

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

## **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0247-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC01972

PROJECT NAME: Retire PSCo Douglas Creek Pipeline

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian,  
T.1N., R. 101W.,  
T.1S., R. 101W.,  
T.1S., R. 102W.

APPLICANT: Public Service Company of Colorado (PSCo)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

**Proposed Action:** Public Service Company is planning the abandonment of its pipeline linking the North Douglas facility and Rangely. The proposed action includes an 8.39 mile natural gas pipeline transportation line, authorized in 1970 as COC1972. Note: This pipeline crosses the proposed R&PP Rangely Hospital project. The BLM, Hospital District, and PSCO are aware of the multiple uses and have determined the projects can be completed safely. The R&PP lease has been issued and the patent is pending.

The subject facility and pipeline system is not needed due to the loss of producing wells in the old field and gas delivery contracts in the Town of Rangely. Associated abandonment of the COC-019253, 019253A and 019253B, south of North Douglas Station was authorized 1/2/2010 and is currently in progress.

A decommissioning plan was submitted in 2009 to BLM for approval and agreement for the southern portion which shall also be used for this project. Additional information was provided to identify specific areas related to where the pipelines lie above ground at washes, stream beds and eroded areas plus valves and taps. The pipelines in these areas will be removed and the remaining portions of the buried pipelines will be purged with nitrogen and capped. Newly disturbed areas will be reseeded to BLM specifications and monitored for successful revegetation. The abandoned pipeline status will remain identified in the One Call System.

Disturbance would be within the currently authorized right-of-way width (generally 50 feet) for removal of the meter station and travel along the existing line to the areas where exposed pipe

would be removed and capped. The entire disturbance would then be subject to final reclamation. The total legal encumbrance to be removed would be 50.7 acres, more or less.

Original Stipulations applicable to this project included but may be updated:

- Fall seeding would be done after September 1<sup>st</sup> and prior to ground frost or spring seeding would be done after frost left the ground but before May 15.
- A qualified professional archeologist will be hired to provide monitoring as per the conditions of approval attached to this document.
- Paleo and cultural standard stipulations current at the time of authorization would be carried forward but updated to present language.
- The holder shall comply with applicable State and Federal air and water quality standards and facility siting standards.
- The holder shall take all measures necessary to prevent damage to the environment, damage to public or private property, and hazards to the public health and safety.

For the 2009 project, after consultation with the Range Specialist, the seed mix was changed from the original 1970 mitigation to:

Species/variety	Lb. Pure Live Seed per acre
Western wheatgrass (Arriba)	3 lbs.
Streambank wheatgrass (Sodar)	2 lbs.
Russian wildrye (Bozoisky)	2 lbs.
Crested wheatgrass (Hycrest)	2 lbs.
Fourwing saltbush (Wytana/Rincon)	2 lbs.

Fall seeding is preferred.

**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The proposed action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3) the following plan:

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

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Pages 2-49 thru 2-52

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.”

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW:** The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, Number (J-10) Removal of structures and materials of no historic value, such as abandoned automobiles, fences, and buildings, including those built in trespass, and reclamation of the site when little or no surface disturbance is involved.

The proposed action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances described in the table below. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exception	YES	NO
1. Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands, floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau of office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations		X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: A list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the White River Field Office.

The proposed action was presented to, and reviewed by the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on 8/18/2010.  
Date

REMARKS:

*Cultural Resources*: The project area was inventoried at a Class III (100% pedestrian) level. 5RB984, the Canyon Pintado National Historic District (CPHD), will be directly impacted by the project. No sites within CPHD are expected to be directly impacted by the proposed project. Two sites within CPHD, and independently Eligible for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listing, could be indirectly impacted: prehistoric rock art sites 5RB87 and 5RB682. Mitigations, given below, will prevent impacts to these sites. The office of the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed and concurred with the WRFO's proposed management of affected sites and CPHD in a letter dated 10/28/2010. (GLH 11/4/2010)

*Native American Religious Concerns*: Currently, no Native American Religious Concerns or Traditional Cultural Properties are known in or near the project area. Should future consultations with tribal authorities reveal the existence of such sensitive properties, appropriate mitigation and/or protection measures may be undertaken. (GLH 11/3/2010)

*Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species*: There are no wildlife-related issues or concerns associated with the proposed action. (LRB 11/19/2010)

*Special Status Plant Species*: There are no known special status plant species or associated habitats located in the proposed action area. (JKS 9/8/2010)

MITIGATION:

- 1) Any excavations into previously undisturbed soils within CPHD must be monitored by a permitted archaeologist.
- 2) Archaeological site 5RB87 must be avoided. Avoidance will be ensured by restricting the parking of vehicles and equipment to the west of the existing N/S road for all operations associated with the north span of Cow Creek (T2S R101W Sec. 9, N ½ of the NE ¼ of the SE 1/4). The monitoring archaeologist will note the observed compliance with this mitigation in their monitoring report and will provide more detailed data regarding site location if necessary for avoidance.
- 3) Archaeological site 5RB682 must be avoided. Avoidance will be ensured by excluding surface-disturbing activities from the area southwest and west-southwest of a point 39° 56' 14.5"N, 108° 45' 27"W (NAD 1983). This will ensure avoidance of the site by at least 35 meters. The monitoring archaeologist will note the observed compliance with

this mitigation in their monitoring report and will provide more detailed data regarding site location if necessary for avoidance.

- 4) 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, 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 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).

- 5) 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 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./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, 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.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional): On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by White River Field Office staff during the removal and reclamation of this project. Specific mitigation developed in this Categorical Exclusion and the terms and conditions of the original associated grants will be followed.

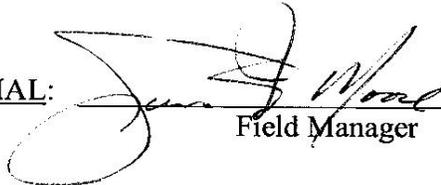
NAME OF PREPARER: Linda Jones

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Kristin Bowen

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this CX and have decided to approve the proposed action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 12 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

  
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 11/22/2010

ATTACHMENTS:

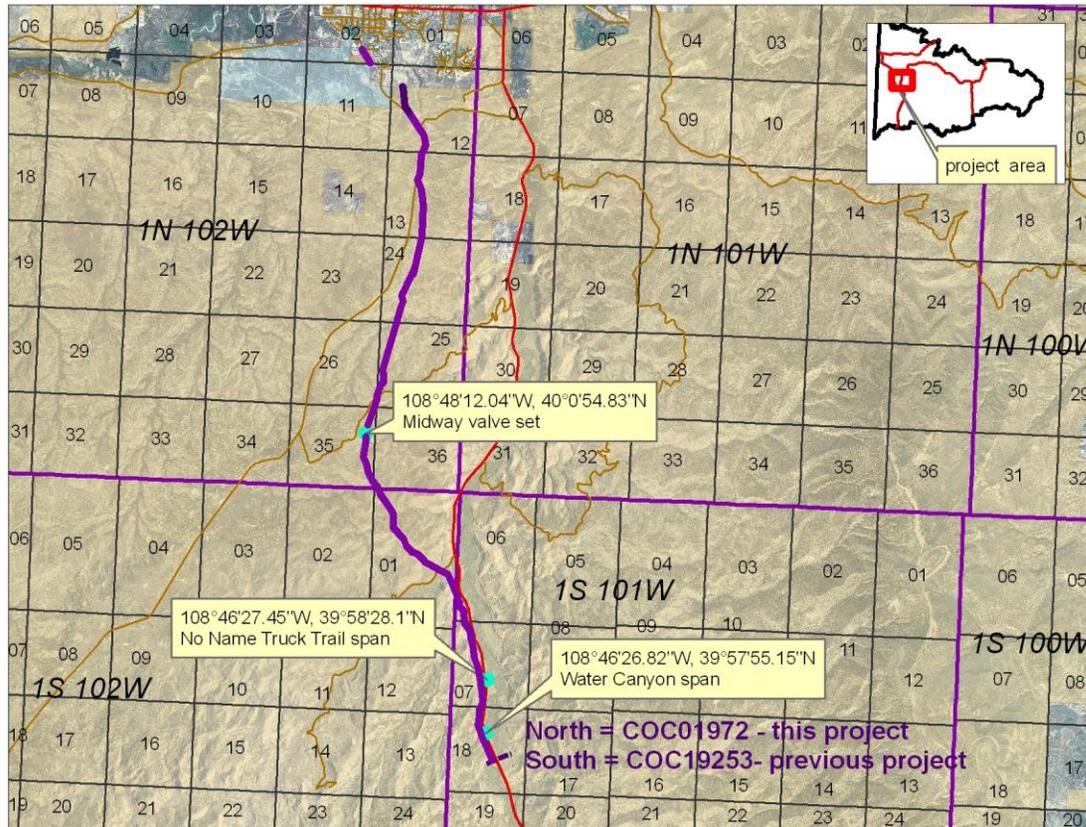
Exhibit A – Map



# RETIREMENT OF PSCO - XCEL PIPELINE



## EXHIBIT A



DOICLMCO-110-2010-247-CX

COC01972

Sixth Principal Meridian  
 T.1N., R.102 W,  
 sec. 2, 12, 13, 24, 25, 26, 35, 31  
 T.1S., R.101W,  
 sec. 6, 7, 18,  
 T.1S., R.102.,  
 sec. 1



- County
- State
- PLSS\_Townships\_GCDB2008
- PLSS\_Sections\_GCDB2008
- BLM
- CDW
- County
- FOR
- NPS
- PRI
- STA



Created:  
 Date: 10/20/2010 11:41 AM  
 Modified:  
 Date: 10/20/2010 11:41 AM  
 User: [unreadable]  
 [unreadable]  
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North = COC01972 - this project  
 South = COC19253- previous project