

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Questar Gas Management (QGM) proposes to modify the route of the buried 6-inch condensate pipeline (611 Pipeline) originally proposed and approved in the Questar Year-Round Drilling Proposal Decision Record (BLM, 2004a) and to make other modifications to the condensate gathering system within the Pinedale Anticline Project Area (PAPA). The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the impacts associated with construction of the modified route of the condensate pipeline in Sublette and Lincoln counties and some of the modifications to the gathering system. Some of the modifications have been addressed separately in right-of-way grants issued by BLM and have been previously analyzed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). However, there are some modifications which are included under the Proposed Action in this document because they have not yet been analyzed under NEPA. Other modifications to the Questar Year-Round Drilling Proposal EA and Decision Record (BLM, 2004a) are also included in this EA and are based on requests made by QGM and Questar Exploration and Production Company (Questar).

QGM proposes to modify the original condensate pipeline route by constructing a pipeline 14.4 miles west from the Bird Canyon Compressor Station to the Rocky Mountain Pipeline Terminal in Lincoln County, Wyoming, rather than south to the Black's Fork Processing Plant near Granger in Sweetwater County. This modification will shorten the original pipeline route by 46 miles so that the entire length will be 61 miles rather than the 107-mile route analyzed in the Questar Year-Round Drilling Proposal EA (WYW-100-EA05-034 - BLM, 2004a). Additionally the modification will require fewer river crossings than the original proposal. The modification would only involve a crossing of the Green River, whereas the original proposal involved a crossing of the Green River and crossing of the Hams Fork and Blacks rivers. The Green River crossing would be relocated from a point approximately 10 miles below Fontenelle Reservoir to its present location approximately 8 miles upstream from Fontenelle Reservoir. With construction of the condensate pipeline, it is generally agreed that impacts from development within the Pinedale Anticline Project Area (PAPA) will be reduced by significantly reducing overall truck traffic and eliminating the need for on-site storage of condensate.

1.2 Purpose and Need

As part of the Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record for the Questar Year-Round Drilling Proposal (WY-100-EA05-034 – BLM, 2004a), BLM stipulated as a condition of approval that Questar install the condensate gathering system. Completion of the gathering system would significantly reduce truck traffic and related impacts to wildlife, air quality, traffic, dust, noise, and other resources within the PAPA by transporting condensate offsite by pipeline for sale and disposal. Condensate is a mixture of heavier hydrocarbons produced as a by-product of natural gas extraction. Questar has estimated that construction of the condensate pipeline, together with other committed mitigation, will eliminate more than 25,000 tanker truck trips annually when their leases on the PAPA are at peak production.

1.3 Authorizing Actions and Relationships to Statutes and Regulations

BLM is not the only agency required to issue approvals for QGM and Questar's proposed pipeline route and other modifications. A list of permits, approvals and authorizing actions necessary to construct, operate, maintain and abandon the proposed pipeline and other modifications is provided in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1
Federal, State and Local Permits, Approvals and Authorizing Actions Necessary for
Construction, Operation, Maintenance and Abandonment of QGM's Proposed Action and Alternatives 1**

Issuing Agency/Permit Name	Nature of Permit/Approval	Authority
Bureau of Land Management Rights-of-way Grants and Temporary Use Permits	Right-of-way grants on Federal lands	Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended (30 U.S.C. 185); 43 CFR 2880
Rights-of-way Grants and Temporary Use Permits	Right-of-way grants on Federal lands	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761 - 1771); 43 CFR 2800
Antiquities, Cultural and Historic Resource Permits	Issue antiquities and cultural resources use permits to inventory, excavate or remove cultural or historic resources from Federal lands	Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 U.S.C. Section 431-433); Archaeological Resources Public Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. Sections 470aa - 47011); 43 CFR Part 3; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
Approval to Dispose of Produced Water	Controls disposal of produced water from Federal leases	Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (30 U.S.C. 181 <i>et seq.</i>); 43 CFR 3164; Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit (Nationwide and Individual)	Controls discharge of dredged or fill materials into waters of the United States.	Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 (33 USC 1344)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation Process, Endangered and Threatened Species	Biological Assessment	Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. <i>et seq.</i>)
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Water Quality Division Notice of Intent - Storm Water Discharge Permit	Controls off-site storm water runoff from construction activities resulting in 1 acre or more of disturbance	Wyoming Environmental Quality Act; Section 405 of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Parts 122, 123 and 124); WDEQ Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 18
Water Quality Division Temporary Discharge Permit	Discharge of Hydrostatic Test Water	Federal Water Pollution Control Act Wyoming Environmental Quality Act
Wyoming State Engineer's Office Water Quality Division Notice of Intent Temporary Permit to Appropriate Surface Water	Withdrawal of water from the Green River	Section 41-3-101 In Article 1, Chapter 3 Of Title 41 in Wyoming State Statutes
Air Quality Division Permits to construct and operate Notice of Installation	Regulates emissions from project components Notification of Potential Emissions from production equipment	Wyoming Air Quality Standards and Regulations WDEQ Rules and Regulations
Wyoming Department of Transportation Oversize and Overlength Load Permits Utility Permit Access Permit	Permits for oversize, overlength and overweight loads Highway pipeline crossing Highway access construction	Chapters 17 and 20 of the Wyoming Department of Transportation Rules and Regulations Title 12: Code of Civil Procedures, Chapter 26: Eminent Domain Rules and Regulations for Access Driveways as Approved by the Wyoming Highway Commission
Wyoming Department of Employment Workers Safety and Compensation Division	Provides the rules and regulations governing the health and safety of employees and employers of oil and gas drilling and servicing, includes equipment spacing, lighting requirements, hours of operation and other items pertinent to pad size and design.	W.S. 27-11-105
Wyoming State Lands and Investments	Right-of-way and easements on state lands	W.S. 36-9-118

¹ This list is intended to provide only an overview of key regulatory requirements that would govern project implementation. Additional approvals, permits and authorizing actions could be necessary.

1.4 Decisions to be Made Based on this NEPA Analysis

BLM decision-makers will decide, based on the analysis contained in this EA, whether or not to authorize the Proposed Action or one of the alternatives including the No Action Alternative.

1.5 Decisions to be Made Following this NEPA Process

The Decision Record associated with this EA may not constitute the final approval for all actions, such as individual right-of-way grants and temporary use permits associated with QGM's Proposed Action. It does, however, provide the authorized officer with an umbrella analysis from which to base the final approval for individual project components such as an individual right-of-way or temporary use permit.