

**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-110-2011-0092-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC74859

PROJECT NAME: Williams Meteorological Site

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado
T. 2 S., R. 97 W.,
sec. 36, lot 8.

APPLICANT: Williams Field Services, LLC

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Proposed Action: The Colorado Division of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Air Pollution Control Division specified the need for Williams Field Services, LLC to install a meteorological tower to conduct monitoring for a one year period as part of a permit requirement for the expansion of the Willow Creek gas processing facility (Willow Creek Plant). The purpose of the monitoring is to collect data to be used for modeling to document the existing meteorological conditions associated with the site. The parameters to be monitored are wind speed, wind direction, temperature, temperature difference, relative humidity, and solar radiation and will be monitored according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) protocols.

Williams Field Services, LLC requests a 25 feet by 25 feet right-of-way (ROW) to construct a 33 feet tall meteorological tower that will be located just off the Willow Creek Plant location. The ground will be scraped of vegetation and leveled. The area of disturbance will be approximately four feet by four feet. Meteorological sensors mounted on the tower will be used to monitor meteorological conditions. The tower instrumentation will be solar powered. The solar panel is 24 inches by 18 inches and will be mounted on the south facing side of the tower. The wind speed and direction sensor will be mounted at 33 feet above ground. The tower foundation will be constructed by inserting the tower base into a two feet by three feet form and filling it with concrete. This tower configuration will not require guy wires. The tower will be lightning protected.

It is anticipated that it will take two days to complete installation, and the tower will be operated year round. Air Resource Specialists, Inc. (ARS) will be the contractor for this effort. Williams is

required by the CDPHE to operate and collect data from the station for a minimum one year period, beginning from the date of installation. However, after the one year period, Williams and/or CDPHE, may want to operate the tower for an indefinite period of time.

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 2-49

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.”

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, Number (J-3) “*Conducting preliminary hazardous materials assessments and site investigations, site characterization studies and environmental monitoring. Included are siting, construction, installation and/or operation of small monitoring devices such as wells, particulate dust counters and automatic air or water samples*”.

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 43 CFR 46.215, apply.

Exception	YES	NO
1. Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
2. Have adverse effects 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		X

Exception	YES	NO
resources.		
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. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have adverse effects on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places.		X
8. Have adverse effects 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. Have the potential to violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have the potential for a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
11. Restrict access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. Significantly, 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:

The proposed action was presented to, and reviewed by the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on April 05, 2011. A list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the White River Field Office.

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The location of the proposed meteorological tower is in an area that appears to be covered by two Class III (100% pedestrian) inventories (Conner and Davenport 2008 Compliance Dated 7/23/2008, Hauck 2003 Compliance Dated 9/23/2003) with no cultural resources identified in the proposed tower area. The project should not result in impacts to any known cultural resources. (MRS 4/12/2011)

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 4/12/2011)

Paleontological Resources: The proposed meteorological tower is in an area generally mapped as the Uinta Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM WRFO has classified as a PFYC 5 formation meaning it is known to produce scientific noteworthy fossil resources (Armstrong and Wolny 1989). If it becomes necessary to excavate into the undisturbed underlying rock, there is the potential to impact noteworthy fossil resources. Due to the relatively small size of the disturbance, the potential may be limited; however any discovery during construction could be important. (MRS 4/12/2011)

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species: The proposed meteorological tower is located within an existing right-of-way. Project construction would not result in any substantial loss of forage or cover resources for local wildlife populations. The proposed site is located within mule deer severe winter range, a specialized component of winter range that supports virtually all an area's deer under the most severe winter conditions (i.e., extreme cold and heavy snow pack). These ranges are typically occupied from January through April. (LRB 05/14/11)

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species: The proposed four foot by four foot surface disturbance for the tower base is located within an existing right-of-way (pipeline) corridor that was constructed in 2008. A modified special status plant species survey was conducted for the pipeline in April of 2009, and no special status plant species were found. The nearest potential threatened & endangered species (TES) plant habitat is approximately two miles to the north of this project site. There are no plant species listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act, nor plants considered sensitive by the BLM, that are known to inhabit the area potentially influenced by the proposed action. This proposed action would have no conceivable influence on special status plant species or associated habitats.

REFERENCES:

Armstrong, Harley J., and David G. Wolny
1989 Paleontological Resources of Northwest Colorado: A Regional Analysis. Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction, Colorado

Conner, Carl E., and Barbara Davenport

2008 Class III Cultural Resources Inventory for the Willow Creek Pipeline Project in Rio Blanco County, Colorado, for Williams Production RMT. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. #08-11-09

Hauck, F. Richard

2003 Cultural Resource Evaluations of Proposed Willow Ridge Federal Unit No. T63X-2G Pipeline Corridor in the Piceance Creek Locality of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Archeological-Environmental Research Corporation (AERC), Bountiful, Utah. #03-38-11

Tweto, Ogden

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

MITIGATION:

1. The holder is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the holder is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the holder as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the holder will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the 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, the holder will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the holder will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO by telephone with written confirmation immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), the holder must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

3. The holder is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing paleontological sites

or for collecting fossils. If fossil materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the holder is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the holder as to:

- whether the materials appear to be of noteworthy scientific interest
- the mitigation measures the holder will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible)

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, the holder will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the holder will then be allowed to resume construction.

4. If it becomes necessary to excavate into undisturbed portions of the underlying rock formation, an approved paleontological monitor shall be present before the initiation of any such excavations and until the excavations have been completed.

5. No construction activities will be permitted from January 1 through April 30 to avoid unnecessary disturbance on mule deer severe winter ranges.

6. The holder shall monitor for cheatgrass, noxious weeds, and/or problem weeds should they occur and/or increase in density as a result of the proposed action. Upon detection of noxious, non-native, and/or invasive plant species, the applicant will control their presence before seed production using materials and methods as outlined in the RMP and/or authorized in advance by the White River Field Office Manager. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA certified pesticide applicator and herbicides must be registered by the EPA. A current, approved Pesticide Use Proposal for weed treatment must be on file at the White River Field Office prior to herbicide application.

7. Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas with the following native seed mix. Seeding rates are shown as pounds of Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre and apply to drill seeding. For broadcast application, double the seeding rate and then harrow to insure seed coverage. Applied seed must be certified and free of noxious weeds and seed certification tags must be submitted to the Authorized Officer within 30 days of seeding. Refer to White River Field Office Surface Reclamation Plan (<http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo.html>) for more detailed information on appropriate seeding timeframes and reclamation success criteria.

Native Seed Mix #3 Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per Acre
Western wheatgrass (Rosanna)	4
Bluebunch wheatgrass (Secar)	3.5
Needle and Thread Grass	2.5
Indian ricegrass (Rimrock)	3

Native Seed Mix #3 Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per Acre
Scarlet Globemallow	0.5

8. The holder is responsible for obtaining and complying with appropriate local and/or State permits.

9. At least 90 days prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the Authorized Officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. This inspection will be held to agree to an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material (e.g., gravel or concrete), as well as final recontouring, spreading of topsoil, and seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

10. The holder shall conduct all activities associated with the construction, operation, and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.

11. Any proposal involving additional surface disturbance outside of the authorized right-of-way requires an application to the BLM for analysis and authorization. New stipulations for construction would be applied to projects subject to the regulations and policies existing at the time of authorization.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by White River Field Office staff. Specific mitigation developed in the associated Categorical Exclusion and the right-of-way terms and conditions will be followed. The holder will be notified of compliance related issues and will be provided an appropriate period to resolve such issues.

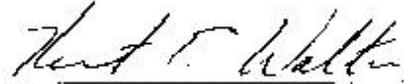
NAME OF PREPARER: Stacey Burke

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Heather Sauls

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: 05/26/11

ATTACHMENTS: Map of proposed action

Williams Meteorological Site
T. 2 S., R. 97 W., sec. 36

EXHIBIT A



- BLM
- CDW
- County
- FOR
- NPS
- PRI
- STA
- PLS5_Townships_GCDB2006



Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

Disclaimer:
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April 2011

