

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**NUMBER:** DOI-BLM-CO-110-2013-0022-EA

**CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:** COC74740

**PROJECT NAME:** Rio Blanco County Road 5, Stock Passes 10, 11(Private),12

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Sixth Principal Meridian  
T. 2 S., R. 97 W.,  
Section 22, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
Section 4, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;

**APPLICANT:** Rio Blanco County

**BACKGROUND:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed an Environmental Assessment (EA), DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0032-EA( signed 6/2/2011) which analyzed six projects along Rio Blanco County Road (CR) 5. An inspection of CR 5 in June 2012 by Zoe Miller, WRFO Ecologist, revealed that portions of the road in the area of Stock Passes 10, 11, and 12 did not have adequate plant surveys. (Stock Passes 10 and 12 are on BLM land and Stock Pass 11 is on private land.)These stock passes are located within suitable habitat for the threatened Dudley Bluffs twinpod (*Physaria obcordata*) and plant surveys confirmed that these plants are located close to or within areas proposed for stock pass reconstruction. Because twinpod plants are present and some plants will be directly affected, a formal Section 7 consultation is required, and a biological assessment (BA) must be submitted to United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). These impacts were not considered in the original EA (DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0032-EA).

**PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION:** The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide Rio Blanco County with authorized use of the public land managed by the BLM to improve County Road 5 in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), BLM right-of-way regulations, and other applicable federal laws. The need for the proposed action is to respond to a right-of way application request submitted by the applicant to replace and upgrade stock passes along the CR 5 corridor in order to increase the width of stock passes and bridges that are currently too narrow for the passage of certain equipment.

Rio Blanco CR 5 is the primary route in the Piceance Basin, providing access to residential, agricultural, and recreational land uses and potential oil and gas deposits in the Roan Plateau.

Decision to be Made: The BLM will decide whether or not to affirm the decision to issue a right-of-way for Stock Passes 10 and 12, and if so, under what terms and conditions.

### **SCOPING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AND ISSUES:**

**Scoping:** Scoping was the primary mechanism used by the BLM to initially identify issues. Internal scoping was initiated when the project was presented to the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 12/4/2012. External scoping was conducted by posting this project on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on [MM/DD/YYYY](#).

**Issues:** No issues were identified during public scoping.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:**

**Proposed Action:** This EA considers the replacement of Stock Passes 10, 11, and 12, that are within the original Project #3 described in DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0032-EA. The existing structures would be replaced with 10 x 10 foot concrete box culverts. Stock Passes 10 and 12 are located on BLM land. Stock Pass 10 is located at Mile Post (MP) 22.82 to MP 23.12 (See Exhibit A) and would require a total proposed right-of-way of 2.835 and 0.75 acres of Temporary Work Area. Stock Pass 12 is located at MP 25.30 to MP 25.69 (See Exhibit B) and would require 0.028 acres of right-of-way with 0.941 acres of Temporary Work Area.

Stock Pass 11 is located on private land and is considered a non-Federal connected action because it is an interdependent part of a larger action and depends on the larger action for its justification. However, since the entire area required to construct Stock Pass 11 is on private land, BLM decision-making cannot modify effects of the non-Federal action and the impacts associated with its construction will be analyzed in the cumulative effects analysis.

Design Features and Common to All Projects: As part of the Proposed Action, Rio Blanco County is incorporating project specific design features to minimize environmental impacts in the CR 5 project area. These features include weed control, erosion and sediment control, livestock fencing replacement, restoration of irrigation ditches, dust suppression, traffic control, and safeguards to prevent potential impacts to wetlands and paleontological resources. These features are included in the final design plans and construction specifications being prepared which will be submitted to BLM upon completion. Rio Blanco County will also prepare a weed control plan, emergency response plan, stormwater management plan, and reclamation plan.

The detailed construction plan set and the Stormwater Management Plan are in the project file at the WRFO and are available for review upon request.

Raptor surveys will be completed prior to construction for each project. Specific measures to minimize impacts are discussed in each resource section of this EA.

**No Action Alternative:** Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM would deny the right-of-way grant application, and the installation of new box culverts for Stock passes 10 and 12 would not occur. The existing stock passes would remain in place and would not change.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD:** The proposed projects for CR 5 are needed to improve safety and traffic flow. Therefore, improvement projects were designed to address specific safety and traffic issues on the existing facility. The environmental impacts, the extensive amount of new right-of-way that would be needed, and the high costs associated with building a new highway to provide access for development of energy resources in this area make consideration of an alternative that would provide a new roadway unreasonable.

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

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (White River 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.”

**AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Standards for Public Land Health:** In January 1997, the Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, special status species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis (EA). These findings are located in specific elements listed below.

**Cumulative Effects Analysis Assumptions:** Cumulative effects are defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.7) as “...the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.” Table 1 lists the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the area that might be affected by the Proposed Action; for this project the area considered was the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 5<sup>th</sup> Level Watershed**. However, the geographic scope used for analysis may vary for each cumulative effects issue and is described in the Affected Environment section for each resource.

**Table 1.** Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Action Description	STATUS		
	Past	Present	Future

Action Description	STATUS		
	Past	Present	Future
Livestock Grazing	X	X	X
Wild Horse Gathers	No	No	No
Recreation	X	X	X
Invasive Weed Inventory and Treatments	X	X	X
Range Improvement Projects : Water Developments Fences & Cattleguards	X	X	X
Wildfire and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation	X	X	X
Wind Energy Met Towers			X
Oil and Gas Development: Well Pads Access Roads Pipelines Gas Plants Facilities	X	X	X
Power Lines	X	X	X
Oil Shale	X	X	X
Seismic	X	X	X
Vegetation Treatments	X	X	X

### Affected Resources:

The CEQ Regulations state that NEPA documents “must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail” (40 CFR 1500.1(b)). While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues raised warrant analysis in an environmental assessment (EA). Issues will be analyzed if: 1) an analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) if the issue is associated with a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact, or where analysis is necessary to determine the significance of the impacts. Table 2 lists the resources considered and the determination as to whether they require additional analysis.

**Table 2.** Resources and Determination of Need for Further Analysis

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
<b>Physical Resources</b>		
PI	Air Quality	See discussion below.
NI	Geology and Minerals	Construction activities associated with the replacement of the existing stock passes would have little to no effect on the geologic and minerals resources.
PI	Soil Resources*	See discussion below.
PI	Surface and Ground Water Quality*	See discussion below.
<b>Biological Resources</b>		

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
NI	Wetlands and Riparian Zones*	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new riparian or wetland issues involved.
NI	Vegetation*	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new vegetation issues or concerns involved.
NI	Invasive, Non-native Species	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new invasive, non-native plant species issues or concerns involved.
NI	Special Status Animal Species*	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new special status animal issues involved.
	Special Status Plant Species*	
NI	Migratory Birds	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new migratory bird issues involved.
NI	Aquatic Wildlife*	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new aquatic wildlife issues involved.
NI	Terrestrial Wildlife*	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new terrestrial wildlife issues involved.
NP	Wild Horses	The project is not located within the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area, North Piceance or West Douglas Herd Areas.
<b>Heritage Resources and the Human Environment</b>		
NI	Cultural Resources	Impacts to cultural resources for the CR 5 project were analyzed in BLM-10-110-2011-0032. Subsequent to this it was discovered that cultural surveys had not been adequate and several more were conducted for the CR 5 project, including areas in the current stock passes project. However, there will be no new impacts to cultural resources with stock passes 10, 11, and 12, that had not been covered in the BLM-10-110-2011-0032 EA.
NI	Paleontological Resources	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new paleontological resource issues involved.
NI	Native American Religious Concerns	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032). There are no new Native American religious concerns involved, and tribal consultation does not need to be done again.
NI	Visual Resources	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
		BLM-10-110-2011-0032. There are no new visual resource issues involved.
	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	
NI	Fire Management	The discovery of affected plants does not change the analysis for fire management. The original analysis for the referenced DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0032-EA remains valid for fire management.
<b>NI</b>	<b>Social and Economic Conditions</b>	<b>There would not be any substantial changes to local social or economic conditions.</b>
NP	Environmental Justice	According to the most recent Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income populations within the WRFO.
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	There are lands with wilderness characteristics identified on the project area.
<b>Resource Uses</b>		
NP	Forest Management	Pinyon/ juniper woodlands will not be disturbed within the Proposed Action area. The original analysis for the referenced DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0032-EA remains valid for Forest Management.
NI	Rangeland Management	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale (0.9 acre each: 55'x600' and 110'x370') and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032. There are no new rangeland management / livestock grazing related issues or concerns involved.
PI	Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights	Installation of culverts is likely to improve the movement of water and sediment under CR5 on these ephemeral tributaries and hence may positively impact the function of floodplains along Piceance Creek, no impacts to hydrology or water rights are expected.
PI	Realty Authorizations	See discussion below.
NI	Recreation	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032. There are no new recreation issues involved.
NI	Access and Transportation	The proposed project amendments are minor in scale and identical in nature to those project components originally addressed in DOI-BLM-10-110-2011-0032. There are no new access and transportation issues involved.
<b>NP</b>	<b>Prime and Unique Farmlands</b>	<b>There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands within the project area.</b>
<b>Special Designations</b>		
	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	
NP	Wilderness	There are no Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas in the project area.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers in the WRFO.
NP	Scenic Byways	There are no Scenic Byways within the project area.

<sup>1</sup> NP = Not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives. NI = Present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required. PI = Present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA.

\* Public Land Health Standard

If NP or NI are used in the table above, please delete your section below. If PI is used then please complete your section below.

Withdrawn

## AIR QUALITY

*Affected Environment:* The Proposed Action is an attainment area for national and state air quality standards, based on a review of the designated non-attainment areas for criteria pollutants, published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2012). Non-attainment areas are areas designated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as having air pollution levels that persistently exceed the national ambient air quality (NAAQ) standards. The Proposed Action is 10-miles from any special designation airsheds, the closest special designation area is Dinosaur National Monument which is designated a Class II airshed with Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) with thresholds for sulfur oxides and visibility.

The Proposed Action is in Rio Blanco County within the Western Counties Monitoring Region of Colorado. The 2010 CDPHE monitoring assessment showed four gaseous pollutant monitoring sites and 11 particulate monitoring sites in the Western Counties area (APCD 2011). Local air quality parameters including particulates are being measured at monitoring sites located at Meeker, Rangely, Dinosaur and Ripple Creek Pass near the Flat Tops Wilderness Area. The closest location for an Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) site is near the Flat Tops Wilderness.

### *Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: This Proposed Action would authorize the use of small pieces of BLM lands to install culverts for CR5 crossings of ephemeral streams. The environmental consequences to air quality from the Proposed Action would include the periodic and local production of dust and emissions of engine exhaust from construction equipment. Dust levels may be noticeable locally and especially during drier times. The Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) estimates the maximum PM<sub>10</sub> levels (24-hour average) in rural portions of western Colorado to be near 50 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ). The increase in airborne particulate matter and emissions of construction equipment is not expected to exceed Colorado ambient air quality (CAAQ) or NAAQ standards on an hourly, 8-hour average or daily basis.

Cumulative Effects: Statewide, more than 70 percent of PM<sub>10</sub> (coarse particles) are created from windblown dust and soil from roads, fields and construction sites. A smaller percentage of coarse particles comes from automobile and diesel engine exhaust, soot from wood fires, and sulfates and nitrates from combustion sources such as industrial boilers (CAQCC 2011). There have been several PM<sub>10</sub> exceedances in recent years (past 10 years) in the Western Counties area. All recent exceedances were caused by dust storms from regional blowing dust/high wind events, which are natural and uncontrollable, and are “exceptional” events.

Industrial facilities in White River Basin include coal mines, soda ash mines, and natural gas processing plants. Oil and gas exploration and development in the region is the most common activity and part of the reason for upgrading CR5 to serve this activity in the Piceance Creek areas. Due to these industrial uses, increased population and oil and gas exploration and development in this region, emissions of air pollutants in the White River Basin due to exhaust emissions and dust (particulate matter) are likely to increase into the future. Despite increases in emissions, overall air quality conditions in the White River Basin are likely to continue to be good for some time due to effective atmospheric dispersion conditions and limited transport of air pollutants from outside the area.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts from the no-action alternative would still include the construction activities for one of the structures on private lands and would probably require a redesign of the project to compensate for not using BLM lands. This alternative is unlikely to result in a measureable difference in construction activities; therefore impacts to air quality would be the same as those described in the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts would be the same as those described for the proposed action since there would not be a measurable difference in construction activities under this alternative.

*Mitigation:* None Identified.

## SOIL RESOURCES

*Affected Environment:* The classifications of soils within 30 meters of the proposed surface disturbance and could be impacted by the Proposed Action are shown in Table XX (NRCS, 2008). There are no fragile soils or soils prone to landslides on Federal lands that will be impacted by this project.

**Table XX.** Soil Classifications within 30 Meters of the Surface Disturbance Proposed.

Soil Classification	Range Site Description	Potentially Impacted Acres
Barcus channery loamy sand, 2-8% slopes	None	11
Havre loam, 0-4% slopes	Foothills Swale	5
Glendive fine sandy loam	Foothills Swale	2

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Soil disturbance will occur that is associated with the road upgrades and installation of culverts. With proper BMPs for stormwater, construction and reclamation practices impacts to soils outside the 30 meter buffer are unlikely. Impacts to the BLM administered lands from construction activities will be removal of soils associated with excavation and reclamation and stabilization efforts.

Direct impacts from the construction would include soil compaction, removal of vegetation, exposure of subsoil, mixing of soil horizons, loss of topsoil productivity, and an increase in the susceptibility of soils to wind and water erosion. Removal of vegetation exposes soils to erosion from rainfall, wind and surface runoff. Exposure of subsoil and mixing of soil horizons can change the physical characteristics of subsoil and may reduce the productivity of these soils into the future. Loss of topsoil productivity can occur during storage due nutrient loss through percolation of precipitation through the soils, physical loss and mixing of less productive soil layers during moving and a loss of structure. Construction and reclamation efforts would likely stabilize these locations after the culverts are installed.

These direct impacts could result in indirect impacts to soils off the construction site such as increased runoff and erosion. Implementation of BMPs for stormwater, mitigation and reclamation will reduce impacts from this project and should limit impacts to within 30 meters of the disturbed areas. Productivity would return to these areas with the success of reclamation efforts.

**Cumulative Effects:** Industrial facilities in the Piceance Creek watershed include coal mines, soda ash mines, and natural gas processing plants. Oil and gas development in the areas area is likely to result in 2-3 well pads per square mile and will include surface disturbance and reclamation of pads, pipelines, roads and support facilities. Energy exploration and development and nacholite mining in the region are the most common activities and part of the reason for upgrading CR5. Livestock grazing occurs on public and private lands in the area and may reduce canopy cover and lead to localized erosion in some areas. In general, soil disturbance in the Proposed Action and other activities are likely to reduce soil productivity but not in a measurable way.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

**Direct and Indirect Effects:** Impacts from the no-action alternative would probably require a redesign of the project to compensate for not using BLM lands. Soil productivity of BLM administered lands would not be impacted by the project under this alternative.

**Cumulative Effects:** Cumulative impacts would be the same as those described for the proposed action, since there would not be a difference in construction activities under this alternative.

*Mitigation:* None Identified.

**SURFACE & GROUND WATER QUALITY**

*Affected Environment: Surface Water:* This construction project is located in ephemeral drainages tributary to Piceance Creek. Table XX describes the surface water segments that may be impacted by this project.

**Table XX. Water Quality Classification Table\***

Segment	Segment Name	303(d) List	Protected Beneficial Uses			
			Aquatic Life	Recreation	Agriculture	Water Supply
16	All tributaries to Piceance Creek	No	Warm 2	No Primary Contact	Yes	No
14b	Mainstem Piceance Creek from Hunter Creek to Ryan Gulch	No	Warm 2	Potential Primary Contact	Yes	No
15	Mainstem of Piceance Creek from Ryan Gulch to the White River	Yes	Warm 2	Potential Primary Contact	Yes	No

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\* Colorado Department Of Public Health And Environment, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 37 Classifications and Numeric Standards For Lower Colorado River Basin, Effective January 1, 2012

All three segments are protected for warm water aquatic life and would be protective of waters where the summer weekly average temperatures are above 20 °C. The Warm 2 designation means that it has been determined that these waters are not capable of sustaining a wide variety of warm water biota. The Mainstem of Piceance Creek (segment 15) is provisionally listed on the State of Colorado's list of impaired water bodies (303d list) for aquatic life. This listing is a low priority for the State.

Groundwater: Precipitation in this area generally moves from areas of recharge to surface waters via alluvial aquifers and on the surface during spring melt and rain storms. A portion of annual precipitation infiltrates to deeper bedrock aquifers that contribute to contact springs. Springs and ground water inputs generally occur in both bedrock and alluvial aquifers along valley bottoms.

Contact springs are common in Piceance Creek and are often the result of upper bedrock aquifers consisting of fractured, lean oil shale zones and siltstones of the Green River Formation above and below the Mahogany Zone or from fractured marlstone and sandstones of the saturated portions of the overlying Uinta Formation. Perched groundwater zones occur locally when these saturated zones contact the surface. These perched zones can occur on terraces parallel to the Piceance Creek; surface water drainages have cut through these areas of saturation and may be manifested as springs and seeps above the valley floor.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Surface Waters: Clearing, grading, and soil stockpiling activities associated with the Proposed Action would alter overland flow and natural infiltration patterns. Stormwater measures and best management practices include periodic monitoring of any erosion problems would be essential to avoid erosion and increased sedimentation to surface waters. Surface erosion for this project is most likely during the construction and early production phases of the project and would be mitigated using BMPs for stormwater.

Groundwaters: Aquifers in the Project Area include the Tertiary Uinta-Animas aquifer, and the Cretaceous Mesaverde aquifer. Groundwater resources are all in elevations above the construction areas and are unlikely to be impacted.

Cumulative Effects: Well pads in the general area are likely to occur at about a 2-3 multi-well pads per square mile and will include surface disturbance and reclamation of other pads, pipelines, roads and support facilities. Livestock grazing occurs on public and private lands in the area and may reduce canopy cover and lead to localized erosion in some areas. No other impacts other than energy development, livestock are expected near the project area.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts from the no-action alternative would probably require a redesign of the project.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts would be the same as those described for the proposed action.

*Mitigation:* No mitigation has been identified.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #5 for Water Quality:* It is unlikely that installation of culverts would result in an exceedence of state water quality standards.

## **SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES**

*Affected Environment:*

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Cumulative Effects:

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Cumulative Effects:

*Mitigation:*

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #4 for Special Status Species:*

## **HAZARDOUS OR SOLID WASTES**

*Affected Environment:*

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Cumulative Effects:

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Cumulative Effects:

*Mitigation:*

## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

*Affected Environment:*

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Cumulative Effects:

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Cumulative Effects:

*Mitigation:*

## REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS

*Affected Environment:* Rio Blanco County holds existing rights-of-way under Revised Statute (R.S.) 2477 for segments of CR 5 crossing public lands. Additionally, there are existing linear rights-of-way (phone, power, oil and gas facilities) and oil and gas leases or agreements within the proposed right-of-way for the stock pass projects. See below.

Table XX

Project	Existing CR 5 ROW	Existing ROW's affecting project	Proposed FLPMA Case #	Proposed ROW on Public land	Temporary Work Area
Stock Pass 10	Yes	COC14840 (Qwest) COC124497 (PSC) COC70684 (Whiting)	COC74740	2.835 ac. (1-400)	0.744 ac. (TE 1-400)
Stock Pass 12	COC2067	COC62186 (TransColo) COC123685 (Questar) COC52705 (Co. Gas Co)	COC74740	0.028 ac. (1-500)	0.941 ac. (TE 1-500)

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Because the improvement projects would expand the road beyond the width and/or length of the existing R.S. 2477 rights-of-way, Stock Pass 10 described in this EA would be replaced with a FLMPA right-of-way as well as a Temporary Use Permit for the temporary work areas. Stock Pass 12 is a new proposed right-of-way with a temporary work area. The FMPLA grant has been serialized as COC74740. Each stock pass will be an amendment to this grant. Rio Blanco County will coordinate with utility providers that would be affected by the stock passes.

Cumulative Effects: As the number of ROW holders in the project area increases so would competition for suitable locations for facilities. Increased ROW densities would also lead to a higher probability of conflict between ROW users.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would not be any direct or indirect effects from the stock passes not being replaced.

Cumulative Effects: There would not be any cumulative effects from the stock passes not being replaced.

*Mitigation:*

1. All activities shall comply with all applicable local, State, and Federal laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. This includes acquiring all required Federal, State, and/or local permits, effectively coordinating with existing facility ROW holders, and implementing all applicable mitigation measures required by each permit.
2. Construction activity should take place entirely within the areas authorized in the ROW grants and temporary use permit.
3. 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. Acceptable data formats are: (1) corrected global positioning system (GPS) files with sub-meter accuracy or better; (2) ESRI shape files 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.
4. At least 90 days prior to termination of the ROW, the holder shall contact the AO to arrange a joint inspection of the ROW. The inspection will result in the development of an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan submitted by the holder. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material (e.g., gravel or concrete), as well as final recontouring, spreading of topsoil, and seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

## AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

### *Affected Environment:*

#### *Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

##### Direct and Indirect Effects:

##### Cumulative Effects:

#### *Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

##### Direct and Indirect Effects:

##### Cumulative Effects:

### *Mitigation:*

## **REFERENCES CITED:**

Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment Air Quality Control Commission (CAQCC).  
2011 Colorado Air Quality Control Commission Report to the Public 2010-2011,  
Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment, Denver, CO.

Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment Air Pollution Control Division (APCD)  
2010 Colorado 5 Year Monitoring Network Assessment. Available online at:  
[http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/documents/2010\\_CO\\_5yr\\_Network\\_Assessment.pdf](http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/documents/2010_CO_5yr_Network_Assessment.pdf).  
(Updated June 30, 2011)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).  
2012 Currently Designated Non-Attainment Areas for all Criteria Pollutants. Updated as  
of July 20, 2012. Available online at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk/ancl.html>. Accessed October 10, 2012.

Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA (NRCS). 2008. Soil Survey of Rio Blanco  
County, Colorado.

## **TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, The Ute  
Mountain Ute Tribe, and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe were all consulted with as part of the work  
done for the BLM-10-110-2011-0032 EA. The Colorado State Historic Preservation Office has  
been consulted with several times on the overall CR5 Road Improvements Project, which  
includes the current project areas.

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<b>Date Signed</b>
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality; Surface and Ground Water Quality; Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights; Soils	01/17/2013
Baili Foster	Ecologist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; Special Status Plant Species	MM/DD/YYYY
Kristin Bowen	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources; Native American Religious Concerns; Paleontological Resources	01/07/2013
Mary Taylor	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species; Vegetation; Rangeland Management	1/29/2013
Ed Hollowed/Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds; Special Status Animal Species; Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife; Wetlands and Riparian Zones	12/21/2012
	Natural Resource Specialist	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	MM/DD/YYYY
	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness; Visual Resources; Access and Transportation; Recreation,	MM/DD/YYYY
Scott Nilson	Fuels Specialist	Fire Management	12/20/2012
Heather Woodruff	Rangeland Management Specialist/Forest Specialist	Forest Management	12/7/2012
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	01/11/2013
Janet Doll	Realty Specialist	Realty	12/3/2012
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horse Management	01/29/2013
		Project Lead – Document Preparer	MM/DD/YYYY
Heather Sauls	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Compliance	MM/DD/YYYY

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Figure 1: Map of the Project

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

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**  
**DOI-BLM-CO-110-2011-0000-EA**

**BACKGROUND**

Briefly describe proposed action.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action and will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity, as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects as described in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (1996). Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described below.

**Context**

The project is a site-specific action directly involving BLM administered public lands that do not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. Expand on response...

**Intensity**

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this Proposed Action:

- 1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**
- 2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.**  
There would be no impact to public health and safety.
- 3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**
- 4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

**5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.**

No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during analysis of the Proposed Action.

**6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The Proposed Action neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Describe if action has been previously evaluated (e.g., in the RMP).

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.**

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

Neither the Proposed Action nor impacts associated with it violate any laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Field Manager

**DATE SIGNED:**

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:**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NUMBER:** DOI-BLM-CO-2011-0000-EA

**DECISION**

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action (**Alternative A**), as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-2011-0000-EA, authorizing....**the construction, operation, and maintenance of...**

**Mitigation Measures**

**COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS & CONFORMANCE WITH THE LAND USE PLAN**

This decision is in compliance with the **XXX, 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.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

The Proposed Action was analyzed in DOI-BLM-CO-2011-0000-EA and it was found to have no significant impacts, thus an EIS is not required.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

**RATIONALE**

**Analysis of the Proposed Action has concluded that there are no significant negative impacts and that it meets Colorado Standards for Public Land Health.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES**

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Field Manager

**DATE SIGNED:**