

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641**

Section 390 Categorical Exclusion for Oil and Gas Development

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2012-0056-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: COC-60733

PROJECT NAME: Williams Temporary Surface Frac Lines

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T1S-R98W-Sec.25 SWNE and SESW

APPLICANT: Williams Production RMT Company LLC

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: Williams Production RMT Company (WPX) requests approval to frac the Ryan Gulch Unit (RGU) 24-25-198 and RGU 32-25-198 well pads from the existing RGU 11-25-198 pad using “simultaneous operations (SIMOPS)” and/or remote frac. The frac equipment would sit on the RGU 11-25-198 pad with no additional disturbance required on the pad. Three 4.5 inch steel frac lines would run from the frac equipment down the road (in the bar ditch), cross under County Road 83 (CR 83) through an existing culvert, and then run up the existing pipeline corridors to each pad (See Figure 1). WPX would like to place the frac equipment and lines starting as soon as possible, and would remove the lines mid-August 2013.

Design Features: The lines would be welded by certified welders and pulled into place. A 10,000 lb swing fitting would be installed where the line turns to head up to the RGU 24-25-198 pad. The county has approved the crossing of CR 83.

Decision to be Made: The BLM will decide whether or not to permit the placement of temporary surface pipelines within approved ROW corridors to facilitate the centralized fracturing of wells on the RGU 32-25-198 and 24-25-198, and if so, under what conditions.

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 Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58) prescribed five categorical exclusions (CX) for activities whose purpose is for the exploration of oil or gas.

The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act, #4: “*Placement of a pipeline in an approved right-of-way corridor, so long as the corridor was approved within five years prior to the date of placement of the pipeline.*”

Documentation

The BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) provides specific instructions for using this CX.

1) Will the proposed pipeline be placed in an existing right-of-way corridor? Was that right-of-way corridor approved within the last five years? Yes. The proposed pipeline would be placed within existing right-of-way corridors that were approved within the last five years. The ROW between the RGU 11-25-198 well pad and Williams’ Northwest pipeline along CR 83 was originally approved 4/11/2007 (2007-0144-DNA), and the ROW between the RGU 32-25-198 and RGU 24-25-198 well pads was originally authorized 8/12/2011 (2011-0115-EA). The subject ROWs were also amended 12/16/2011 (2011-0170-EA).

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 2/21/2012. A list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the WRFO. 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	3/28/2012
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	3/27/2012
Zoe Miller	Ecologist	Special Status Plant Species	2/24/2012

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The proposed surface pipeline route is covered by all or part of eight inventories at the Class III (100 percent) pedestrian level (Conner and Davenport 1999 compliance dated 11/8/1999, 2005 compliance dated 7/12/2005, 2006 compliance dated 2/28/2007, 2007 compliance dated 6/14/2007, Greenberg and Kester-Tallman 2006 compliance dated 10/2006, Hauck 2001 compliance dated 6/22/2001, Highland 2005 compliance dated 7/2005). There are no known cultural resources within the proposed Area of Potential Effect and the surface line should have no effect on surface or subsurface resources since it is all within existing disturbance.

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 pipelines are located in an area generally mapped as the Uinta Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM WFRO has classified as a Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 4/5 formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically noteworthy fossil resources (c f. Armstrong and Wolny 1989). However, since the proposed line is to be laid on the surface and involves no excavations into the underlying sedimentary rocks there will be no adverse impacts to fossil resources from the project.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species: There are no threatened or endangered animal species that are known to inhabit or derive important use from the project area. The proposed surface line lies within big game severe winter range and as such is subject to RMP-approved timing limitations designed to limit disturbance during the core period of occupation (January 1 – April 30). In November 2009 an agreement was reached by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Williams Production RMT Company LLC, and the BLM that supports CPW research that is designed to better define deer response to applied Best Management Practices (BMPs) and intense, but spatially confined natural gas development. To provide the necessary contrast in experimental design, gas development projects within a pre-defined area of Williams' Ryan Gulch Unit have been excepted from big game winter timing limitations through year 2013. The exception area encompasses about 11 percent of the deer severe winter range encompassed by Williams' leaseholdings in Piceance Basin or about 1 percent of the total severe winter range available within Game Management Unit (GMU) 22. This project is within that 7,680-acre exception area.

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species: Since the Proposed Action requires no surface disturbance, there are no concerns associated with special status plant species. If surface disturbance will be required for the project, full special status plant species surveys will be required prior to construction activities. Fugitive dust abatement measures will be required for all construction traffic and activity.

REFERENCES CITED:

Armstrong, Harley J

1989 Paleontological Resources of Northwest Colorado: A Regional Analysis. Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Conner, Carl E., and Barbara J. Davenport

199 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for a Two-Mile-Long Section of the Yellow Creek Jeep Trail in Association with the Yankee Gulch Minerals Project in Rio Blanco County, Colorado, for American Soda, L.L.P. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (99-11-05: SHPO #RB.LM.R390)

2005 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Six Proposed Reroutes of the EnCana Meeker, Pipeline in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Trigon EPC. Grand River institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (05-11-10: SHPO: #RB.LM.R830)

2006 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Twenty-One proposed Ryan Gulch Well Locations and Related Access Routes in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Williams Production RMT. Grand River institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (07-11-07: SHPO #RB.LM.R999)

2007 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Three Proposed Ryan Gulch Unit Well Locations (Federal NRG 41-1-198, RGU 11-25-198 and RGU 14-25-198) Related Access Routes in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Williams Production RMT. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (07-11-14: SHPO #5B.LM.R1067)

Conner, Carl E., Nicole Darnell and Barbara Davenport

2011 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for the proposed RGU 32-25-198 Well Location in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Williams Field Services Company LLC, BLM 11-11-28, OAH #RB.LM.R1263. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (11-411-28:: SHPO #RB.LM.R1263)

Greenberg, Marc E., and Christina Kester-Tallman

2006 Class III Cultural Resource Survey of the Meeker Lateral Pipeline Rio Blanco and Garfield Counties, Colorado. (06-162-06: SHPO MC.LM.R620)

Hauck, F. Richard

- 2001 Cultural Resource Evaluation of 11 Proposed Mallard Well Locations & Associated pipelines/Access Corridors in the Piceance Creek Locality of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Archeological-Environmental Research Company, (AERC), Bountiful, Utah.. (01-38-08: SHPO #RB.LM.R441)

Tweto, Ogden

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

MITIGATION:

- 1) If pipeline placement has not begun by 12/16/2016 (five years from the date the original ROWs were amended), then the authorization will be suspended and the operator will be required to obtain a new ROW.

Air Quality

- 2) The operator shall employ dust suppression techniques (i.e., freshwater use) whenever there is a visible dust trail behind construction vehicles or during pipeline installation. Any technique other than the use of freshwater as a dust suppressant on BLM lands will require prior written approval from BLM.

Soil Resources

- 3) In order to protect rangeland health standards, erosion features such as rilling, gully, piping, and mass wasting on the ROW or adjacent to the ROW as a result of this action will be addressed immediately by Williams after observation by submitting a mitigation plan to the BLM for approval and implement BMPs to correct the problem.
- 4) After pipeline construction activities are completed Williams will be responsible for taking measures to prevent off-road vehicle use along the pipeline ROW until reclamation has been successful or for a longer period, as directed by the Authorized Officer (AO).
- 5) All construction activity shall cease when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless otherwise approved by the AO.

Invasive and Noxious Weeds

- 6) The area should be surveyed for the presence of noxious/invasive species before and after construction. If undesirable species are found, they shall be promptly controlled/eradicated using materials and methods approved in advance by the BLM AO. If invasive, non-native species establish within the project area and spread onto adjoining BLM lands, the applicant will be responsible for control of those populations, also using materials and methods approved by the AO.
- 7) If herbicide is to be used on public land, the applicant shall submit a pesticide use proposal (PUP) before herbicide is applied.
- 8) The applicant shall clean all off-road equipment to remove seed and soil prior to commencing operations on public lands within the project area.

Special Status Plant Species

- 9) The project proponent must control invasive weeds infestations for the life of the project after disturbance to avoid cumulative impacts on nearby special plant species habitats. If either the twinpod or the bladderpod are found within 600 m of the project area, Section 7 consultation must be initiated with the FWS for weed management as well.

Wild Horses

- 10) To minimize the incidents of young foals becoming dislocated from their mare, crews would be required to slow or stop when wild horses are encountered, allowing the bands to move away at a pace slow enough so that the foal can keep pace and is not separated.

Cultural Resources

- 11) Williams is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.

Paleontological Resources

- 12) Williams is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25 lbs./day, up to 250 lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.
- 13) If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, Williams or any of its agents must stop work immediately at that site, immediately contact the BLM Paleontology Coordinator, and make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The BLM or designated paleontologist will evaluate the discovery and take action to protect or remove the resource within 10 working days.

Within 10 days, the operator will be allowed to continue construction through the site, or will be given the choice of either (a) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for stabilizing the fossil resource in place and avoiding further disturbance to the fossil resource, or (b) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for mitigating impacts to the fossil resource prior to continuing construction through the project area.

Hazardous or Solid Waste

- 14) All lessees and/or operators and right-of-way holders shall comply with all federal, state and/or local laws, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to onshore orders and notices to lessees, addressing the emission of and/or the handling, use, and release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment.
- 15) Where required by law or regulation to develop a plan for the prevention of releases or the recovery of a release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, provide a current copy of said plan to the BLM WRFO.
- 16) Through all phases of oil and gas exploration, development, and production, all lessees and/or operators and holders of rights-of-way shall employ, maintain, and periodically update to the best available technology(s) aimed at reducing: 1) emissions, 2) fresh water use, and 3) utilization, production, and release of hazardous material.

- 17) All substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment shall be stored in appropriate containers. Fluids that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, including but not limited to produced water, shall be stored in appropriate containers and in secondary containment systems at 110% of the largest vessel's capacity. Secondary fluid containment systems, including but not limited to tank batteries shall be lined with a minimum 24 mil impermeable liner.
- 18) Construction sites and all facilities shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times; waste materials shall be disposed of promptly at an appropriate waste disposal site. "Waste" means all discarded matter including, but not limited to, human waste, trash, garbage, refuse, oil drums, petroleum products, ashes, and equipment.
- 19) As a reasonable and prudent lessee/operator in the oil and gas industry, acting in good faith, all lessees/operators and right-of-way holders will report all emissions or releases that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, regardless of a substance's status as exempt or nonexempt and regardless of fault, to the BLM WRFO (970) 878-3800.
- 20) As a reasonable and prudent lessees/operator and/or right-of-way holder in the oil and gas industry, acting in good faith, all lessees/operators and right-of-way holders will provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any substance that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, regardless of that substance's status as exempt or non-exempt. Where the lessee/operator or right-of-way holder fails, refuses or neglects to provide for the immediate clean-up and testing of air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils contaminated by the emission or release of any quantity of a substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, the BLM WRFO may take measures to clean-up and test air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils at the lessee/operator's expense. Such action will not relieve the lessee/operator of any liability or responsibility.
- 21) With the acceptance of this authorization, the commencement of operations under this authorization, or within thirty calendar days from the issuance of this authorization, whichever occurs first, and during the life of the pipeline, the right-of-way holder and the lessee/operator, and through the right-of-way holder and lessee/operator, its agents, employees, subcontractors, successors and assigns, stipulate and agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the United States Government, its agencies, and employees from all liability associated with the emission or release of substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment.

Realty Authorizations

- 22) All activities would be required to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. This would include acquiring all required State and Rio Blanco County permits, implementing all applicable mitigation measures required by each permit, and effectively coordinating with existing facility ROW holders.
- 23) The holder shall provide the BLM AO with data in a format compatible with the WRFO's ESRI ArcGIS Geographic Information System (GIS) to accurately locate and identify the ROW and all constructed infrastructure, (as-built maps) within 60 days of construction completion.

24) Acceptable data formats are: (1) corrected global positioning system (GPS) files with sub-meter accuracy or better; (2) ESRI shapefiles or geodatabases; or at last resort, (3) AutoCAD .dwg or .dxf files. Option 2 is highly preferred. In ALL cases the data must be submitted in Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Zone 13N, NAD 83, in units of meters. Data may be submitted as: (1) an email attachment; or (2) on a standard compact disk (CD) in compressed (WinZip only) or uncompressed format. All data shall include metadata, for each submitted layer, that conforms to the Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata from the Federal Geographic Data Committee standards. Questions should be directed to WRFO BLM GIS staff at (970) 878-3800.

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE: 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: Christina J. Barlow

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 Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

4/6/2012

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1.



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**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641**

DECISION

PROJECT NAME: Williams Temporary Surface Frac Lines

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-2012-0056-CX

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-2012-0056-Categorical Exclusion (CX), authorizing frac operations on the Ryan Gulch Unit (RGU) 24-25-198 and RGU 32-25-198 pads from the existing RGU 11-25-198 pad using SIMOPS and/or remote frac, which necessarily includes the placement, operation, and maintenance of three 4.5 inch steel frac lines between the RGU 11-25-198 well pad and existing right-of-way (ROW) along County Road (CR) 83 and in the existing ROW between the RGU 32-25-198 and RGU 24-25-198 well pads, for a period of time not to exceed 8/15 2013.

Mitigation Measures

- 1) If pipeline placement has not begun by 12/16/2016 (five years from the date the original ROWs were amended), then the authorization will be suspended and the operator will be required to obtain a new ROW.

Air Quality

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Hazardous or Solid Waste

- 14) All lessees and/or operators and right-of-way holders shall comply with all federal, state and/or local laws, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to onshore orders and notices to lessees, addressing the emission of and/or the handling, use, and release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment.
- 15) Where required by law or regulation to develop a plan for the prevention of releases or the recovery of a release of any substance that poses a risk of harm to human health or the environment, provide a current copy of said plan to the BLM WRFO.
- 16) Through all phases of oil and gas exploration, development, and production, all lessees and/or operators and holders of rights-of-way shall employ, maintain, and periodically update to the best available technology(s) aimed at reducing: 1) emissions, 2) fresh water use, and 3) utilization, production, and release of hazardous material.
- 17) All substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment shall be stored in appropriate containers. Fluids that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, including but not limited to produced water, shall be stored in appropriate containers and in secondary containment systems at 110% of the largest vessel's capacity. Secondary fluid containment systems, including but not limited to tank batteries shall be lined with a minimum 24 mil impermeable liner.
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- 19) As a reasonable and prudent lessee/operator in the oil and gas industry, acting in good faith, all lessees/operators and right-of-way holders will report all emissions or releases that may pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment, regardless of a substance's status as exempt or nonexempt and regardless of fault, to the BLM WRFO (970) 878-3800.
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clean-up and test air, water (surface and/or ground) and soils at the lessee/operator's expense. Such action will not relieve the lessee/operator of any liability or responsibility.

- 21) With the acceptance of this authorization, the commencement of operations under this authorization, or within thirty calendar days from the issuance of this authorization, whichever occurs first, and during the life of the pipeline, the right-of-way holder and the lessee/operator, and through the right-of-way holder and lessee/operator, its agents, employees, subcontractors, successors and assigns, stipulate and agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the United States Government, its agencies, and employees from all liability associated with the emission or release of substances that pose a risk of harm to human health or the environment.

Realty Authorizations

- 22) All activities would be required to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. This would include acquiring all required State and Rio Blanco County permits, implementing all applicable mitigation measures required by each permit, and effectively coordinating with existing facility ROW holders.
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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

Internal scoping was initiated when the project was presented to the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 2/21/2012. External scoping was conducted by posting this project on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 3/30/2012.

RATIONALE

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act. Transport of water through the temporary frac lines would result in less truck traffic.

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:

4/6/2012

