

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-110-2012-0078-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: Amend COC123685

PROJECT NAME: Anomaly Repair Questar ML 68 Pipeline

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian
T.2S., R.100,
Sec. 31, 32, 33

APPLICANT: Questar Pipeline Company

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: Questar Pipeline Company has completed a pigging operation on the ML 68 transmission natural gas pipeline. Three of the four anomalies that require repair are located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land (see Exhibit A). Transmission lines are required to be internally checked by the Department of Transportation and Hazardous Material Safety Agency (PHMSA).

Questar proposes to excavate the three sites to determine the extent of the pipe weakness and determine the appropriate repair. All excavation will be within the 50 foot right-of-way. Duration for each dig is approximately three days. The size of the excavation would be five feet in width and a minimum of ten to fifteen feet in length. If a section of pipe needs to be replaced, the size of excavation could be larger. Access will be from County Road 27. Equipment to complete the work consists of backhoe, three pick-ups, and a welding truck if the pipe must be replaced.

The disturbed area will be immediately reseeded and covered with erosion control matting. Questar will continue to be responsible for controlling and monitoring weeds.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with (43 CFR 1610.5-3, BLM 1601.08) the following plan:

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

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, E-13: *Amendments to existing rights-of-way such as upgrading of existing facilities which entail no additional disturbance outside the right-of-way boundary.*

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 the bureau.		X
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		X

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 4/10/2012. 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	4/19/2012
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	4/10/2012
Zoe Miller	Ecologist	Special Status Plant Species	4/25/2012

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The proposed work areas have been inventoried at the Class III (100 percent) pedestrian level for three projects adjacent to the Questar pipeline (Pennefather-O'Brien et al 1992 compliance dated 12/17/1992, Piontkowski 2006 compliance dated 5/3/2006 Weston and Welch 2006 Compliance date 11/30/2006). No cultural resources have been identified at the proposed repair locations. There are no anticipated direct or indirect impacts to cultural resources from the proposed repair activity.

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 repair area in T 2 S, R 100 W, Section 33 NW¼SE¼ is located in an area mapped as the Douglas Creek Member of the Lower Green River formation which the BLM, WRFO has classified as a Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 4 formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically noteworthy fossil resources (c f. Armstrong and Wolny 1989). If it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying sedimentary rock formation there is a potential to impact scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. Such an impact is likely to result in an adverse impact to the regional paleontological database even if the fossils exposed are recovered.

The repair location located in T 2 S, R 100 W, Section 33, NE¼NE¼SW¼ is located in what is generally mapped as the Wasatch Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM WRFO has classified as a PFYC 5 formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically noteworthy fossil resources (c f. Armstrong and Wolny 1989). Excavation into the underlying sedimentary rock formation

would have a potential to impact scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. Any impacts to fossil resources that might be present would constitute an adverse impact to the regional fossil database even if the fossil resources were recovered.

The remaining two repair areas in T 2 S, R 100 W, Sections 31 and 32 are located in an area generally mapped as the Upper Mesa Verde Formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM, WRFO has classified as a PRYC 5 formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. (c f. Armstrong and Wolny 1989). Any excavations into the underlying sedimentary rock have the potential to adversely impact scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. Any impacts to fossil resources as a result of the excavations would represent a loss to the regional paleontological data base.

Special Status Wildlife Species: There are no listed, proposed, candidate, or BLM-sensitive animals potentially influenced by the Proposed Action. In each project site, northerly-sloped woodlands adjacent to the 150-200 foot wide pipeline corridor offer habitat potentially suited for use by nesting raptors (e.g., Cooper's hawk, long-eared owl). Although project work would be conducted coincident with the raptor nest season, in each case, site-specific circumstances strongly reduce the likelihood that raptors use woodlands in close proximity to each project site. Existing vehicle tracks lie immediately adjacent to the two westernmost ridgeline sites and the subtending woodlands are steep (40% slope). In WRFO's experience, uniformly steep slopes, high ridgeline positions, and areas in close proximity to roads do not represent favored accipiter or long-eared owl nest habitat. Similarly, the easternmost site lies in a valley bottom within 500 feet of an existing road. The lower wooded slopes in closest proximity to the project site are bounded by this road and the cleared pipeline right-of-way. It is very unlikely that raptors would select a nest site in a woodland corner fully exposed to road activity. Habitat better suited for use by nesting raptors is generally separated from the project sites by 200 or more meters of intervening woodland cover. Relatively brief, low intensity construction work confined to a discrete locale within an existing roaded pipeline corridor would have no reasonable likelihood of disrupting ongoing nest activities at these distances.

Special Status Plant Species: The eastern most location of the Proposed Action occurs on the edge of the dry fork tongue of the green river formation. The threatened species *Physaria obcordata* is known to occur on this tongue but over 20 miles to the east. No threatened species are known to occur within 600 meters of the project area therefore there are no concerns for special status plant species associated with the Proposed Action.

REFEENCES CITED:

- Armstrong, Harley J., and David G. Wolny
1989 Paleontological Resources of Northwest Colorado: A Regional Analysis. Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction, Colorado.
- Pennefather-O'Brien, Elizabeth, Patrick Lubinski, and Michael D Metcalf
1992 Colorado Interstate Gas Company Uinta Basin lateral 20" Pipeline: Class III Cultural Resource Final Report Utah, Colorado and Wyoming. Metcalf

Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (92-54-26: SHPO #MC.LM.R71)

Piontkowski, Michael

2006 A Report of the Class III Inventory of an EnCana Meeker South and West pipelines and Related Facilities, Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado, and Uintah County, Utah. Uncompahgre Archaeological Consultants, Grand Junction, Colorado. (06-145-02: SHPO # MC.LM.R470)

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 (06-162-02: SHPO #RB.LM.R979)

MITIGATION:

1. The holder 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.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the Authorized Officer (AO). The holder will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The holder, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder must notify the AO, by telephone and 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 AO.
4. The holder 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 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.

5. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the holder or any of his 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.

6. Any excavations into the underlying native sedimentary stone must be monitored by a permitted paleontologist. The monitoring paleontologist must be present before the start of excavations that may impact bedrock.

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.

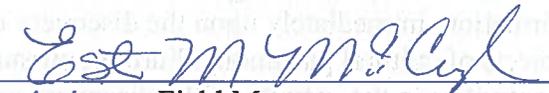
NAME OF PREPARER: Janet Doll

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, 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.

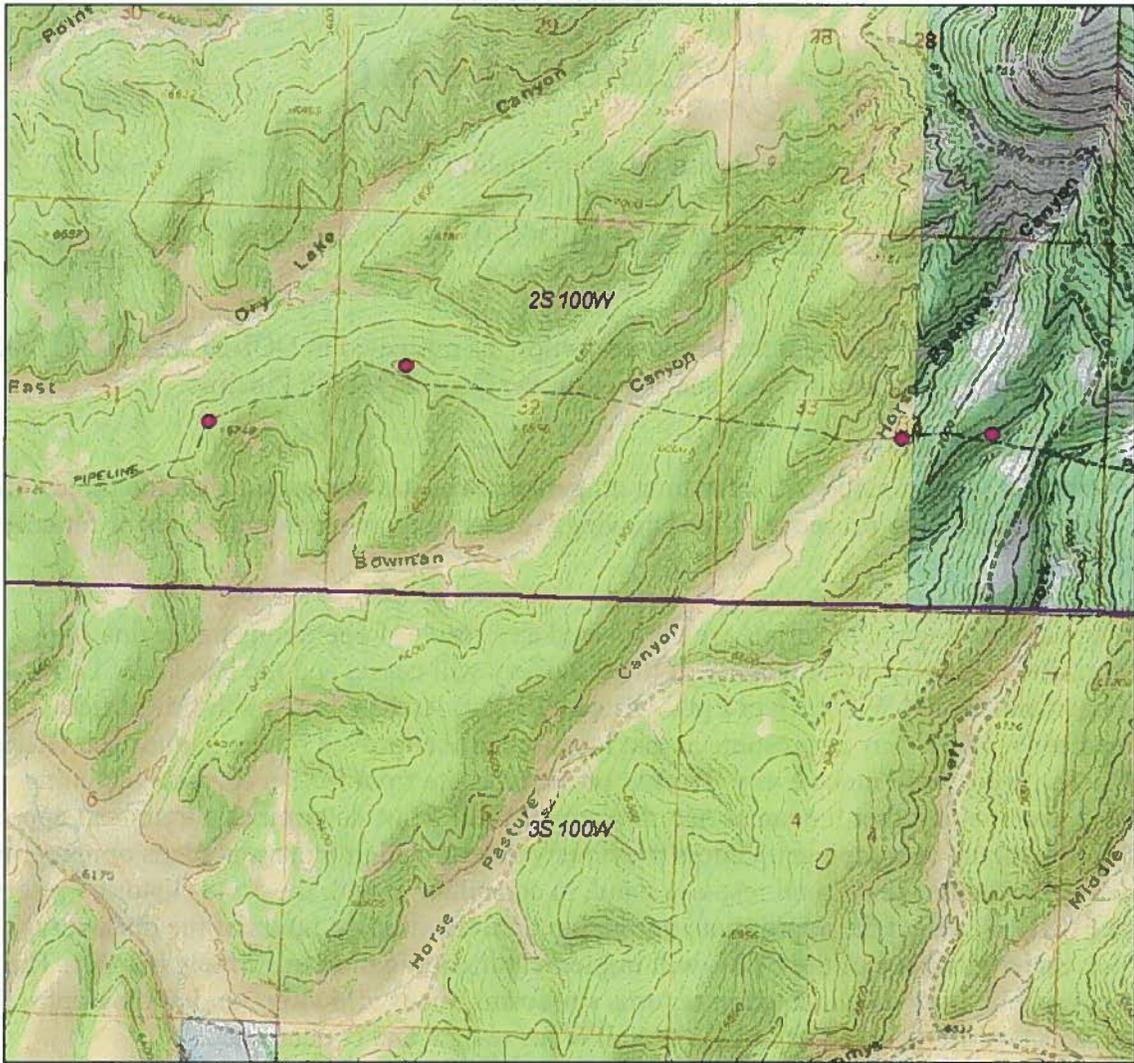
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:


Acting Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 5/3/12

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit A-Map

Questar Anomaly Digs COC0123685



April 2012



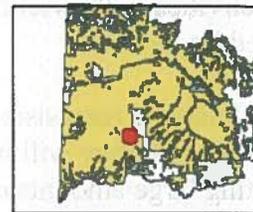
0 850 1,700 3,400 Feet

Exhibit A

- Dig_Locations
- PLSS_Townships_GCDB2008

Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

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



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

DECISION RECORD

PROJECT NAME: Anomaly Repair Questar Pipeline Company

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-2012-0078-CX

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-2012-0078-CX, authorizing the repair of three anomalies on the Questar ML 68 Pipeline.

Mitigation Measures

1. The holder 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.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) White River Field Office (WRFO) Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the Authorized Officer (AO). The holder will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The holder, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder must notify the AO, by telephone and 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 AO.
4. The holder 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 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.

5. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the holder or any of his 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.

6. Any excavations into the underlying native sedimentary stone must be monitored by a permitted paleontologist. The monitoring paleontologist must be present before the start of excavations that may impact bedrock.

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

The BLM informed the public about this project by listing it on the online WRFO NEPA Register on 4/25/2012 and a copy of the completed Categorical Exclusion will be posted on the WRFO website.

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:

Est. M. McCull
Acting Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

5/3/12