

1792/2880 (040)
Pacific Creek Temporary
Surface Pipeline Project

December 19, 2001

Dear Reader:

Enclosed you will find the Decision Record, Finding of No Significant Impact, and the Environmental Assessment for SWEPIIP's (Shell) Pacific Creek Temporary Surface Pipeline Project.

The environmental assessment fully analyzed two alternatives and considered several others. The Bureau of Land Management is issuing the documents simultaneously. The rationale for this approach is two-fold: those individuals expressing a high interest in the project during public scoping were coordinated with individually and the other reason is to protect Greater Sage-grouse leks from unnecessary intrusion during important life events. A full explanation is contained in the enclosed documents.

BLM appreciates the public's participation during the environmental analysis. The enclosed documents will be available via a link from the Rock Springs updated website, once the website is reopened to the general public. The new address for our website is http://www.wy.blm.gov/rsfo/rs_index.htm. Copies of this decision and environmental assessment are available at the Rock Springs Field Office in Rock Springs. You may call Teri Deakins at 307-352-0211 to request copies. If you have questions about this action, please call Patricia Hamilton at 307-352-0334.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ted Murphy

Assistant Field Manager

Enclosures

**Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Shell Western E and P, LP
Temporary Surface Pipeline**

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared an environmental assessment and released a decision approving Wolverine's 3-well drilling program in close proximity to the national historic trails system for the California, Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express Trails, located approximately 19 miles northwest of Farson, Wyoming. The first of the three wells has been drilled. SWEPLP (Shell), who acquired interest in the lease originally held by Wolverine, is seeking a short-term right-of-way (ROW) for a temporary surface pipeline to test production from one or more wells drilled on lease WYW-147486 until a permanent pipeline is constructed. BLM prepared the attached environmental assessment (EA) for the proposal.

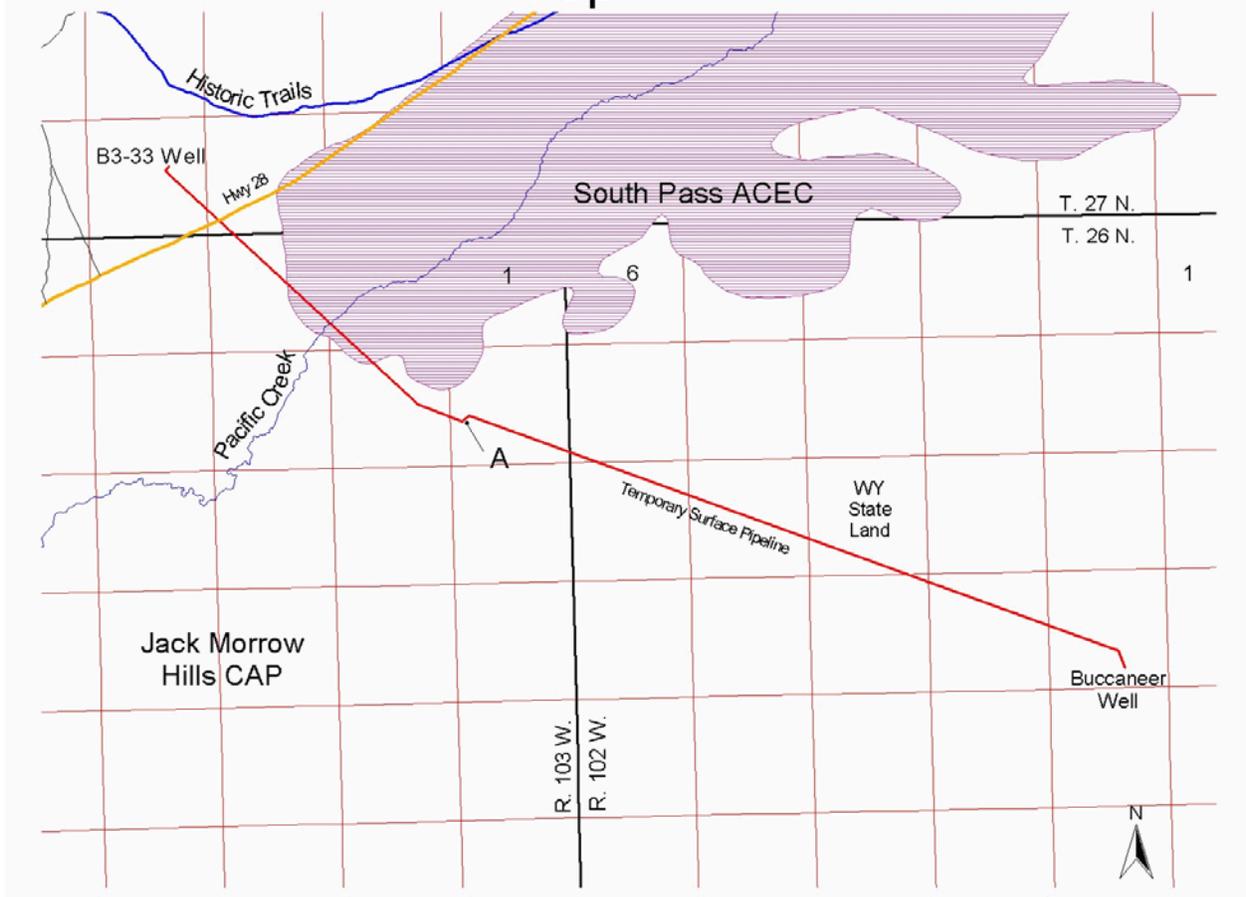
Alternatives Considered

The attached EA analyzed two alternatives. Under the Proposed Action, Shell proposed to lay a total of 50,000 +/- feet (9.47 miles), of which 45,300 feet (8.58 miles) crosses public lands managed by BLM, of 6-inch nominal diameter temporary surface pipeline along existing two-track trails in previously disturbed areas (the pipeline will be placed cross-country in one small area, see point A on Map 1). The No Action Alternative analyzed the impacts of denial of Shells's proposal. Several other pipeline routes were considered but dropped from analysis for various reasons explained in the attached EA.

Decision

It is my decision to approve and issue a right-of-way grant for a temporary surface pipeline as described in the attached EA to allow installation of 45,300 feet (8.58 miles) of 6-inch nominal diameter temporary surface pipeline across public lands managed by BLM. The pipeline will be placed along existing two-track trails in previously disturbed areas (the pipeline will be placed cross-country in one small area). Placement of the pipe will be offset from the existing two-track trails a minimum of 2 feet or more depending where the pipe requires a bend in the pipe. The pipeline will start at the Pacific Creek B3-33 well site located in section 33, T. 27 N., R. 103 W., 6th Principal Meridian and proceed in a southeasterly direction to the pipeline terminus at the existing Buccaneer Unit well located in section 23, T. 26 N, R 102W. Width of the proposed ROW is 30 feet to accommodate construction equipment and the pipe. Term of the temporary surface pipeline ROW is 5 years. Should Shell request a new right-of-way grant because a permanent pipeline is not in place or operational, BLM may review the request subject to review and conformance with any future land use planning decisions for the Jack Morrow Hills coordinated activity planning area.

Map 1



Map 1

No surface disturbance will be required with the exception of work sites used for boring under Wyoming Highway 28 as required by the Wyoming Department of Transportation and shallow trenching where the pipeline crosses the active travelway of two-track trails in order to protect public safety. Trenches across the two-track trails will be constructed utilizing either a small backhoe with a narrow bucket or a small trencher (a ditch witch) to dig a shallow trench wide enough to accommodate the pipe and deep enough to bury the pipe a minimum of 10 inches. All trenching of two-track trails will be limited to the active travelway to minimize disturbance.

Total area affected by the Proposed Action is 31.77 acres. Shell will use existing two-track trails as a working surface for equipment, welding, and other work associated with pipe installation. Pipe will be offset from two-track trails by a minimum of 2 feet to allow safe passage by vehicles on the trails. Where the pipe goes cross-country to connect with another existing two-track trail, the pipe will be laid with the least disturbance possible.

Two work areas located approximately 125 feet from the highway fences on either side of Wyoming Highway 28 corridor are required to allow safe boring and pipe retrieval operations in accordance with Wyoming Department of Transportation requirements. On the north side of the highway, a 100- x 125- foot area is approved and within the 100- x 125-foot area, an area large enough to accommodate boring equipment may be leveled to allow the safe operation of the equipment. On the south side of Wyoming Highway 28, a 40- x 40-foot area is required to accommodate a “bell hole” for pipe retrieval, welding, and other work associated with boring operations. Topsoil associated with the bell hole will be stockpiled and used to reclaim the disturbed area once boring is complete.

Equipment required for the installation of the pipeline includes medium duty trucks for pipe delivery and line fabrication, trenching tools/backhoes for trenching across two-track trails, tracked bulldozers with booms for pipe installation, and a blade for backfilling trenched areas (two-track trails). In addition, a road grader will be used for leveling or topsoil stripping at work areas used for boring operations.

The pipeline will be designed for pressures of approximately 1,775 psi and the expected amount of natural gas to be transported is 8.5 mmcf (million cubic feet).

Construction and installation practices will be in accordance with the plan of development and supplement submitted by Shell (available at the Rock Springs Field Office) and standard stipulations for rights-of-way issued under the Mineral Leasing Act, as amended. The following measures were either proposed by the applicant as part of their plan of development or were determined to be necessary during analysis and include the following.

- Start construction simultaneously from both ends of the project to expedite the construction time frame.
- Pipeline markers will be installed on either side of Wyoming Highway 28. Placement of other markers will be coordinated with BLM as to height, style, and color within existing

rules and regulations.

- No plowing will be allowed on two-track trails or other roads. If snow depths hinder pipe installation, the project will be stopped until conditions improve.
- Engineering standards will be in accordance with Department of Transportation regulations and industrial standards established by the American Petroleum Institute, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and the American Standard Code for Pressure Piping as appropriate.
- Pipe color will be as delivered to location from the manufacturer (a muted dark brown). If pipeline markers are placed within the ACEC area, they will be done in such a manner as not to affect the viewscape of those visiting the national historic trails system located to the north of the project area.
- In areas where taller sage brush occurs, the pipe will be pulled through with winches to avoid disturbing or breaking branches.
- Where the pipeline crosses perennial (e.g., Pacific Creek) or intermittent streams, the pipe will be laid at the same grade elevation as the banks on either side of the stream. If the span is greater than 20 feet, the pipe will be supported by a vertical brace located in the stream bottom. Any vertical supports used will be anchored into the ground approximately 5 feet below the base of the stream bed. Soil from anchoring the vertical braces will be either scattered or removed from the floodplain and any vertical braces will be placed outside of the main stream channel.
- Where the pipeline crosses land in the vicinity of a known spring or shallow stream beds, the pipe will be supported on wood blocks to allow free migration of water under the pipe. Any wood blocks will be anchored by driving iron rods through the wood into the ground to minimize pipe and block movement.
- Whenever possible, needed bends in the pipeline will be placed in areas of less steep topography to reduce potential for soil disturbance and concentration of overland water flows on higher slopes.
- Construction activity and surface disturbance will be prohibited during the period from November 15 to April 30 for the protection of crucial winter range for elk, and February 1 to July 31 for the protection of sage grouse leks and raptors, and nesting habitats for both species. Any exceptions to this requirement must have prior written approval from the authorized officer. Appendix A provides criteria for exception approval.
- Standard stipulation for discovery of unanticipated cultural resources.
- Avoidance of archaeological site 48SW14053 (accommodated by rerouting the pipeline in

accordance with the cultural resource inventory report).

- No surface blading should be allowed except where the work sites used for boring operations under Highway 28.
- The pipeline will be hydrostatically tested for leaks using fresh water obtained from local sources. Water used for testing purposes will be captured and disposed of in strict accordance with Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality rules and regulations pertaining to the disposal of waste water.
- Disturbed work areas will be reclaimed by discing on the contour to a depth of 4 to 6 inches and uniformly covering the area with depressions constructed perpendicular to the natural flow of water to facilitate the capture of water to promote vegetation establishment. Disturbed areas will be seeded using the following seed mixture as recommended by BLM.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Pound of PLS¹/Acre</u>
Thickspike wheatgrass	4.0
Western wheatgrass	4.0
Bottlebrush squirreltail	3.0
Indian ricegrass	3.0
Winterfat	1.0
Gardner's saltbush <small>1 - pure live seed</small>	1.0

- Seed mix will be applied on the contour using a seed drill equipped with a depth regulator in order to ensure even depths of planting which will not exceed 0.5 inch and utilizing outside bins of the seed drill for the seeding with shrub species.
- Timing of seeding will be completed after September 1 and prior to ground frost. Should spring seeding be done, it will be completed after frost has left the ground but prior to June 15. Seeding will be repeated until a satisfactory stand as determined by BLM is achieved.
- Shell will be responsible for weed control on disturbed areas within the boundary of the right-of-way in consultation with the BLM.
- The pipeline will be removed upon termination of the ROW. The casing lying underneath Wyoming Highway 28 roadway would be abandoned in place.

Rationale for the Decision

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Green River Resource Management Plan which allows for the leasing, exploration, and development of energy resources in an environmentally responsible manner and is in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and county authorizing actions. Additionally, the Proposed Action is consistent with actions allowed under the criteria for interim actions during the Jack Morrow Hills planning effort.

BLM released a scoping notice on October 19, 2001. Thirteen comment letters, emails, or phone calls were returned. All issues brought forth during public scoping have been considered. Two commenters requested review of the EA prior to issuing a decision. BLM coordinated with these individuals by either escorting them on a field review or providing a viewshed analysis along with photos of the proposed route. No additional issues were raised and due to the timing of installation of the pipe to avoid the sage grouse mating and nesting season, BLM is releasing the decision with the EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the review of the EA, I have determined that the Proposed Action with implementation of measures identified above and standard terms and conditions for grants of rights-of-way is in conformance with the Green River Resource Management Plan and interim actions allowed for during completion of the Jack Morrow Hills coordinated activity planning effort. Implementation of this decision will not have a significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is not required.

Appeal

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4 and Form 1842-1 (Appendix B). If an appeal is taken, the notice of appeal must be filed in this office, BLM, Rock Springs Field Office, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901, within 30 days from the date of this decision plus 7 days mailing time (January 25, 2002). The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

You may file a petition for stay, pursuant to regulations contained in 43 CFR 4.21 (58 Federal Register 4939, January 19, 1993), 43 CFR 2804.1, or 43 CFR 2884.1, of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the IBLA. Such a petition for stay must show sufficient justification based on the standards listed on Form 1842-1. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Parties to this action:

SWEIP LP c/o Shell Exploration and Production Company
P.O. Box 576
Houston, Texas 77001-0576

/s/ Ted Murphy
Assistant Field Manager for
Lands and Minerals

December 19, 2001
Date

Appendix A

Criteria to Consider for Exceptions to Seasonal Restrictions

REQUESTER: _____		DATE OF REQUEST: _____
PROJECT NAME: _____		
REQUESTED DATE(S) OF EXCEPTION: _____		
ACTIVITY PROPOSED: _____		
LAST DATE OF FIELD EXAM: _____		GIS/ARCVIEW MAP REVIEWED: <u>YES</u> <u>NO</u>
General Considerations - Requests for Exceptions		
	Comments	
Are factors leading to inclusion of the wildlife restriction still valid?		
What action is the request for an exception for?		
Dates of the proposed exception?		
Criteria for Winter Ranges		Comments
Animal	present or absent	
Animal Condition	good, fair, poor	
Weather Severity		Comments
Snow Conditions	depth, crusting, longevity	
Weather patterns		
Wind chill factors (indication of animal energy use)		
Air temperatures/ variation		
Duration of condition		
Short and long range forecast		
Habitat Condition		Comments
Animal density	low or high	
Forage condition	good or poor	
Forage Availability	yes or no	

Competition with livestock or other wildlife		
Amount of forage - Has livestock use decreased forage		
Suitable/ample forage available and accessible nearby	yes or no	
Site Location		Comments
Likelihood of animal habituating to activity	yes or no	
Presence of thermal, wind cover		
Proportion of winter range affected (ac or %)		
Where site is located within the winter range		
Other activity and effect on the animals		
Timing		Comments
Early or late in winter season		
Kind of and length of disruptive activity		
How much winter is remaining		

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Based on the above analysis, I recommend the exception be:

Approved: _____

Denied: _____

Wildlife Biologist

Date: _____

The exception is: Approved: _____

Denied: _____

Authorized Officer

Date: _____

Appendix B

Form 1842-1
(February 1985)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION ON TAKING APPEALS TO THE BOARD OF LAND APPEALS

DO NOT APPEAL UNLESS

1. This decision is adverse to you.

AND

2. You believe it is incorrect.

IF YOU APPEAL, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED

1. NOTICE OF APPEAL Within 30 days file a Notice of Appeal in the office which issued this decision (see 43 CFR Secs. 4.411 and 4.413). You may state your reasons for appealing, if you desire.

2. WHERE TO FILE NOTICE OF APPEAL Field Manager
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

SOLICITOR Office of the Regional Solicitor
ALSO COPY TO Rocky Mountain Region
755 Parfet Street, Suite 151
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

3. STATEMENT OF REASONS Within 30 days after filing the Notice of Appeal, file a complete statement of the reasons why you are appealing. This must be filed with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Board of Land Appeals, 4015 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22203 (see 43 CFR sec. 4.412 and 4.413). If you fully stated your reasons for appealing when filing the Notice of Appeal, no additional statement is necessary.

SOLICITOR Office of the Regional Solicitor
ALSO COPY TO Rocky Mountain Region
755 Parfet Street, Suite 151
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

UNLESS THESE PROCEDURES ARE FOLLOWED YOUR APPEAL WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISMISSAL (SEE 43 CFR SEC 4.402). BE CERTAIN THAT ALL COMMUNICATIONS ARE

IDENTIFIED BY SERIAL NUMBER OF THE CASE BEING APPEALED.

- 4. ADVERSE PARTIES Within 15 days after each document is filed, each adverse party named in the decision and the Regional Solicitor or Field Solicitor having jurisdiction over the State in which the appeal arose must be served with a copy of: (a) the Notice of Appeal, (b) the Statement of Reasons, and (c) any other documents filed (see 43 CFR Sec. 4.413). Service will be made upon the Associate Solicitor, Division of Energy and Resources, Washington, D.C. 20240, instead of the Field or Regional Solicitor when appeals are taken from decisions of the Director (WO-100).

- 5. PROOF OF SERVICE Within 15 days after any document is served on an adverse party, file proof of that service with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Board of Land Appeals, 4015 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22203. This may consist of a certified or registered mail "Return Receipt Card" signed by the adverse party (see 43 CFR Sec. 4.401(c)(2)).

SUBPART 1821.2--OFFICE HOURS; TIME AND PLACE FOR FILING

Sec. 1821.2-1 Office hours of State Offices. (a) State Offices and the Washington Office of the Bureau of Land Management are open to the public for the filing of documents and inspection of records during the hours specified in this paragraph on Monday through Friday of each week, with the exception of those days where the office may be closed because of a national holiday or Presidential or other administrative order. The hours during which the State Offices and the Washington Office are open to the public for inspection of records are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., standard time or daylight saving time, whichever is in effect at the city in which each office is located.

Sec. 1821.2-2(d) Any document required or permitted to be filed under the regulations of this chapter, which is received in the State Office or the Washington Office, either in the mail or by personal delivery when the office is not open to the public shall be deemed to be filed as of the day and hour the office opens to the public.

(e) Any document required by law, regulation, or decision to be filed within a stated period, the last day of which falls on a day the State Office or the Washington Office is officially closed, shall be deemed to be timely filed if it is received in the appropriate office on the next day the office is open to the public.

Standard for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards.

- 1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- 2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- 3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
- 4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.