

**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-110-2008-0196-EA**

BACKGROUND

Enterprise Gas Processing, LLC (Enterprise) and White River Electric Association, Inc. (WREA) propose to obtain a Right-of-Way Grant from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to construct, operate, maintain, and abandon a gas plant expansion and a double circuit 138-kV 3-phase aboveground power line between the existing McBryde Substation and the proposed gas plant expansion. On BLM administered lands, construction of the proposed gas plant expansion would require 40.9 acres, of which 7.1 acres was previously disturbed for a temporary laydown area. Installation of the power line would require a 100-foot wide right-of-way (15.3 acres) of which 1.8 acres would be cleared around a 50-foot radius for the poles. Total disturbance for the project is 42.7 acres.

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 Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (1997). 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 have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. The proposed plant expansion consists of 40.9 acres is adjacent to the existing plant that consists of 50 acres. The total footprint consists of 90.9 acres with a 138-kV 3-phase electric line. The project is remote and located away from any residential areas.

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.

A beneficial impact resulting from implementation of this project would be the contribution of construction income to the local economy. Adverse impacts on public lands include direct

impacts to vegetation, wildlife habitat, suitable habitats for special status plant species; and temporary air quality impacts due to construction activities. With implementation of the mitigation measures included in the EA, all adverse impacts are expected to be low to moderate in intensity.

2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.

Mitigation would reduce the potential impacts to public health and safety to a level that is not significant. The scale of this project, and the short-term duration of construction, coupled with the mitigation measures are expected to result in a low risk 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.

There are no cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in or adjacent to the project area.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The quality and use of the human environment in the project area as understood, has been analyzed, and is not highly controversial from a scientific standpoint. There was no information or data that would demonstrate the impacts described in the EA are 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.

The Proposed Action is not unique for the project area, as the existing adjacent gas plant has been previously approved. The BLM has experience in implementing and monitoring similar projects, the effects of which have been found to be reasonably predictable. Effects from the Proposed Action would not be classified as highly uncertain or involving unique or unknown risks.

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.

Consenting to the construction and operation of the Proposed Action would not create a precedent for future gas plant development. The BLM administers the existing, adjacent gas plant. Any future proposals would have to be evaluated on their own merits based on the issues and impacts related to the location, timing, and intensity of each action. The Proposed Action does not set a precedent for a future consideration.

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

Other projects, including other gas plants and energy developments, are foreseeable, but it is not anticipated that cumulative impacts of any significance would occur. The scale of the gas plant creates minimal individual effects, as well as minimal cumulative effects when added to the existing situation and other potential activities.

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.

A 50-acre block around the proposed gas plant expansion (84.8 acres, total) and a 200-foot corridor along the proposed power line right-of-way were surveyed. CRAI (2009) identified one isolated find (5RB6540); no additional cultural resources were observed.

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.

There were no new populations of Dudley Bluffs bladderpod and twinpod found within 600 meter of the Proposed Action; however, 2.39 acres of suitable habitat was identified within 492 m of the Proposed Action.

No special status plant species were encountered within the area surveyed, and it was determined that those species would be unlikely to occur in the project area due to distance from known occurrences and/or lack of potential habitat (West Water Engineering, 2012)

Water required for process operations (67 barrels per day) and for dust control during construction would be considered a depletion within the Upper Colorado River Basin and is likely to adversely affect the four federally-listed Colorado River fishes and likely to adversely modify their designated critical habitats.

As a reasonable and prudent alternative in the Programmatic Biographical Opinion, FWS authorized BLM to solicit a one-time contribution to the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin (Recovery Program) in the amount equal to the average annual acre-feet depleted by fluid minerals activities on BLM-administered lands.

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: