locations.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action has the potential to create minor earthen disturbance, which, if it is not promptly revegetated, could result in the establishment and proliferation of cheatgrass and noxious weeds on site.

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

Mitigation: WREA will be responsible for monitoring the occurrence of noxious weeds on site and eradicating/controlling same for the life of the project using materials and methods approved in advance by the BLM Authorized officer.

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

Affected Environment: There are no plant species listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act or plants considered sensitive by the BLM that are known to inhabit areas influenced by the proposed action. The Ryan Gulch Area of Critical Environmental

Concern (ACEC) is located approximately 1.5 miles to the east. This ACEC contains known populations of two federally listed threatened plants, *Physaria congesta* and *Physaria obovata*. Areas west of the Ryan Gulch ACEC have been thoroughly surveyed for threatened plants during the 2010 blooming season to confirm that threatened plant populations do not extend west of the ACEC boundary. Both *Physaria* species are associated with outcrops of the Green River formation, which are not present in the vicinity of the proposed action. Thus no occupied, suitable, or potential special status plant habitat should occur in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is not expected to affect special status plant species or associated habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no action alternative is not expected to affect special status plant species or associated habitats.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The proposed and no-action alternatives are not expected to affect populations or habitats of 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 animal species listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act that are known to inhabit or derive important use from the project area. There are a number of BLM-sensitive animals whose distribution encompasses the area, including northern goshawk, Townsend's big eared bat, and Yuma and fringed myotis, but none are likely to consistently use ridgeline woodland habitats adjacent to an existing vehicle way as roost or nest substrate. Further, a raptor survey conducted in this locale in 2010 did not suggest any use by goshawk during the nesting season. The nearest known goshawk nest is roughly five miles from the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: See discussion regarding woodland raptors in the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have any direct or indirect influence on special status species.

Mitigation: See mitigation regarding woodland raptors in Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The woodland habitats encompassing the project area, by all appearances, meet the land health standards though these stands are not known to receive substantive use by any special status species. The proposed and no action alternative are not expected to have any reasonable

potential to detract from the subsequent utility of adjacent stands to serve as bat roost or goshawk nest habitat, and as such, would have no effective influence on continued meeting of the standard.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The northern terminus of the proposed power line is located just north of CR 83 in an open sagebrush park with encroaching pinyon-juniper. It follows, to some degree, an existing road down a pinyon-juniper dominated ridgeline to the bottom of Ryan Gulch where it ties into the Ryan Gulch Gas Plant. Approximately 0.50 mile (~1.5 acres) of the pipeline (central portion) is heavily wooded (pinyon-juniper), with 0.90 miles (~2.7 acres) traversing open-canopied, low-density woodlands. The remaining 0.8 miles (~2.4 acres) pass through predominantly Wyoming big sagebrush communities.

The big sagebrush and pinyon-juniper communities provide suitable nesting habitat for many species of migratory birds during the breeding season (May 15 – July 15) including but not limited to: Vespers sparrow, sage thrasher, blue-gray gnatcatcher, black-throated gray warbler, Bewick's wren, dusky flycatcher, and gray flycatcher. The only Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC; designated regionally by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for long-term declining population trends) within the project area are Brewer's sparrow (BLM sensitive species) and juniper titmouse.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would directly involve nearly seven acres of sagebrush and pinyon-juniper communities. These habitats take anywhere from 30 years (sagebrush) to several hundred years (pinyon-juniper) to return to pre-disturbance conditions. Vegetation removal outside of the breeding/nesting season would have no direct impact on migratory bird nesting success. Should vegetation removal take place during the migratory bird nesting season (generally May 15 – July 15), there would be greater chance of displacement of birds, nest abandonment, and potential mortality (mainly of nestlings). Vegetation clearing will generally be confined to those areas around each power pole which should minimize the number of nests involved. Nest disruption from nearby activity is also possible, but most activity between poles would be transient and short-term and would generally not result in nest abandonment or chick mortality from prolonged absence of the brooding bird. As discussed in the proposed action, access to the power line will be along an existing right-of-way and should not require any permanent off-road/cross-country disturbance. Because of the proximity of the proposed power line to existing corridors, it is suspected that the proposed action will involve relatively few nesting pairs.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no conceivable influence on migratory birds under the no action alternative.

Mitigation: None.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Privately-owned sections of Piceance Creek, the nearest system supporting higher-order aquatic vertebrate populations, is located over 2.5 valley miles

downstream from the southern terminus of the proposed power line. Piceance Creek provides habitat for native fish species including speckled dace and mountain sucker, a BLM sensitive species. Northern leopard frog, another BLM sensitive species, is also located along the Piceance Creek system.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Installation of the proposed power line would have no direct impact on aquatic resources. The project area is well removed from systems which support higher-order aquatic populations. Ridgeline access and pole placement would have no measurable influence on sediment contribution to Ryan Gulch and would, therefore, preclude any reasonable potential for indirectly affecting the condition of downstream channel (Piceance Creek) or aquatic resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have potential to influence riparian or channel resources as aquatic habitat.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): The nearest BLM-administered reach is over a dozen channel miles downstream from the project area. Neither the proposed action nor the no action alternative would have any reasonable potential to influence the function or condition of the Piceance Creek channel or its aquatic habitat values.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The low to mid elevation pinyon-juniper and sagebrush habitats that encompass the project area are categorized by the Colorado Division of Wildlife as mule deer severe winter range. Severe winter range is a critical habitat component that is occupied by the majority of the herd in the most severe winters (e.g., deep snowpack and/or low temperatures). These areas generally receive heaviest use from January through April.

Mature components of pinyon-juniper surrounding the project site may provide suitable habitat for several woodland raptors including sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, long-eared owl, and several other small owl species. There is a known nest (occupied by Cooper's hawk in 2009 and long-eared owl in 2010) approximately 0.25 miles from the project area. Additionally, there are several nests which have been inactive in recent years in the area, one being nearly directly in-line with the proposed route.

Non-game mammals using this area are typical and widely distributed in like habitats across the resource area and northwest Colorado; there are no narrowly endemic or highly specialized species known to inhabit those lands potentially influenced by this action.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Power line installation would directly involve roughly seven acres of pinyon-juniper and big sagebrush habitats, most of which would be confined to disturbance around individual power poles. Vegetation clearing between

poles is expected to be minimal. In general, this action is considered singular and short-term in nature; however, increased activity may influence local big game populations if installation should take place during the critical use period. Once installed, the proposed action would have no potential to substantively influence big game animal distribution or behavior. The temporary reduction of woody shrubs would be of minimal consequence to the available forage base for big game.

Discussions took place with WREA on December 3, 2010, in which it was agreed upon to move the proposed route roughly 75 meters to the east in T.1 S., R. 98 W., Sections 35 and 36 and T. 2 S., R. 98 W., Section 1, thereby pulling in the route closer to an existing well pad and road. This move would effectively avoid a known nest and better retain the character of the nest stand.

This area was surveyed for raptors in 2010 in conjunction with another project (Pitcher Mound Project; WestWater Engineering 2010). Several inactive and one active nest were found within the project area. A raptor survey (re-check of existing nests) will need to be completed and results submitted to BLM staff biologist prior to power line installation. Should an active nest be located, appropriate timing stipulations would be applied depending on species.

The relatively confined extent and short duration of activities would have potential to adversely affect very few individual birds or small mammal reproductive activities and would have no measurable effect of any species at the population level.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have any potential to affect terrestrial wildlife.

Mitigation: No development activities, including vegetation removal, will be allowed from January 1 – April 30 to avoid unnecessary disturbance in critical big game habitat.

All known nests within ¼ mile either side of the proposed route will be revisited and their status documented prior to power line installation. Results will be submitted to BLM staff biologists. Should an active nest be located, appropriate timing stipulations would be applied depending on species (TL-01 and TL-04 and NSO-02 and NS-03 from the WRRR ROD).

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The present land base currently meets the land health standard, but it is becoming increasingly affected by physical and behavioral impacts associated with oil and gas and oil shale development activities. This project, by itself, is associated with those industries, but would pose little, if any, incremental contribution to cumulative impacts that would compromise fully achieving or continued meeting of the standard.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Approximately 78% of the project's APE (Area of Potential Effect) has been recently inventoried to the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Davenport 2010, Conner et al. 2005, Highland 2005). No cultural resources potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) have been identified within 100 meters of the

project area. No cultural resources, including those not eligible for NRHP listing, have been located within 50 meters of the project area. Due to a necessary reroute after completion of the inventory made for this project, the remaining portion (22%) has only been covered by a Class III inventory that is not typically used for Section 106 compliance for new construction (Schwendler et al. 2008).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Because overlapping Class III inventories did not locate historic properties in or near the project area, the project's relatively low impact to soils (with soil disturbance mostly limited to the installation of poles), and the general area has a low incidence of properties potentially eligible for the NRHP, the project has no potential to disturb NRHP-Eligible historic properties.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no action alternative would have no potential to affect cultural resources.

Mitigation: In the event that cultural resources and/or human remains are discovered during operations, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM authorized officer will be notified immediately. BLM, in cooperation with the proponent and/or cultural resource consultant, will ensure that the cultural resources and/or human remains are protected from further disturbance until BLM determines the treatment approach, and the treatment is completed.

Unless otherwise noted in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the SHPO [office of the State Historic Preservation Officer], select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. BLM will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.

If human remains are discovered on BLM-administered land, the treatment of human remains will be in accordance with NAGPRA [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act] and BLM policy. If human remains are discovered on private or state land during a BLM undertaking, the BLM will notify the State of Colorado Archaeologist immediately, who will comply with Colorado Revised Statutes (Appendix) regarding the discovery of human remains (24-80-1302).

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The project area has been mapped as containing the following formations, known to produce scientifically-valuable fossils as indicated (Tweto 1979; Armstrong and Wolny 1989):

Uinta Formation—Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 5—Eocene mammals (titanotheres, uintatheres, miacid carnivores, possibly others), reptiles (turtles and crocodylians), fish (vertebrae, spines, and scales, likely including Lepisosteidae),

gastropods (high-spired and turitellid snails), insect larvae, and plants (leaves, wood, algae, etc.).

Modern Alluvium—PFYC 2—Holocene animals, including Bison and horses.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Due to the small impact post hole drilling represents to the underlying native sedimentary stones, the project has a very small potential to adversely impact fossil resources, despite largely occurring in a high-potential (PFYC 5) area.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no action alternative would have no potential to affect fossil resources.

Mitigation: Due to the inability for the monitoring of hole drilling to produce intact, recoverable fossils, monitoring will NOT be required. However, concerning fossil remains that may occur on the surface, the operator is 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 (over 25 lbs./day, up to 250 lbs./year), 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 proponent or any of his agents must:

- (a) stop work immediately at that site;
- (b) contact the appropriate BLM representative, typically the project inspector or Authorized Officer (AO), as soon as possible; and
- (c) make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage.

The BLM or designated paleontologist 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 operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, 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.

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 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
Wild Horses	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	

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within a visual resource management (VRM) class III area. The objective of the VRM III class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape. The area has been and is being developed for the extraction of natural gas and sodium bicarbonate. There are 12 wellpads with pipelines and the Natural Soda Inc. solution mine located within one mile of the proposed project.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed power line route is primarily on a ridge top which would be visible to the casual observer traveling Rio Blanco County Roads 31 and 24. The route will be adjacent to an existing pipeline route to Bargath's Ryan Gulch Plant. The construction of the power line will create a contrast in color with the removal of the pinyon/juniper for the power poles and trees that may interfere with the power line. The removal of as little trees as possible will reduce the visual impact and the objectives of the VRM III classification would be retained.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no additional environmental consequences.

Mitigation: Remove as little trees as needed for the poles and follow mitigations listed in the Forestry section.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within both the B6 Yellow Creek and the C6 Lower Piceance Basin Fire Management polygons. The vegetation for the B6 Yellow Creek and the C6 Lower Piceance Basin polygon is primarily pinyon and juniper woodland and Wyoming big sagebrush. Fires historically are lightning caused in the area of the proposed power line route and range in size from 0.1 to 5 acres.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Due to the existing tree cover of pinyon and juniper, there will be a need for the operator to clear some of these trees. If not adequately treated, these trees will result in elevated hazardous fuels conditions and remain on-site for many years. Vegetation removal and soil disturbance could provide an opportunity for noxious weeds and cheatgrass to establish or expand in the area, which would increase fuel loads. These accumulations of dead material are very receptive to fire brands and spotting from wind driven fires and can greatly accelerate the rate of spread of the fire front. If not treated the slash and woody debris will create an elevated hazardous dead fuel loading which could pose significant control problems in the event of a wildfire. Additionally, there would be greater threat to the public and fire suppression personnel.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no clearing of the trees and no increase in dead fuel loading susceptible to fire.

Mitigation: Where trees are cleared by chainsaw, boles should be limbed so that the height is no greater than 24 inches, and the limbs shall be scattered to reduce concentrated fuel loading.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action would traverse pinyon and juniper stands that are mature and on productive exposures. Productive exposure types occur on primarily lower gradient slopes and north and east aspects. Growth rates are higher in these areas due to soil features which allow for effective use of precipitation. Mature pinyon/juniper trees on productive exposures establish themselves as the dominant plant community on the site.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Due to the nature of the proposed action there is a need to remove trees at power pole locations and a further need to remove trees that may interfere with the power line. The removal of trees by hydro-ax will reduce the accumulation of materials at the pole locations. The removal of trees by chainsaw will primarily be under the power lines and the material will remain on site unless dispersed. If the boles of the trees are visible to the public, the public may attempt to remove them for fire wood. It is

unknown how many trees will need to be removed for the pole locations and what may interfere with the power line.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no removal of pinyon and juniper trees.

Mitigation: Trees removed by chainsaw will be cut with a stump height no greater than 6 inches and all limbs will be scattered. If trees are visible to the public off of the travel routes, the trees will be cut into 4 foot lengths down to 4 inches in diameter and placed along the routes to facilitate removal and to deter the public from traveling the power line. Because it is unknown how many trees will need to be removed for poles and what may interfere with the power line, WREA will contact the BLM WRFO Forester post construction so that an inspection of the site may take place and an estimate of trees removed may be calculated for billing.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located within the Ryan pasture of the Square S allotment (06027), which is authorized for cattle use. The proposed power line route crosses two existing buried water pipelines used to feed livestock water sources. The power line will cross the water line, which runs from the top of the ridge south into Ryan Gulch, three times. This water line follows the Bargath natural gas pipeline. The other water line, which begins at the same location on top of the ridge and runs north-east following the ridgeline, will be crossed once. Based on shapefile data provided by the proponent showing locations of power poles, it is not expected that the water line will be affected by construction of the power line

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The individual proposed action would have minimal impacts on the authorized grazing use because the amount of potential new surface disturbance (6.7 BLM acres) is nominal in regards to the scale of the Square S allotment (~79,552 acres).

The 6.7 BLM acres of potential disturbance would be considered short term following successful reclamation. Therefore, there is no opportunity of long-term active Animal Unit Month (AUM) loss associated with the individual proposed action. An AUM is the amount of forage necessary for the substance of 1 cow (5 sheep) for a period of 1 month. Without successful reclamation of seeded species within disturbed areas, a potential exists to increase the ground cover of undesirable plant species that invade disturbed sites, thus decreasing available forage for livestock. The livestock waterline could potentially be damaged as a result of construction if power poles are set adjacent to or on top off the line.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Avoid setting any power poles immediately adjacent to the existing water lines to avoid cutting or puncturing the line. Any livestock control facilities and/or rangeland improvements impacted during construction will be replaced or repaired to their prior condition.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment: Rio Blanco County (CR) Roads 83, 31, 24 and BLM Road 1019 are the main access into the project area. CR 31 and 24 have a paved surface and CR 83 and BLM Road 1019 are dirt surface. BLM Road 1019 and a pipeline follow the general direction of the proposed power line route.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Due to the nature of the proposed action, there is a need to travel off of the existing roads to the power pole locations to install the poles and power line. The result of the travel will create a disturbance in the form of a two-track route that will be visible to an individual traveling BLM 1019.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no additional environmental consequences.

Mitigation: Reclaim two-track routes created for power pole access where these routes differ from BLM 1019 to deter use.

REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS

Affected Environment: The power line route follows and crosses existing natural gas pipelines. Existing pipeline rights-of-way are authorized to Enterprise Products Operating, Bargath, Williams Northwest Pipeline, Colorado Interstate Gas Company, and Questar Pipeline Company. The power line route also follows and crosses Bargath water lines, Williams Production well access roads, Qwest telephone cable, Rio Blanco County Road 83, and BLM Road 1019.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There is the potential during power line construction, especially when placing poles, to damage existing pipelines and water lines. There will be an increase in the use of Rio Blanco County Road 83 and BLM Road 1019 during construction and for future maintenance of the power line. In order to avoid impacts to or from existing rights-of-way, the proponent would need to use Colorado One Call and coordinate with existing right-of-way holders prior to construction to determine appropriate safety measures and any maintenance of the adjacent ROWs.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: The holder is responsible for obtaining all necessary state and local permits.

The holder shall take all measures necessary to protect existing facilities and coordinate with ROW holders prior to power line construction. The holder shall contact Colorado One Call and the following right-of-way holders: Qwest, Williams Production, Enterprise Products Operating, Bargath, Williams Northwest Pipeline, Colorado Interstate Gas Company, and Questar Pipeline Company.

The holder shall provide the BLM Authorized Officer with data in a format compatible with the WRFO's ESRI ArcGIS Geographic Information System (GIS) to accurately locate and identify the right-of-way and all constructed infrastructure, within 60 days of construction completion. Acceptable data formats are: (1) corrected global positioning system (GPS) files with sub-meter accuracy or better; (2) ESRI shapefiles or geodatabases; or at last resort, (3) AutoCAD .dwg or .dxf files. Option 2 is highly preferred. In ALL cases the data must be submitted in UTM Zone 13N, NAD 83, in units of meters. Data may be submitted as: (1) an email attachment; or (2) on a standard compact disk (CD) in compressed (WinZip only) or uncompressed format. All data shall include metadata, for each submitted layer, that conforms to the Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata from the Federal Geographic Data Committee standards. Questions should be directed to WRFO BLM GIS staff at (970) 878-3800.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: There is a large amount of oil and gas development around the proposed action. This development includes access roads, well pads, and pipelines. Regarding the analysis of cumulative effects of this action on renewable and non-renewable resources associated with this project and other future projects that are similar in both scope and extent, cumulative impacts of power lines are addressed in the White River ROD/RMP for each resource value (USDI BLM 1997). Moreover, the current proposed action, as described above, is consistent with the scope of impacts addressed in the White River ROD/RMP.

REFERENCES CITED:

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

Conner, Carl E., Barbara Davenport, Dan Archuleta, and Jim Conner

2005 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Seven (7) Pipeline ROW's in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Bargath Inc. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Davenport, Barbara

2010 Class III Cultural Resources Inventory for the Proposed Bargath 25kV Powerline (2.25 miles) in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for White River Electric Association [GRI Project #2010-61]. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. WRFO CRIR# 10-11-22.

Highland, Steve

2005 A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for the Proposed Ryan Gulch 2-D Seismic Project, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. TRC Mariah Associates, Laramie, Wyoming.

Schwendler, Rebecca, Sarah Baer, Karen Reed, Scott Phillips, Scott Slessman, Matthew Bandy, Nicole Kromarek, Scott Bowen, Max Wolk, Caryn M. Berg, Paul Burnett, Tom Witt,

Sean Doyle, Michelle Delmas, Michael Cregger, John Kennedy, Judy Cooper, Zonna Barnes, Amanda Cohen, Cynthia Manseau, Michael Retter, Dan Shosky, and Erin Salisbury

2008 A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for the Ryan Gulch 3-D Geophysical Exploration Project, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. SWCA Environmental Consultants, Broomfield, Colorado. WRFO CRIR# 09-127-01.

Tweto, Ogden

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

WestWater Engineering

2010 Ryan Gulch Gathering System - Pitcher Mound Pipeline Corridors 3 and 4. WestWater Engineering, Grand Junction, CO.

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 August 24, 2010.

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Water Quality (Surface and Ground), Hydrology and Water Rights, and Soils	10/13/2010
Jill Schulte	Botanist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species	9/16/2010
Geoffrey Haymes	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources	12/15/2010
Tyrell Turner	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation , Rangeland Management	12/14/2010
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Wetlands and Riparian Zones	12/06/10
Christina Barlow	Natural Resource Specialist/HazMat Coordinator	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	12/21/2010
Jim Michels	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation,	11/29/2010
Jim Michels	Forester /Fire / Fuels Technician	Fire Management, Forest Management	11/29/2010
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	09/08/2010
Stacey Burke	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations	12/20/2010
Jim Michels	Natural Resource Specialist / Outdoor	Visual Resources	11/29/2010

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
	Recreation Planner		
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horses	10/08/2010

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

DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0239-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 proposed action as described in this EA with the addition of the mitigation listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. All construction or maintenance shall be postponed when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches or more, unless otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer (AO). Emergency maintenance may occur when saturated soil conditions exist without prior approval of the AO. Timely notification is required after emergency maintenance occurs.
2. If access to pole locations for construction and/or maintenance result in ruts that are 3 inches or deeper, the holder shall notify the AO and initiate reclamation activities including seeding with a BLM approved seed mix, mulching, and installation of water bars or other means to reduce the concentration of storm water along tire ruts.
3. The holder shall comply with all Federal, State and/or local laws, rules, and regulations addressing the emission of and/or the handling, use, and release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment.
4. The holder shall report all emissions or releases of any quantity of any substance that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment to the Bureau of Land Management's White River Field Office at (970) 878-3800.
5. Construction sites and all facilities shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times; any waste materials shall be disposed of promptly at an appropriate waste disposal site. "Waste" means all discarded matter including, but not limited to, human waste, trash, garbage, refuse, oil drums, petroleum products, ashes, and equipment.
6. Regardless of a substance's status as exempt or non-exempt and regardless of fault, the holder shall provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground), and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any quantity of a substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment. Where the holder fails, refuses, or neglects to provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground), and soils

contaminated by the emission or release of any quantity of a substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, the Bureau of Land Management’s White River Field Office may take measures to clean-up and test air, water (surface and/or ground), and soils at the holder’s expense. Such action shall not relieve the holder of any liability or responsibility.

7. With the acceptance of this authorization or the running of thirty calendar days from its issuance, whichever occurs first, the holder, and through the holder, its agents, employees, subcontractors, successors and assigns, stipulates and agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the United States Government, its agencies, and employees from all liability associated with the emission or release of substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment.
8. The holder shall promptly revegetate all disturbed areas with Native Seed Mix # 3 listed below. Seed mixture rates are Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre. Drill seeding is the preferred method; however, if disturbed areas are not accessible to drill seeding equipment, seed should be applied using a broadcast method at double the rate listed below, followed by harrowing to provide adequate soil cover.

Native Seed Mix # 3	
Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per acre
Western wheatgrass (Rosanna)	2
Beardless Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar)	2
Thickspike wheatgrass (Critana)	1
Indian ricegrass (Rimrock)	2
Fourwing saltbush (Wytana or VNS N Lat)	1
Utah sweetvetch	.5

9. The holder shall be responsible for monitoring the occurrence of noxious weeds on site and eradicating/controlling same for the life of the project using materials and methods approved in advance by the BLM Authorized officer.
10. **No development activities**, including vegetation removal, shall be allowed **from January 1 – April 30** to avoid unnecessary disturbance in critical big game habitat.
11. All known nests within ¼ mile either side of the proposed route shall be revisited and their status documented prior to power line installation. Results shall be submitted to BLM staff biologists. Should an active nest be located, appropriate timing stipulations would be applied depending on species (TL-01 and TL-04 and NSO-02 and NSO-03 from the WRRRA ROD).
12. In the event that cultural resources and/or human remains are discovered during operations, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM authorized officer will be notified immediately. BLM, in cooperation with the holder and/or cultural resource consultant, will ensure that the cultural resources and/or human remains are protected from further disturbance until BLM determines the treatment approach, and the treatment is completed.

13. Unless otherwise noted in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the SHPO [office of the State Historic Preservation Officer], select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. BLM will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
14. If human remains are discovered on BLM-administered land, the treatment of human remains will be in accordance with NAGPRA [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act] and BLM policy. If human remains are discovered on private or state land during a BLM undertaking, the BLM will notify the State of Colorado Archaeologist immediately, who will comply with Colorado Revised Statutes (Appendix) regarding the discovery of human remains (24-80-1302).
15. Due to the inability for the monitoring of hole drilling to produce intact, recoverable fossils, monitoring will NOT be required. However, concerning fossil remains that may occur on the surface, the holder is 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 (over 25 lbs./day, up to 250 lbs./year), 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 holder or any of his agents must:
 - (a) stop work immediately at that site;
 - (b) contact the appropriate BLM representative, typically the project inspector or Authorized Officer (AO), as soon as possible; and
 - (c) make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage.

The BLM or designated paleontologist 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 holder 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, significant delays may occur while the AO enacts mitigation procedures. The holder 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 holder will then be allowed to resume construction.

16. The holder shall remove as few trees as needed for the poles. Trees removed by chainsaw shall be cut with a stump height no greater than 6 inches, boles shall be limbed so that the height is no greater than 24 inches, and all limbs shall be scattered. If trees are visible to the public off of the travel routes, the trees shall be cut into 4 foot lengths down to 4 inches in diameter and placed along the routes to facilitate removal and to deter the public from

traveling the power line. Because it is unknown how many trees will need to be removed for poles and what may interfere with the power line, WREA shall contact the BLM WRFO Forester post construction so that an inspection of the site may take place and an estimate of trees removed may be calculated for billing.

17. The holder shall avoid setting any power poles immediately adjacent to the existing water lines to avoid cutting or puncturing the line. Any livestock control facilities and/or rangeland improvements impacted during construction shall be replaced or repaired to their prior condition.
18. The holder shall reclaim two-track routes created for power pole access where these routes differ from BLM 1019 to deter use.
19. The holder is responsible for obtaining all necessary state and local permits.
20. The holder shall take all measures necessary to protect existing facilities and coordinate with ROW holders prior to power line construction.
21. The holder shall provide the BLM Authorized Officer with data in a format compatible with the WRFO's ESRI ArcGIS Geographic Information System (GIS) to accurately locate and identify the right-of-way and all constructed infrastructure, within 60 days of construction completion. Acceptable data formats are: (1) corrected global positioning system (GPS) files with sub-meter accuracy or better; (2) ESRI shapefiles or geodatabases; or at last resort, (3) AutoCAD .dwg or .dxf files. Option 2 is highly preferred. In ALL cases the data must be submitted in UTM Zone 13N, NAD 83, in units of meters. Data may be submitted as: (1) an email attachment; or (2) on a standard compact disk (CD) in compressed (WinZip only) or uncompressed format. All data shall include metadata, for each submitted layer, that conforms to the Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata from the Federal Geographic Data Committee standards. Questions should be directed to WRFO BLM GIS staff at (970) 878-3800.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by WRFO staff during and after construction. Specific mitigation developed in the associated Environmental Assessment will be followed. The holder will be notified of compliance related issues and depending on the nature of the issue(s), will be provided 30 days to resolve such issues.

NAME OF PREPARER: Stacey Burke

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Heather Sauls

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

01/10/2011

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit A – Map of proposed action

WREA Power line to Bargath's Ryan Gulch Plant
T. 1 S., R. 98 W., and T. 2 S., R. 98 W.

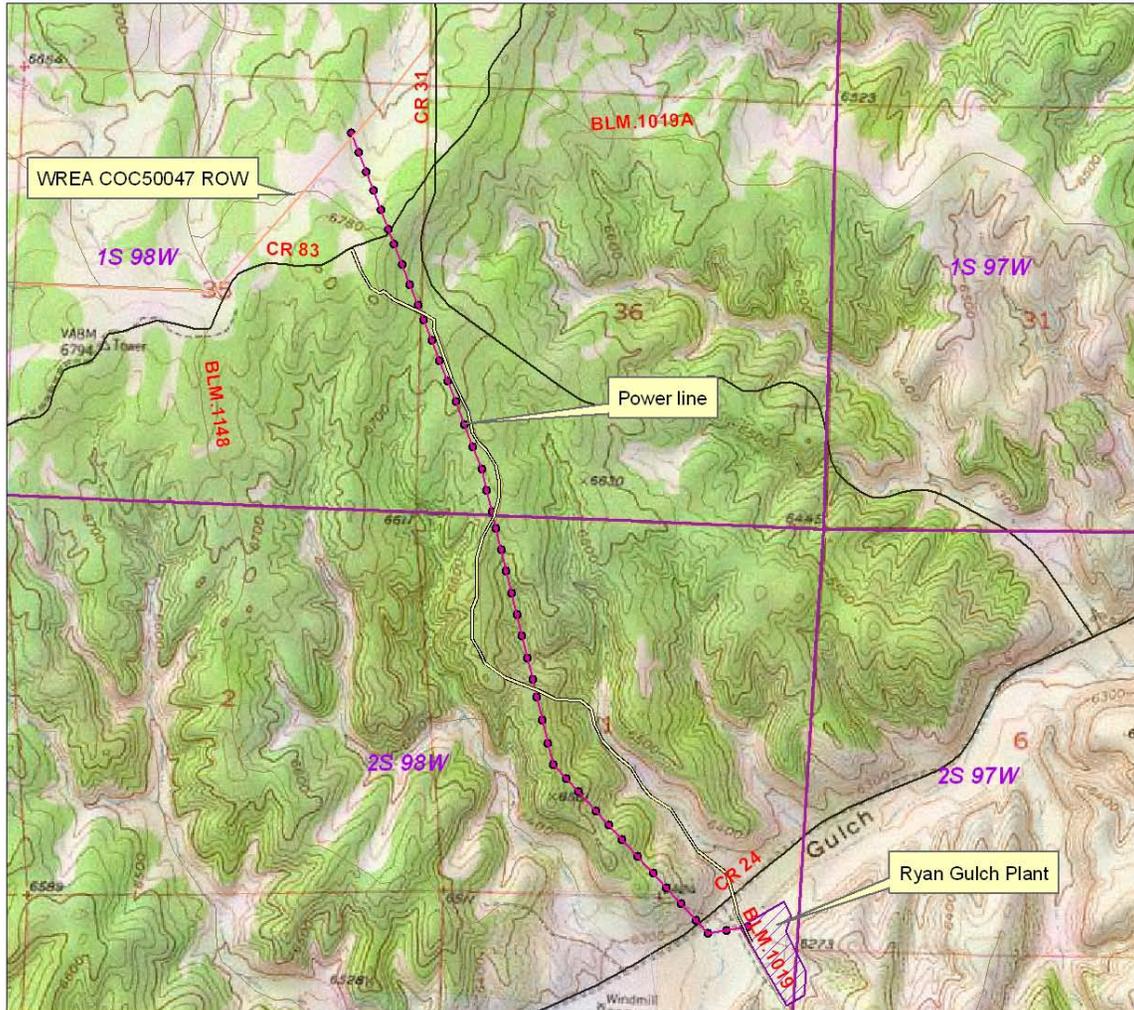
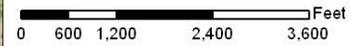


EXHIBIT A

- Bargath's Pitcher's Mound Pipeline
- Power Line ROW COC50047
- Bargath's Ryan Gulch Plant
- Proposed WREA overhead power line
- Proposed WREA poles
- BLM
- CDW
- County
- FOR
- NPS
- PRI
- STA
- PLS_Townships_GCD&2008
- State
- County
- BLM
- USFS
- NPS
- Other



Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

Disclaimer:
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January 2011

