

Finding of No Significant Impact

Jim Bridger Power Plant 3-D Seismic and Electromagnetic Surveys

WYW167761

WY-040-EA10-111



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BLM/WY/PL0-10/043+1990

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office

Jim Bridger Power Plant 3-D Seismic

Case File No.: WYW167761

EA Number: WY-040-EA10-111

Proposed Action Title: Jim Bridger Power Plant 3-D Seismic

Proposed Action Type and Location: To develop a 3-D image of geologic structure and stratigraphy underlying parcels within Townships 20 and 21 North and Ranges 100 and 101 West; to effectively evaluate hydrocarbon reserves underlying the project area for potential future development of oil and gas resources.

Applicant: Geokinetics USA, Inc.
P.O. Box 421129
Houston, TX 77242-1129

BACKGROUND

The proposed action is to conduct three-dimensional (3-D) and electromagnetic (EM) geophysical exploration in Sweetwater County, Wyoming. The project, hereafter referred to as the Proposed Action, would be near Point of Rocks in Townships 20 and 21 North and Ranges 100 and 101 West. The project area covers approximately 39,588 acres of federal, state, and private land. The Proposed Action is needed to effectively evaluate hydrocarbon reserves underlying the project area for potential further development of oil and gas resources.

According to the Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP) (BLM 1997), the project area is open to consideration of mineral leasing and exploration, except where those activities would cause unacceptable impacts. The objective for seismic surveys is to provide opportunity for collection of geophysical data, while protecting natural resource values.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon the information contained in the attached environmental assessment *Jim Bridger Power Plant 3-D Seismic* and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the GRRMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the GRRMP; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA or as articulated in the letters of comment.

The Proposed Action has been designed to avoid or minimize environmental impacts to the extent feasible. The following mitigation measures have been identified for the proposed action.

Vegetation and Noxious Weeds

- Reclaim all surface disturbances using a BLM-approved seed mixture.
- Ensure vehicles and equipment are cleaned, power-washed, and free of soil and vegetation debris prior to entry and use of access roads to prevent transporting weed seeds.
- Ensure all seed mixtures, erosion control materials, and reclamation materials are certified weed free.

Water Resources

- Reclaim all surface disturbances within the Town of Superior aquifer recharge zone.
- Seed disturbed areas in the Town of Superior aquifer recharge zone for the 17 EM points.
- Limit vegetation removal, OHV usage, and surface disturbances to the smallest area necessary to conduct work within the Superior aquifer recharge area.
- If avoiding wetland areas is not possible, allow vibroseis buggies to pass only one way in wetland areas to avoid rutting and unnecessary surface disturbances of vegetation and the upper soil layer in wetlands and riparian areas.
- Conduct work during drier months and low-flow conditions in perennial and intermittent streams.

Wildlife and Sensitive Species

- Avoid active prairie dog burrows and active pygmy rabbit burrows by 50 feet.
- Project activities are scheduled to avoid wildlife conflicts; however, if the schedule changes, the following seasonal restrictions would be enforced:
 - Avoid pronghorn and mule deer crucial range November 15 through April 30.
 - Avoid greater sage-grouse nesting areas March 15 through July 15.
 - Avoid areas of high probability for mountain plover habitat or conduct nest survey and avoid active nesting April 10 through July 10.
 - Survey for burrowing owls if project activities occur between April 1 and September 10.
 - Avoid all active raptor nests by 0.5 mile (1.0 mile for ferruginous hawk) February 1 through July 31.

Noise and Safety

- The Operator should keep all noise levels at a minimum where vehicles are not used extensively for unnecessary travel or near the town of Point of Rocks, especially between 9:00 PM and 8:00 AM.
- No firearms would be allowed in the project area at anytime.
- No smoking would be allowed outside of vehicles to reduce fire hazards.
- An emergency response plan would be in place to address fire, injuries, and other potential hazards.

Hazardous or Solid Wastes

- After seismic activities cease, the Operator would collect and properly dispose of all waste generated by this project at an approved waste disposal site.
- The Operator would submit its Spill Prevention Containment and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan to the authorized officer prior to scheduled start-up. If the Operator encounters any waste dump sites on or adjacent to the project area, they must be reported to the BLM.
- All refueling would occur on existing roads and absorbent pads would be used while refueling to prevent a potential fuel spill. In the event of a spill of lubricants, hydraulic fluid, or any other hydrocarbon during seismic activities, the Operator would immediately cease activities within the area and contain and clean up the affected area immediately. Any contaminated vegetation and soil would be removed and disposed of in an approved waste disposal facility. The Operator would have absorbent onsite for spill containment. After cleanup is complete, the spilt substance(s) and materials used for cleanup would be removed from the project area and disposed of at an approved disposal facility. All spills would be immediately reported to the BLM.

Authorized Official:


Lance Porter
Field Manager
Rock Springs Field Office

September 23, 2010
Date