

**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-110-2010-0257-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC-068239X and COC-03453

PROJECT NAME: Williams Communication Towers

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T1S-R98W-Sec 35
T2S-R98W-Sec 13

APPLICANT: Williams Production RMT Company

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Williams Production RMT Company requests authorization to construct 50 feet tall communication towers on the RGU 23-35-198 and Government Federal 298-13-1 well pads. The tower located on the Government Federal 298-13-1 well pad is located at 39° 52' 19.2" N, 108° 20' 14.3" W. The tower located on the RGU 23-35-198 well pad is located at 39° 55' 10.4" N, 108° 21' 47.8" W. A solar panel would be installed on each tower in order to provide power to the radio tower. The towers would be freestanding with a poured concrete base. The base would be nominally 8 feet x 8 feet, with 4 feet of base poured below grade and 1 foot above (this could change slightly depending on soil samples at the site). The towers would be used for well data communications and well control for lease/unit wells within the area. The towers would provide the communication's link that enable monitoring and control of the wells. The towers would transmit well data to an existing tower at the Greasewood Compressor Site, and then on to Williams' Operations Center in Parachute. Williams would like to construct the towers by mid-October 2010.

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: 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.”
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, Number (J-8). “*Installation of minor devices to protect human life (e.g., grates across mines).*”

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		X

Exception	YES	NO
expansion of the range of such species.		

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

The proposed action was presented to, and reviewed by the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on September 21, 2010.
Date

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

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: RGU 23-35-198 tower location: the proposed tower is located on the RGU 23-35-198 well pad which has been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Conner and Davenport 2006, Compliance Dated 9/18/2006) with no cultural resources located in the ten acre inventory area. The tower would have no effect on any known cultural resources.

RGU 298-13-1 tower location: The proposed tower is located within the existing disturbance of what was originally the Black Sulphur Unit 2 fuel wood sale (Schroeder 1981, Compliance Dated 4/17/1981) and the Rio Blanco Natural Gas well #1-13 (Conner 1980m Compliance Dated 10-30-1980). Further inventories in the area for pipelines (Black and Zier 1981, Compliance Dated 9/9/1981) and a geophysical project (Highland 2005 Compliance Dated 7/21/2005) have also been completed without finding any cultural resources in the project area. No known cultural resources will be impacted by the project. (MRS 10/1/2010)

Paleontological Resources: The proposed towers are located in areas generally mapped as the Uinta Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM WRFO has classified as a PFYC 5 formation. The formation is known to produce scientifically noteworthy fossils (Armstrong and Wolny 1989). Should excavations for the tower bases go below the existing disturbance and encounter undisturbed material of the underlying rock formation there is a potential to impact scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. Mitigation is required. (MRS 10/1/2010)

Native American Religious Concerns: No Native American Religious Concerns are known in the area, and none have been noted by Northern Ute tribal authorities. Should recommended inventories or future consultations with tribal authorities reveal the existence of such sensitive properties, appropriate mitigation and/or protection measures may be undertaken. (MRS 10/1/2010)

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species: There are no wildlife-related issues or concerns associated with the proposed action. (LB 09/28/2010)

Special Status Plant Species: There are no special status plant concerns associated with the proposed action. (JKS 9/28/2010)

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.

Black, Kevin D., and Christian J. Zier

1981 Archaeological Inventory of Approximately 5.2 Miles (8.5 Km) of CIG Pipeline Routes Near Black Sulphur Creek, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf-Zier Archaeologists, inc., Eagle, Colorado. (81-08-11) (RB.LM.R899)

Conner, Carl E.

1980 Cultural Resources Inventory Report on Four Proposed Well Pads (Federal #1-13, #1-19, #1-25, #1-30) and Access Roads in the Black Sulphur Creed Area for Rio Blanco Natural Gas. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (80-11-21) (RB.LM.NR976)

Conner, Carl E., and Barbara J. Davenport

2006 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Seven proposed Ryan Gulch Unit Well Locations and Related Access Routes in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Williams Production RMT. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (06-11-39)

Highland, Steven

2005 A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for the Proposed Ryan Gulch 2-D Seismic Project, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. TRC Mariah Associates, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah. (05-22-01b). (RB.LM.R1131)

Schroeder, Alan M.

1981 Black Sulphur Fuelwood Sale (CO-010-751-6), Unit 2. Bureau of Land Management, White River Resource Area, Meeker, Colorado. (81-10-12) (RB.LM.NR1509)

Tweto, Ogden

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

MITIGATION: Applicable conditions of approval associated with the approved APDs for the well pads shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect.

RGU 298-13-1 well pad: The original well pad APD approval did not include a paleontological stipulation therefore a paleontological monitor shall be required should excavations extend deep enough to encounter the underlying rock formation for the communication tower footer.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: On-going compliance inspections and monitoring of activities will be conducted by White River Field Office staff during and after construction. Specific mitigation developed in the associated Categorical Exclusion and the lease terms and conditions 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: Christina Barlow/Stacey Burke

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:

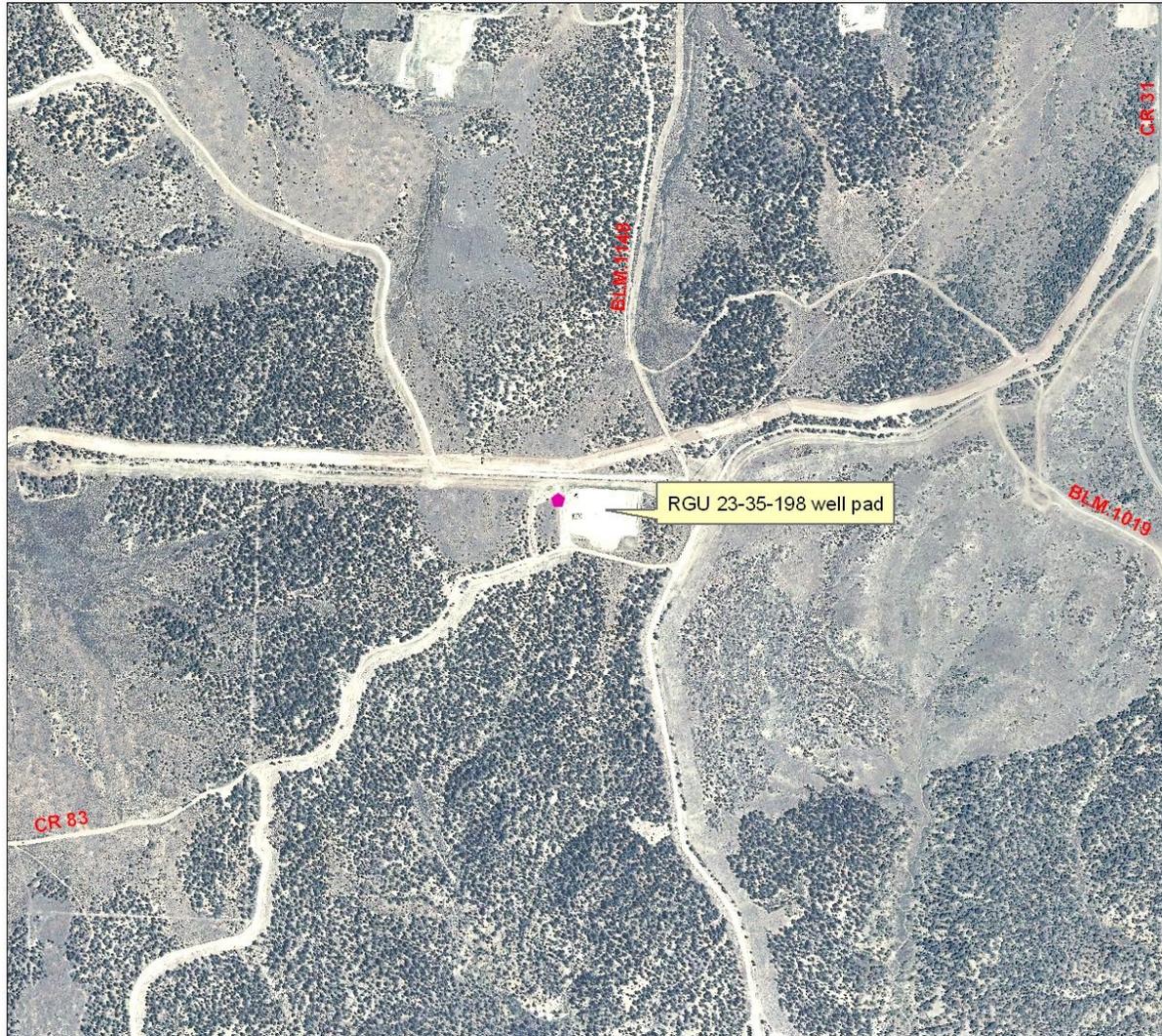

Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 10/5/2010

ATTACHMENTS: Maps of proposed action

Communication Tower on RGU 23-35-198 well pad
T. 1 S., R. 98 W., sec. 35

EXHIBIT A



- Communication Tower
- State
- County
- BLM
- USFS
- NPS
- Other

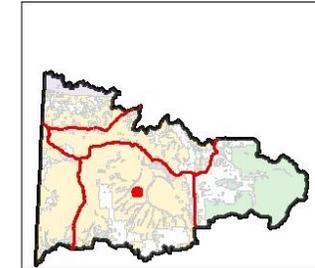


Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

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October 2010



Communication Tower on Federal 298-13-1 well pad
T. 2 S., R. 98 W., sec. 13

EXHIBIT A



-  Communication Tower
-  State
-  County
-  BLM
-  USFS
-  NPS
-  Other



Sources:
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October 2010

