

**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-110-2011-0126-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC74539, COC73847

PROJECT NAME: Exxon Fiber Optic and Combined Liquids Line (Widening of ROW)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian

T.2S., R.96W.,
sec. 8, lots 5, 6, 11, 13, 14,
sec. 17, lot 4,
sec. 18. lots 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15,
T.2S., R. 97W.,
sec. 11, SE¹/₄NW¹/₄, E¹/₂SW¹/₄, S¹/₂SE¹/₄,
sec. 12, S¹/₂SE¹/₄,
sec. 13, lots 1, 2, 3, 4,
sec. 14, lot 1

APPLICANT: Exxon Mobil Corporation

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Background: Exxon Mobil received approval on 10/26/2010 from the White River Field Office (WRFO) for authorization under COC-74539 to install two segments of fiber optic cable to provide more reliable communication within the Piceance Creek and Freedom Units. They also requested authorization to install a buried connecting combined liquids pipeline which was granted as an amendment under COC-73847.

The temporary construction disturbance for both was authorized for a width of 50 feet and was reviewed in [DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0211-CX](#) with a permanent disturbance width of 20 feet for the fiber optic line and 30 feet for the combined liquids line. The two lines occupy the same trench.

A 3/4-inch cable would be laid in the same trench during construction of previously authorized pipelines that have not been constructed. It would provide redundant communication between the Piceance Creek Unit Plant and the F23-18G well site to enable the plant to be remotely operated. The second segment of cable would extend westward from the T35X-11G well site to the existing HUB Station.

The 6-inch Flexsteel combined liquids pipeline would connect the PCU 296-18G well group to a tie-in at the T35X-11G well pad. A Plan of Development was attached to the application and includes the equipment and methods of installation and has been placed in the case file. This line would also be laid in the same trench during construction of the previously authorized pipelines.

Proposed Action: Due to obstacles and terrain, temporary rights-of way 60 to 80 feet wide will be needed during the construction of a fiber optics line and a combined liquids line in the vicinity of the Piceance Creek Unit Plant. The proponent has identified 13 specific sites and cited the reasons for each request.

The additional work space areas would be issued as a temporary use permit which would grant an additional width of 30 feet (10 feet for Sites 3, 4, 12 and 13). When combined with the original grant of a 50 ft temporary ROW, it would give the applicant a total temporary construction ROW of 80 ft in the areas identified in Table 1 (60 feet for sites 3, 4, 12, and 13) and shown on Exhibit A. The total disturbance (including the additional temporary work area of 1.44 acres) associated with the construction ROW space for these sites is approximately 3.85 acres. There would be no change to the existing permanent ROW width which is 20 feet for the fiber optic line and 30 feet for the combined liquids line.

Table 1: Additional Temporary Use Permit Areas

Description	Case file	Length	Total Construction ROW		Additional Temporary ROW		Vegetation
			Width	Acres	Width	Acres	Effect
Site # 1 & 2	73847	350	80 feet	.64	30	.24	Clear ~ 5' sagebrush
Site #3	73847	100	60	.14	10	.02	Clear ~ 10' trees
Site #4	73847	550	60	.76	10	.13	Clear ~20' trees
Site #5	73847	80	80	.15	30	.06	
Site #6	73847	200	80	.37	30	.14	
Site #7	73487	400	80	.74	30	.26	
Site #8	Both	200	80	.37	30	.14	Clear ~15' trees
Site #9	Both	300	80	.55	30	.21	
Site #10	Both	100	80	.18	30	.07	
Site #11	Both	200	80	.37	30	.14	
Site#12	Both	60	60	.08	10	.01	
Site #13	Both	100	60	.14	10	.02	
Totals				3.85		1.44	

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 (E-19): “*Issuance of short-term(3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorizations for such uses as storage sites, apiary sites, and construction sites where the proposal includes rehabilitation to restore the land to its natural condition.*”

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		X

Exception	YES	NO
bureau of office.		
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:

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on 06/07/2011. A list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the White River Field Office.

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: Due to obstacles and terrain, temporary rights-of way 60 to 80 feet wide will be needed during the construction of a fiber optics line and a combined liquids line in the vicinity of the Piceance Creek Unit Plant. The proponent has identified 13 specific sites and cited the reasons for each request. The proposed extra width work areas have been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level by portions of ten separate inventories (Bott 2004 Compliance Dated 11/8/2004, Brogan and Metcalf 2005 Compliance Dated 12/9/2005, Camp 2010 Compliance Dated 5/27/2010, Hauck 2001a Compliance Dated 5/21/2001, 2001b Compliance Dated 6/11/2001, Metcalf 2007 Compliance Dated 5/30/2008, O'Brien 1994 Compliance Dated 6/30/1994, 2006 Compliance Dated 7/12/2005, Schneider et. al. 2007 Compliance Dated 1/31/2008, Stahl 2010 Compliance Dated 5/28/2010). No cultural resources were identified in the proposed extra construction width areas. No known cultural resources will be impacted and no subsurface cultural resources are anticipated in the project area. (MRS 6/8/2001)

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 6/8//2011)

Paleontological Resources: The proposed temporary extra width work areas are located 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 (Armstrong and Wolny 1989, c.f. Bilbey et al 2011). If it should become necessary to excavate into the underlying native sedimentary stone there is a potential to impact noteworthy fossil resources. Such an impact to the data base could be serious if not mitigated during the discovery of the fossil remains. (MRS 5/3/2011)

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species: Minor widening of the construction right-of-way (10 to 30 feet) on short reaches of the project corridor (13 sites totaling 2,640 feet) would have no effective influence on wildlife. (EH 6/7/2011)

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species: There are no known threatened plant populations within 600 m of the Proposed Action. The surface disturbance is not expected to have an impact on special status plant species. (ZMM 6/9/2011)

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,

Bilbey Sue Ann, Evan Hall, Quinn Hall, and Travis Estes

2011 Paleontological Final Monitoring Report: Exxon Mobil Corporation PCU 296-6B Location and Associated Pits, Township 2 South, Range 96 West, Section 6, Bureau of Land Management, Rio Blanco County, Colorado 29 March 2011. Uinta Paleontological Associates, Inc., Vernal, Utah. (11-115-23

Bott, Tracy

2004 Exxon-Mobil Corporation: Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for the Proposed Love Ranch 16" Gas/Water Pipeline and Holding Pond in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (04-54-40)

Brogan, John M., and Sally J. Metcalf

2005 Exxon-Mobil Corporation's Nine Proposed Gas Well Locations and a Proposed Water Line, Class III Cultural Resource Inventory, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (05-54-15)

Camp, Beth Ann

2010 ExxonMobil Corporation: A Class III Cultural Resources Inventory of the Proposed PCU 197-36A Flowline Alignment and PCU T78X-12TG Well Pad Expansion and Access in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants Inc., Grand Junction, Colorado. (10-54-02)

Hauck, F. Richard

- 2001a Addendum to: Cultural Resource Evaluations of 14 Proposed Locations & a Compressor Site Location in the Magnolia Ridge Locality of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Archeological-Environmental Research Corporation, Bountiful, Utah. (01-38-04)
- 2001b Cultural Resource Evaluation of Proposed Well Locations & Pipeline Corridors in the Magnolia Locality of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Archeological-Environmental Research Corporation, Bountiful, Utah. (01-38-06)

Metcalf, Michael D.

- 2007 Exxon-Mobil Corporation: Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for Proposed PCU 23-18 to 35-11 Pipeline, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (08-54-01)

O'Brien, Patrick K.

- 1994 Mobil Oil Corporation Proposed Piceance Creek #T11-18G Well Location: Class III Cultural Resource Inventory, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (94-54-10)
- 2006 Exxon-Mobil Corporation: Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for Proposed Piceance Creek Units 197-34A, 197-34B, 297-2A, 297-11B and 296-18C Well, Access, and Pipeline Developments, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (06-54-12)

Schneider, James Lowe and Nancy Pahr

- 2007 A Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for White River Hub LLC'S White River Hub Project, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. TRC (Mariah), Laramie, Wyoming. (08-22-01)

Stahl, Jenny

- 2010 ExxonMobil Oil Corporation: A Class III Cultural Resources Inventory of the Proposed PCU 296-6C and PCU 296-18A Well Pads and Access Proposed PCU 296-18D well Pad, Access Road, and Pipelines in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Wheat Ridge, Colorado. (10-54-04)

Tweto, Ogden

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

MITIGATION:

1. The operator 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 operator 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 operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator 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 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, the operator 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 operator 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), you 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 operator 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 operator 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 operator as to:

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

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, the operator 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 operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

4. If it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying rock formations to place cattle guards or culverts a paleontological monitor shall be present before such excavations begin and remain until excavations have been completed.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: On-going compliance inspections and monitoring of drilling, production and post-production activities will be conducted by White River Field Office staff during construction of well pads, access roads, and pipelines. 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.

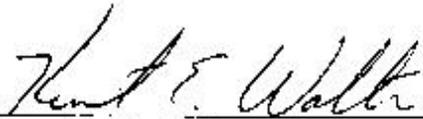
NAME OF PREPARER: Jeanne E. Newman

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:

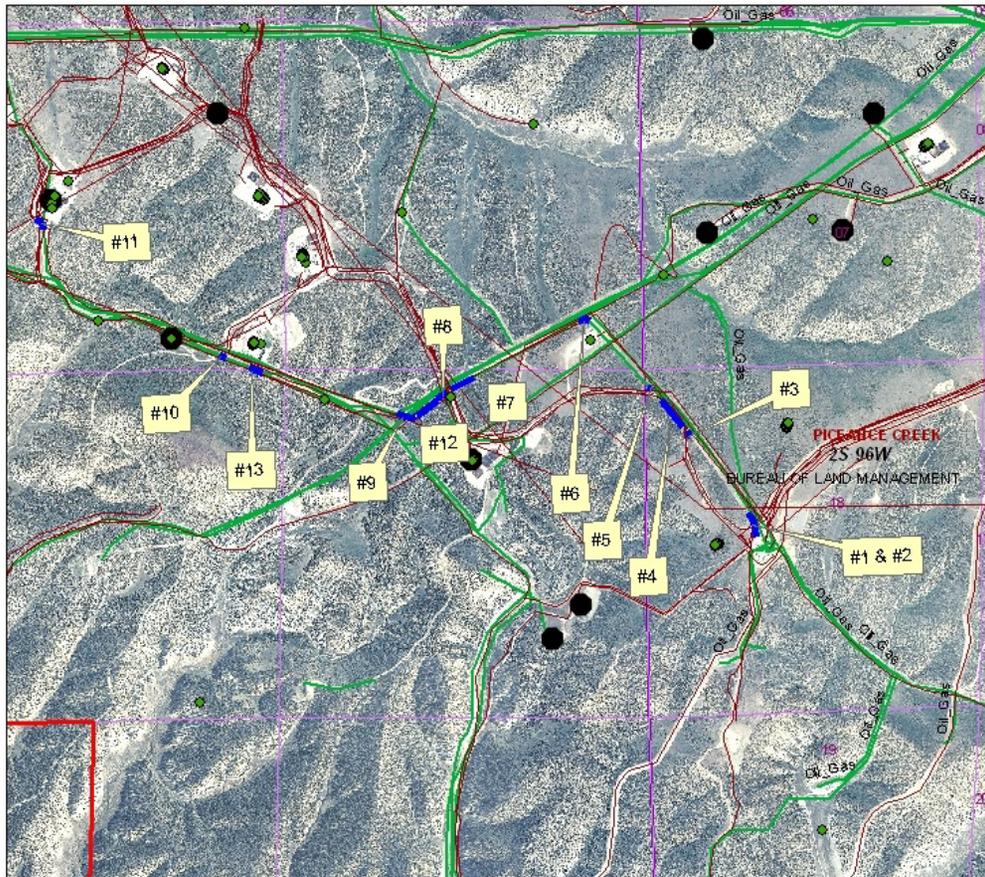

Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 06/13/2011

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit A: Map of Temporary Construction Areas

Exhibit A: Map of Temporary Construction Areas

CO-110-2011-0126-CX Combined Liquids & Fiber Optic Lines



Legend

- ◆ Projects: point
- Projects: line**
- <all other values>
- LEASE_NUM**
- CO-110-2011-0126-CX
- County
- State
- LR2000_Pipelines
- OG_Units
- PLSS_Sections_GCDB2008
- PLSS_Townships_GCDB2008

