

**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-110-2011-0136-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COD038242

PROJECT NAME: Vertical Seismic Profile (VSP) for ExxonMobil's PCU 296-5A2 Well

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 1 S., R. 97 W., Sec. 1, 2, 12, 13, 6th Principle Meridian
T. 1 S., R. 96 W., Sec. 18, 19, 29, 30, 32
T. 2 S., R. 96 W., Sec. 5, 8, 17

APPLICANT: ExxonMobil Oil Corporation

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Approval is requested to conduct a Vertical Seismic Profile (VSP) survey in the PCU 296-5A2 well. The survey is composed of two stages and will be completed within 20 days once survey begins. The time window for survey completion is between August 1st and September 30th. Vibrator trucks will be used as the seismic source.

During the first stage of the VSP survey, there will be four vibrators placed on the wellpad and one vibrator sitting stationary on either the well access road or Rio Blanco County Road (RBC) 76. Vibrators will only use previously disturbed terrain. Wireline geophone sensors will be placed in the wellbore and will record the acoustic energy generated from the surface seismic vibrators.

During the second stage of the VSP survey, twin vibrators will be used at less than 150 locations sparsely populated on a 9.5 mile stretch on County Road 76 (see attached map). When possible, vibrator locations will use previously surveyed locations used during the 2009 ExxonMobil 3D seismic survey. Vibrator source locations will be surveyed in using a survey crew. Any new vibrator locations outside of the previously examined 2009 locations will be surveyed in for proximity to underground pipelines. Vibrators will only use previously disturbed terrain, primarily County Road 76.

Traffic control will be coordinated with Rio Blanco County and will be used while vibrators operate on county roads to ensure safe operations. Two vibrators will be nose-to-tail on the side of the road to allow traffic to pass on the other side if needed. Traffic control will manage the flow of traffic past the vibrators to ensure safety.

The operator has confirmed that all source locations will be confined to existing roads.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plans (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

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 the reasonable protection of other resource values.”

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, B-6: “Approval of Notices of Intent to conduct geophysical exploration of oil, gas, or geothermal, pursuant to 43 CFR 3150 or 3250, when no temporary or new road construction is proposed.”

The Proposed Action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
a) Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
b) 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
c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the		X

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
bureau of office.		
h) 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
i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations		X
k) 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
l) 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 6/14/2011. 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	7/19/2011
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	7/19/2011
Zoe Miller	Ecologist	Special Status Plant Species	6/23/2011

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The well pad location has been inventoried at the Class III (100 percent pedestrian) level (Piontkowski 2003 Compliance Dated 7/16/2003) with no cultural resources identified within the pad location. Source points along existing disturbance of RBC 76 fall under the inventory waiver provisions of BLM manual 8110.23(B)(2). There should be no impacts to cultural resources under the Proposed Action.

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.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species: The Proposed Action involves no wildlife-related issues or concerns. The work would be brief, transient, and confined to an existing well pad and a heavily used county road. The project, as proposed, would take place after any potential sage-grouse nesting activity were complete and prior to the big game winter use period.

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species: There is potential habitat for special status plant species approximately 455 m to the northwest of the Proposed Action. Since there will be no new surface disturbing activity with the Proposed Action there are no concerns for special status plant species.

REFERENCES CITED

BLM Manual 8110

2004, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

Piontkowski, Michael

2003 A Report of the Class III Inventory of the Magnolia WUI Project, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Uncompahgre Archaeological Consultants, Grand Junction, Colorado.

MITIGATION:

As per IM-2009-044, applicable standard terms and conditions (See Attachment 1) are attached as mitigation.

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.

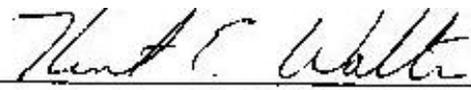
NAME OF PREPARER: Brett Smithers

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, B-6. 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:



08/02/2011

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Applicable Standard Terms and Conditions from H-3150-1 Onshore Oil and Gas Geophysical Exploration Surface Management Requirements

Figure 1. Project area map.

Attachment 1

From H3150-1 (Rel. 3-289, 06/07/94)

Illustration 16 (as revised by Rel. 3-330, 01/09/07)

H-3150-1- ONSHORE OIL AND GAS GEOPHYSICAL EXPLORATION SURFACE MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS (PUBLIC)

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Standard Terms and Conditions

1. The staging area(s) shall be kept clean and free of litter. Appropriate human waste facilities will be provided and properly maintained. Such waste facilities shall be removed from the site upon completion of the project.
2. All equipment will be power washed prior to entering Federal lands to help mitigate the spread of noxious plants.
3. If oil, lubricants and other petroleum or man-made products are accidentally spilled onto the ground surface, the BLM will be contacted and provided specific information about the spill and/or leak. Spills or leaks will be cleaned from the soil and any contaminated material will be bioremediated or disposed of at an authorized landfill.
4. All flagging, lath, pin flags, and similar materials used in the seismic project will be removed from public land and disposed of at an authorized landfill.
5. Vehicular travel shall be suspended when ground conditions are wet enough to cause rutting or other noticeable surface deformation and severe compaction. As a general rule, if vehicles or other project equipment create ruts in excess of four inches deep when traveling cross-country over wet soils, the soil shall be deemed too wet for vehicular use.
6. Visible migratory bird nests will be avoided and not disturbed.
7. Setbacks and Buffers: the operator will adhere to setbacks or "buffer zones" that are set forth in the following tables.

**Offset in Feet, from Certain Objects
(based on pounds of explosive charge)**

Object	< 1 lb	1 lb	2 lbs	3 lbs	5 lbs	6 to 10 lbs	11 to 15 lbs	16 to 20 lbs
Pipeline less than 6" diameter	50'	100'	150'	150'	200'	250'	300'	400'
Pipeline 6" to 12" diameter	75'	150'	200'	200'	300'	400'	500'	600'
Pipeline greater than 12" diameter	100'	200'	250'	250'	300'	500'	600'	800'
Telephone line	20'	20'	30'	40'	40'	50'	50'	50'
Railroad Track or main paved Highway	50'	100'	150'	150'	150'	220'	280'	350'
Electric Powerline (Shot holes not to exceed 200' depth)	75'	100'	200'	200'	200'	200'	250'	300'
Water wells, buildings, underground cisterns, and all other similar objects	225'	300'	400'	450'	700'	800'	1000'	1200'
Brick and/or concrete block buildings	275'	400'	500'	600'	800'	1000'	1200'	1500'
Producing oil and gas well	250'	450'	600'	700'	800'	900'	1000'	1000'
Irrigation wells	500'	800'	1000'	1200'	1500'	2000'	2500'	2500'

Minimum Safe Offset In Feet for Vibrator Truck Operations

Structures	Distance (ft)
Residences, Buildings, Concrete Base Structures	300
Water Wells	350
Concrete Water Pipeline	100
PVC/Plastic Water Pipeline	20
Oil or Gas Well	250
Oil or Gas High Pressure Pipelines	30
High Voltage Power Lines	0
Local Transmission Power Lines	0

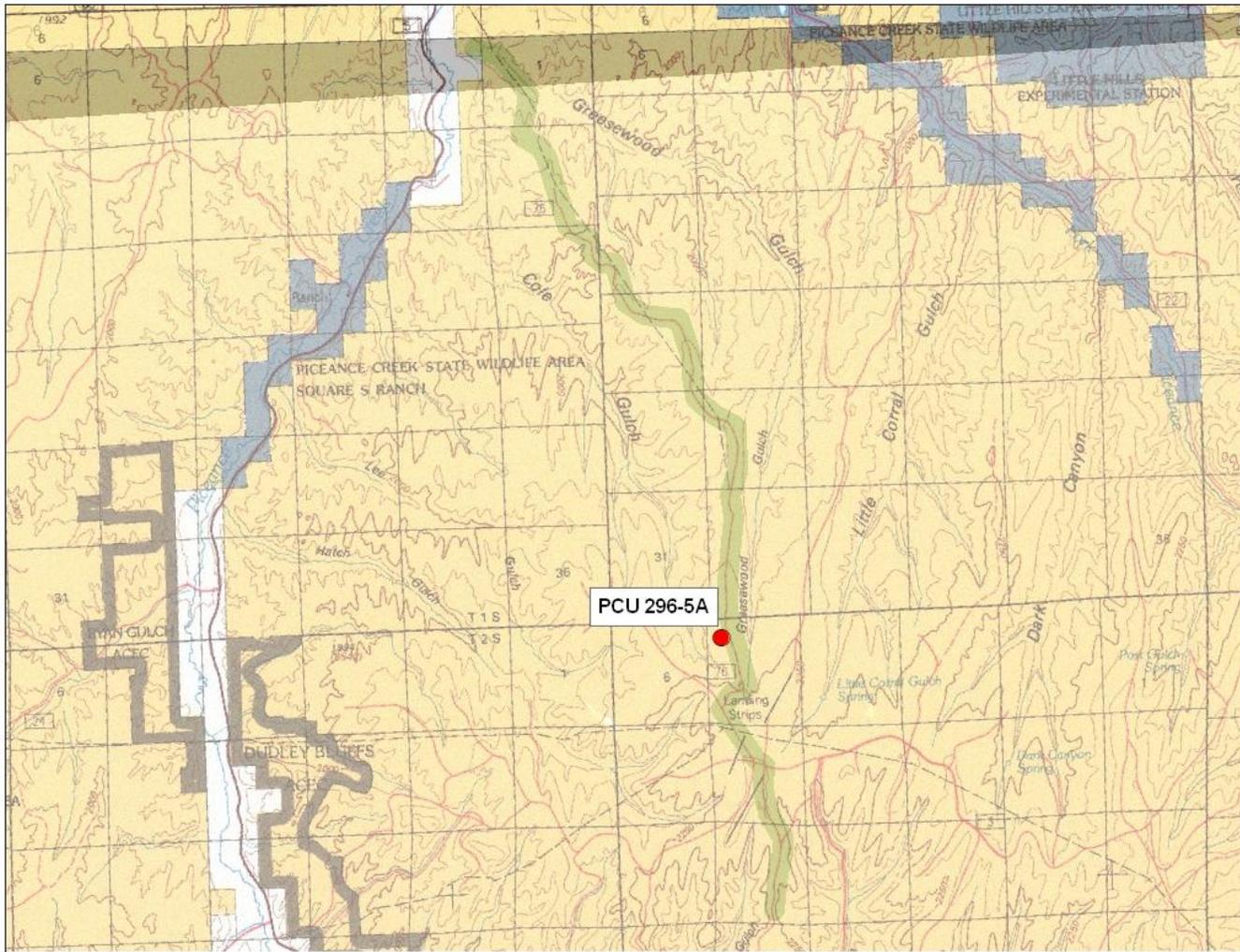


Figure 1. Above is the proposed route for the vertical seismic route (in light green) and the receiver point on the existing PCU 297-5A location. All source points will fall on existing roads (in light green).

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DECISION RECORD

PROJECT NAME: Vertical Seismic Profile (VSP) for ExxonMobil's PCU 296-5A2 Well

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0136-CX

DECISION:

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0136-CX authorizing the implementation of ExxonMobil's vertical seismic profile for the PCU 296-5A2 well.

Mitigation Measures:

1. The staging area(s) shall be kept clean and free of litter. Appropriate human waste facilities will be provided and properly maintained. Such waste facilities shall be removed from the site upon completion of the project.
2. All equipment will be power washed prior to entering Federal lands to help mitigate the spread of noxious plants.
3. If oil, lubricants and other petroleum or man-made products are accidentally spilled onto the ground surface, the BLM will be contacted and provided specific information about the spill and/or leak. Spills or leaks will be cleaned from the soil and any contaminated material will be bioremediated or disposed of at an authorized landfill.
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Structures	Distance (ft)
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Water Wells	350
Concrete Water Pipeline	100
PVC/Plastic Water Pipeline	20
Oil or Gas Well	250
Oil or Gas High Pressure Pipelines	30
High Voltage Power Lines	0
Local Transmission Power Lines	0

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.

RATIONALE

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, B-6. 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:

State Director Review

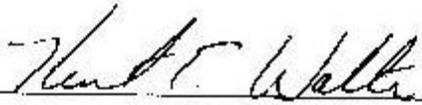
Under regulations addressed in 43 CFR 3165.3(b), any adversely affected party that contests a decision of the Authorized Officer may request an administrative review, before the State Director, either with or without oral presentation. Such request, including all supporting documentation, shall be filed in writing with the BLM Colorado State Office at 2850 Youngfield

Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215 within 20 business days of the date such decision was received or considered to have been received. Upon request and showing of good cause, an extension may be granted by the State Director. Such review shall include all factors or circumstances relevant to the particular case.

Appeal

Any party who is adversely affected by the decision of the State Director after State Director review, under 43 CFR 3165.3(b), of a decision may appeal that decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals pursuant to the regulations set out in 43 CRF Part 4.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

08/02/2011