

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

Jonah Gas Gathering Company (JGGC) proposes to construct the following dehydrated natural gas pipelines and related facilities (including valves, compression, metering equipment, and liquids separation equipment):

- Luman Road 24" Low Pressure Suction Line
- Windmill Road 24" Low Pressure Suction Line
- Burma Road 36" Low Pressure Suction Line
- Bridger to Luman 36" Low Pressure Discharge Pipeline
- Bridger to Luman to Bird Canyon to Opal 36" High Pressure Discharge Line
- Bridger to Luman 8" Liquids Pipeline
- Bridger Compressor Station
- 230 kV Overhead Power Line from LaBarge, WY to the Bridger Compressor Station
- Expansion of the Existing Pioneer Gas Plant.
- Pioneer Gas Plant to Opal Gas Plant 4" Hydrocarbon Liquids Pipeline
- 230 kV Overhead Power Line from Craven Substation to Pioneer Gas Plant.

The proposed facilities are shown on Figure 1-1. The facilities would be located in Sublette, Sweetwater, and Lincoln Counties, Wyoming. JGGC currently owns and operates a large gathering pipeline system including three large diameter pipelines from the west end of the Jonah Field to Opal. The pipelines would run parallel to the existing pipeline routes for most of their length.

1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Exploration and development of federal oil and gas leases by private industry, including transport and delivery of produced oil/gas, is an integral part of the BLM's oil and gas program under authority of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended, the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research and Development Act of 1980, and the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987.

The BLM oil and gas program encourages development of domestic oil and gas reserves. Natural gas is an integral part of the United States' energy future due to its availability and the presence of the existing market delivery infrastructure. By developing domestic reserves of clean burning natural gas, the U.S. would reduce dependence on foreign energy, such as natural gas from Mexico and Canada. The environmental advantages of burning natural gas rather than oil or coal were emphasized by the U.S. Congress and by the President when the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 were signed into law.

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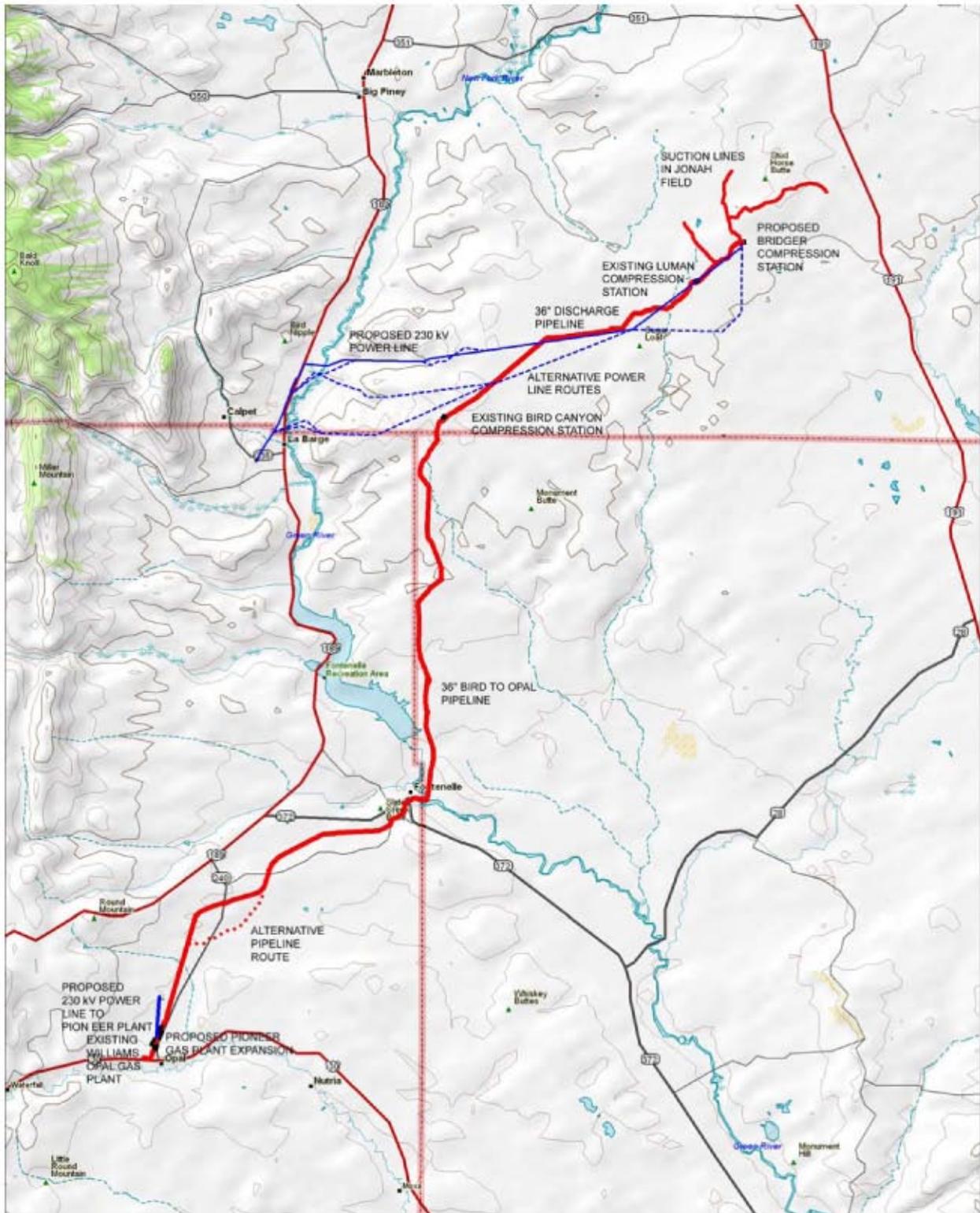


Figure 1-1. General Location Map, Jonah Compression and Gas Plant Project.

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The proposed project will assist in the transportation of natural gas necessary to meet the nations growing demand for U.S. domestic gas production. Projections indicate that demand for natural gas will increase from the 2002 level of 18 trillion cubic feet (TCF) to 21 TCF in 2025. The remaining demand will be met by imports of foreign natural gas, primarily from Canada. A portion of the increase in domestic supply is projected to be met by growth in production from the Rocky Mountain region. In addition, the Report of the National Energy Policy Development Group states that 90 percent of electric power generation capacity additions between 1999 and 2020 are projected to be natural gas fueled. The quantity of natural gas consumed for power generation is expected to triple from 1999 to 2020 (NEP, 2001). Natural Gas production delivered by the Jonah Bridger to Opal Natural Gas Project would help meet this demand.

The purpose of the project, as described by JGGC, would be to allow JGGC to gather natural gas produced from the Jonah and Pinedale Anticline natural gas fields for the long term (approximately 30 years), deliver to multiple markets, and provide for the sale of developed minerals. Regardless of approvals of outstanding proposals in the Jonah and Pinedale Anticline Fields, the compression and pipelines in this proposal are necessary to extend the life of the natural gas resource by reducing the well head pressure from its current 600 pounds per square inch (psig) to an anticipated 300 psig, which, in a tight sands formation like Jonah and Pinedale Anticline, would prolong natural gas production by many years. The Pioneer Gas Plant expansion is needed to treat the rich field gas so that its quality allows transport through existing interstate pipelines.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PROCESS

The BLM, Kemmerer Field Office, Kemmerer, Wyoming, is the lead agency responsible for preparation of this EA, with resource input and involvement from the BLM, Pinedale and Rock Springs Field Offices. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), which administers some lands on the proposed pipeline corridor, is a cooperating agency.

The evaluation of this proposal and alternatives was developed through interdisciplinary field review with representatives from JGGC, the BLM, and the project interdisciplinary team (IDT). In addition, for purposes of this EA, reference to JGGC, as the project proponent, includes all contractors, subcontractors or other parties that would be involved in the design, layout, and operation of the proposed Jonah Compression and Gas Plant Project.

The BLM, as authorized by the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) directives, analyzes actions involving federal lands to determine their impact on the human environment (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508). Prior to issuing decisions on the JGCC proposal, the BLM must comply with the requirements of NEPA. NEPA requires Federal agencies to use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to ensure the integrated use of natural and social sciences in planning and decision making. NEPA also directs that an environmental analysis of proposed Federal actions must be completed to determine reasonable alternatives and effects of the federal action on the environment. The analysis is to determine whether approval of the proposed action would constitute a "major" federal action significantly affecting the human environment. An interdisciplinary team conducted the evaluation of the proposed action and project alternatives with representatives from the BLM and a third-party contractor approved by and working under the direction of the BLM.

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Factors considered during the environmental analysis process regarding the JGGC project include the following:

- A determination of whether the proposal and alternatives are in conformance with BLM policies, regulations, and approved resource management plan direction.
- A determination of whether the proposal and alternatives are in conformance with policies and regulations of other agencies likely associated with the project.

This EA is not a decision document. It documents the process used to analyze the potential impacts of the proposed action and alternatives and discloses the effects of the proposed action and alternatives to that action. A Decision Record (DR), signed by the responsible official (Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Kemmerer Field Office) will document the final decision regarding the selected alternative. The BLM will document whether or not significant impacts would occur with implementation of any of the alternatives. If the BLM determines that no significant impacts would occur, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) Decision Record would be issued. If significant impacts are identified, the BLM decision would be to complete an EIS, with subsequent public input and additional analysis of the alternatives. The BLM decision will relate to BLM administered lands. Decisions by the responsible official regarding the use of transportation networks in the project area by JGGC may affect private landowners, county administration of these roads, and public access to BLM administered lands.

1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

1.4.1 Conformance With Land Use Plan

The proposed pipeline and related facilities are located on lands administered by the Kemmerer, Pinedale, and Rock Springs Field Offices. The documents that direct management of BLM administered lands within the project area are the Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP)(approved August 8, 1997), the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (KRMP)(approved April 29, 1986), and the Pinedale Resource Area Resource Management Plan (PRA RMP)(approved December 12, 1988). The RMPs provide for land use guidance for development of oil and gas reserves, including transmission of products to distribution points by pipelines. The proposed pipeline project is in conformance with the RMPs and the objectives and actions established in these RMPs. The environmental analysis completed for this project will incorporate appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the RMP decisions.

1.4.2 Relationship to Other Plans and Documents

The proposed action would comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws, and the Sublette, Sweetwater, and Lincoln Counties land use plans.

Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Jonah Infill Development Project, Sublette County, Wyoming. – The BLM has prepared an environmental impact statement and issued a Record of Decision (March 14, 2006) for activities related to the Jonah Infill project. The portions of that analysis and decision relevant to the proposed project are: the cumulative air resources impact analysis and technical support document; and surface disturbances within the Jonah Infill Development Project Area. Other proposed project

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components were not addressed in this document.

Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Development Exploration and Development Project Sublette County, Wyoming. - The BLM has prepared an environmental impact statement and issued a Record of Decision (July 27, 2000) for activities related to the Pinedale Anticline project. The portion of that analysis and decision relevant to the proposed project is the Sales Pipeline Routes approved as part of the Pinedale Anticline project (Figure 7 on page 13 in the ROD). The proposed discharge pipeline corridor from the Bridger Compressor Station to the Opal, WY area would exceed the 200-foot wide corridor approved in this document. In addition, the compression proposed for the Jonah Compression and Gas Plant Project would exceed the limits approved in this ROD. Also, the Pioneer Gas Plant expansion was not addressed in this document.

Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project Sublette County, Wyoming. - The BLM has prepared an environmental impact statement and issued a Record of Decision (April 27, 1998) for activities related to the Jonah Field. None of the proposed project components of the Jonah Compression and Gas Plant Project were foreseen or addressed in this NEPA analysis.

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Modified Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project, Sublette County, Wyoming. - The BLM has prepared an environmental assessment and issued a Decision Record and FONSI (June 8, 2000) for activities related to a modified proposal to the Jonah Field II ROD/EIS approved action. None of the Jonah Compression and Gas Plant proposed action components were addressed by this NEPA analysis.

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Proposed Pioneer Natural Gas Processing Plant and Associated Pipelines and Powerline, Lincoln County, Wyoming. - The BLM has prepared an environmental assessment and issued a Decision Record and FONSI (May 12, 2003) approving the proposed Pioneer Gas Plant and associated pipelines. The Gas Plant site is 12 acres, and two pipelines and a power line are in place as a part of this project. The expansion of the Pioneer Gas Plant currently proposed is not addressed in this analysis.

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Bird Canyon to Opal 24-inch Natural Gas Pipeline Project, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Lincoln Counties, Wyoming - The BLM has prepared an environmental assessment and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR, July 23, 2003) for the Bird Canyon to Opal 24" pipeline route. The FONSI/DR authorized Jonah Gas Gathering Company to construct and operate the proposed Bird Canyon to Opal 24" Pipeline, subject to conditions of approval provided in the BLM right-of-way grant. Where appropriate, the Jonah Compression and Gas Plant EA will tier to resource inventories and management direction provided in the Bird Canyon to Opal 24" EA.

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Opal Loop Natural Gas Pipeline and Compressor Station, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Lincoln Counties, Wyoming - The BLM has prepared an environmental assessment and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR, September 16, 2001) for the Opal Loop pipeline route. The FONSI/DR authorized Jonah Gas Gathering Company to construct and operate the proposed Opal Loop Pipeline, subject to conditions of approval provided in the BLM right-of-way grant. Where appropriate, the Jonah Compression and Gas Plant EA will tier to resource

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inventories and management direction provided in the Opal Loop EA.

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Bird Canyon-Opal Pipeline, Granger Spur Pipelines, and One Compressor Station, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Lincoln Counties, Wyoming - The BLM has prepared an environmental assessment and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR, February 2, 1999) for the Bird Canyon to Opal pipeline route. The FONSI/DR authorized Jonah Gas Gathering Company to construct and operate the proposed Bird Canyon Pipeline, subject to conditions of approval provided in the BLM right-of-way grant.

1.5 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Public issues and comments regarding the Jonah Bridger to Opal Natural Gas Project proposal were solicited for incorporation into this EA through the scoping process. A Scoping Statement that described the actions to be analyzed was prepared and submitted to the public on January 20, 2006, with comments due no later than February 28, 2006. The statement identified preliminary land and resource management issues, concerns, and opportunities, and outlined timing needs for public involvement. Environmental and social issues of local importance associated with natural gas production, gathering, and treatment were identified as follows:

- Potential impacts to wildlife habitats within the project area, including big game, sage grouse, and raptors.
- Potential impacts to agency sensitive wildlife and plant species within the project area, including pygmy rabbit, burrowing owl, and mountain plover.
- Increased traffic and associated impacts on existing Federal, State, County, and BLM roads.
- Social and economic impacts to local communities.
- Impacts to surface and groundwater resources, including sedimentation/salinity to the Colorado River system.
- Potential impacts to sensitive soils within the project area.
- Potential impacts to wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas.
- Impacts from emissions resulting from additional construction and operating activities.
- Reclamation of disturbed areas and control of noxious weed invasions.
- Potential conflicts with livestock management operations in the analysis area, including possible impacts to range improvements.
- Potential impacts to cultural, historical, and paleontological values within the analysis area.
- Potential impact to listed, or proposed for listing, threatened and endangered plant and

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animal species, including potential Colorado River depletion and effects to downstream listed fish species.

- Cumulative effects addressing this proposed project and other ongoing or planned energy-related activities near the proposed development.
- Noise impacts due to additional compression and other operations.
- Visual Resource Management concerns.

1.6 AUTHORIZING ACTIONS

The proposed federal, state, county, and local actions required to implement the Jonah Compression and Gas Plant Project are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Federal, State, and County Authorizing Actions.

AGENCY	NATURE OF ACTION
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	
Bureau of Land Management (Kemmerer, Pinedale, and Rock Springs Field Offices)	NEPA compliance and approval of ROW applications for pipelines, compressor station, plant site expansion, powerlines, and temporary use permits.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Coordination, consultation, and impact review on federally listed or proposed for listing, threatened or endangered species of fish, wildlife, and plants. Migratory bird impact coordination.
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	
	Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plans. Regulate hazardous waste treatment, storage, and /or disposal.
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Issue permits(s) (Section 404) for placement of dredged or fill material in or excavation of waters of the U.S. and their adjacent wetlands.

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AGENCY	NATURE OF ACTION
WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	
Water Quality Division	<p>National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for discharging waste water and storm water runoff.</p> <p>Conformance with all surface water standards; permit to construct and permit to operate.</p> <p>Permits to construct settling ponds and waste water systems, including ground water injection and disposal wells.</p> <p>Regulate disposal of drilling fluids from abandoned reserve pits.</p> <p>Administrative approval for discharge of hydrostatic test water.</p>
Air Quality Division	New Source Review (NSR) Permit: All pollution emission sources, including compressor engines and portable diesel and gas generators.
WYOMING STATE ENGINEERS OFFICE	
	<p>Issue permits to appropriate groundwater and surface water.</p> <p>Issue temporary water rights for construction permits to appropriate surface water.</p>
WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE	
	<p>Consultation concerning identification, evaluation, assessments effect and treatment of adverse effects on historic properties</p>

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AGENCY	NATURE OF ACTION
LINCOLN, SUBLETTE, AND SWEETWATER COUNTIES	
	<p>Zoning certificates for site development and construction.</p> <p>Small wastewater system permits, where applicable.</p> <p>Road use agreements and/or oversize trip permits when traffic on county roads exceeds established size and weight limits or where the potential for excessive road damage exists.</p> <p>Construction and conditional use permits for all new structures.</p> <p>Zoning changes where applicable.</p> <p>Control of noxious weeds.</p> <p>Permits to bore or trench county roads or for any crossing or access off a county road.</p>
WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	
	<p>Conformance with applicable size and weight limits for trucks.</p> <p>Encroachment permits.</p>