

Summary of BLM Requirements and Process for Responding to Land Use Access Applications

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on an understanding of environmental consequences and to take actions that protect, restore and enhance the environment. For this purpose, the BLM created the National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1790-1.

Managing Public Lands for Multiple Uses

The BLM manages a system of public lands for multiple uses.

A request is made to the BLM when a proponent seeks access and/or use of public lands.

Under the Federal Land Management Act (FLPMA) the BLM is required to consider and respond to all requests.

Step 1: The BLM process for evaluating a request for public land use, begins by first answering whether the request is compatible with the area Resource Management Plan (RMP).

- If yes, then the BLM will initiate the Environmental Analysis (EA) process.
- If no, then the request is rejected. The proponent may request that the BLM amend the RMP so that the requested use/access conforms with the RMP. Regulations and process requirements for amending the RMP are detailed in the BLM Handbook.

Saddle Butte San Juan Midstream, LLC., filed an application for right-of-way with the BLM Farmington Field Office in July 2014 for access to construct and operate a gathering system (i.e., pipelines and terminals) to gather crude oil that is currently being produced by existing wells in the Lybrook area of the BLM Farmington Field Office. Currently, the oil is being trucked up to 750 miles to deliver the oil to the market. Saddle Butte is proposing the Piñon Gathering System Project (i.e., Project) to provide a more efficient and safe alternative method to transport the oil to the delivery points.

The ROW application for the Project is compatible with the current BLM Farmington Field Office RMP approved in 2003. It is compatible because the area where the project is proposed is identified as available to uses such as rights-of-way (pipelines and gathering systems).

Step 2: The BLM must analyze the project and ensure that there are design features to minimize impacts from the project and that the project is constructed and managed in a way that ensures compliance with environmental laws and regulations.

If the project proposal appears that it can be implemented in a way that avoids or mitigates irretrievable damage to the human environment, then the BLM will initiate the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. If the project proposal appears that it will result in an environmental impact that may be irretrievable, then the BLM will initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). See illustration of the EA process on the back of this sheet.

Piñon Gathering System Project

