

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-110-2011-0124-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: Amend COC0123685

PROJECT NAME: Questar repeater and meter site within ROW COC0123685

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian
T.2S, R98W,
sec. 6, NWSW, NWSE,
T 2 S, R 99 W
Sec 1, SESENE

APPLICANT: Questar Pipeline Company

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Background:

Questar Pipeline Company is the owner of the grant numbered COC-0123685 for a 14-inch natural gas pipeline in Section 6, T2S, R98W, Rio Blanco County, Colorado, where an above ground valve assembly is located.

Mesa Energy Company has received authorization from BLM to install a natural gas pipeline and connect this line at the site listed above to transport gas on the existing Questar Pipeline Company transmission line.

Proposed Action:

Questar Pipeline requests authorization to amend the original grant to modify the existing block valve assembly and natural gas regulating station with appurtenances.

Meter Site

There would be a 4 ft X 6 ft skid mounted meter building, an 8 ft X 12 ft gas chromatograph building, a filter separator on a 4 ft X 9 ft skid, a 15 ft high communications signal tower and one White River Electric Association power pole with meter. The existing fenced site will be expanded from 15 ft wide by 20 ft long to 50 ft wide by 50 ft long.

Repeater

A 15 ft high solar powered radio repeater is located approximately 1,864 feet to the west. All facilities and the work associated with its installation would be located within the existing 50 ft wide right-of-way.

An area map is attached as Exhibit A.

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

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 (E-13): “*Amendments to existing rights-of-way, such as the upgrading of existing facilities, which entail no additional disturbances outside of the right-of-way boundary.*” The Proposed Action has been reviewed with respect to the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

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 resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X

Exception	YES	NO
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 5/24/2011. A complete list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the White River Field Office. The table below lists resource specialists who provided additional remarks concerning cultural resources and special status species.

Name	Title	Resource	Date
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	07/26/2011
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	06/24/2011
Zoe Miller	Ecologist	Special Status Plant Species	07/08/2011

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The proposed valve block area and radio repeater tower locations have been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level by all or portions of project inventories (Conner et al. 2004 Compliance Dated 8/9/2004, Conner et al. 2004 Compliance Dated 12/17/2004, Conner and Darnell 2010 Compliance Dated 9/17/2010, Highland 2005 Compliance Dated 7/2005, Weston and Welch 2006 Compliance Dated 11/30/2006). These inventories did not identify any cultural resources in the proposed project areas. There will not be any impacts to any known cultural resources as a result of this project.

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.

Paleontological Resources: The proposed projects are in an area generally mapped as the Uinta Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM WRFO has classified as a PFYC 4/5 formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically noteworthy fossil resources (c.f. Armstrong and Wolny 1989). However, the valve tap is in the alluvial bottom of Stakes Springs Draw and should involve no excavations into underlying sedimentary rocks and therefore should not impact paleontological resources.

The proposed repeater tower is located on a ridge top where soils covering the underlying fossil bearing formation could be quite shallow. If excavation into the underlying formation is necessary to install the tower there is a potential to impact scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. Depending on the method, auger versus backhoe excavated pit, the potential impacts could be of differing severity. The minimum impact potential is with an auger to prepare the hole for the pole. It is not feasible to monitor hole drilling for fossil resources due the limited visibility in the hole. Excavation of a hole for pole placement with a backhoe opens up a much larger area with a greater potential to impact fossils but also provides more opportunity for monitoring of excavations.

Threatened and Endangered Species: There are no special status species that are known to occur within the project area. The Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any impacts to terrestrial or aquatic wildlife species or associated habitats.

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species: There are no special status plant species concerns.

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.

Conner, Carl Elk Curtis Martin, Barbara Davenport, and Jim Conner

- 2004 220 Coring Project Piceance Basin Study: A Class III Cultural Resources Inventory of Five Proposed Drill Holes and Related Access Routes in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Shell Frontier Oil and Gas. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (04-11-13: SHPO #RB.LM.R894)

Conner, Carl E., Curtis Martin, Nicole Darnell, and Barbara Davenport

- 2004 2004 Experimental Project Site: A Class III Cultural Resources Inventory Report for a 920-Acre Block in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Shell Frontier Oil and Gas. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (04-11-33: RB.LM.R840)

Conner, Carl E., and Nicole Darnell

- 2010 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Two Proposed Well Locations and Related Linear Routes (BDU 1-9-299 and BDU 13-8-199) IN Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Mesa Energy partners, LLC. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (10-11-06: SHPO #RB.LM.R1197)

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 Inc., Salt lake City, Utah. (05-22-01B: SHPO # RB.LM.R1131)

Tweto, Ogden

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

Weston, Jason D., and James M. Welch

- 2006 Twin Basin Gathering System: Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for Installation of a Natural Gas Gathering System Pipeline in Rio Blanco County, Colorado/ Western Land Services, Inc., Sheridan, Wyoming. (06-161-02: RB.LM.R979_

MITIGATION:

If the project proponent elects to place the radio repeater pole using a backhoe to excavate the placement hole for the pole, a paleontological monitor shall be required for all such excavations.

All applicable terms and conditions contained in the original right-of-way grant and any amendments shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect.

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

NAME OF PREPARER: Janet W. Doll

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Heather Sauls

COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA

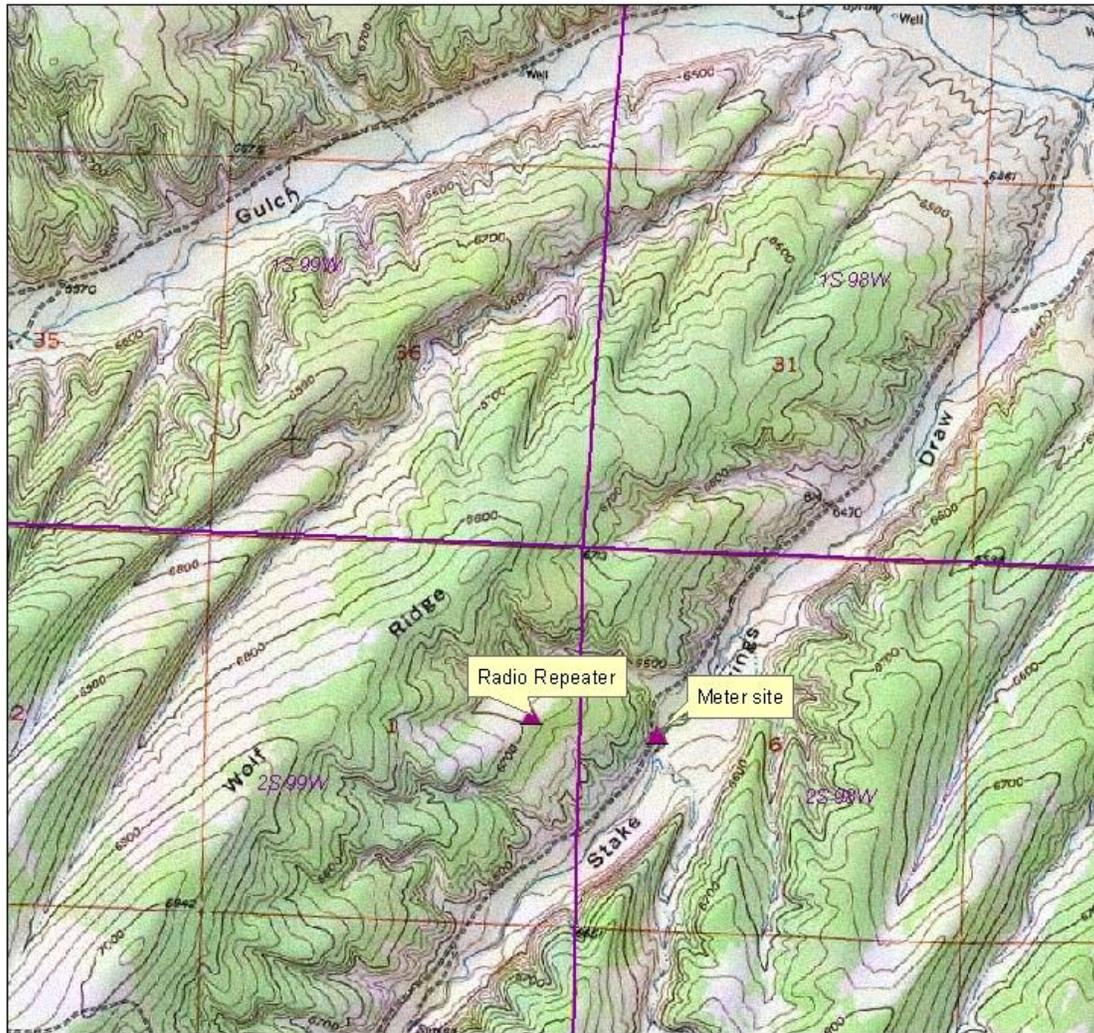
The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E-13. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: 
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 07/28/11

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit A—Map of Proposed Action

Questar repeater and meter site within ROW COC0123685

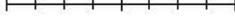


July 2011

Exhibit A

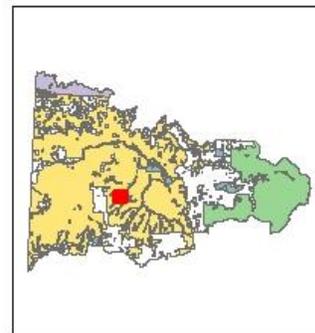
-  Radio repeater and meter site
-  PLSS_Townships_GCDB2008

0 800 1,600 3,200 Feet



Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

Disclaimer:
Although the data presented on this map, and the map itself, have been processed electronically on computers of BLM, no warranty, expressed or implied, is made by BLM regarding the use of this map or the data represented, nor does the distribution constitute or imply any such warranty.



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DECISION RECORD

PROJECT NAME: Questar repeater and meter site within ROW COC0123685

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0124-CX

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0124-CX, authorizing Questar to modify the existing block valve assembly and natural gas regulating station with appurtenances. A radio repeater will be located 1,864 feet west of the valve station. All facilities will be located within the previously authorized right-of-way.

Mitigation Measures

If the project proponent elects to place the radio repeater pole using a backhoe to excavate the placement hole for the pole, a paleontological monitor shall be required for all such excavations.

All applicable terms and conditions contained in the original right-of-way grant and any amendments shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS & CONFORMANCE WITH THE LAND USE PLAN

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision/Approved Resource Management Plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

External scoping was conducted for this project by listing it on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 07/13/2011.

RATIONALE

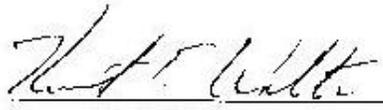
The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E13. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances

potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a Notice of Appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at White River Field Office, 220 East Market St., Meeker, CO 81641 with copies sent to the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet St., Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215, and to the Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals, 801 North Quincy St., MS300-QC, Arlington, VA, 22203. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals at the above address within 30 days after the Notice of Appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

07/20/11