U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2006-013-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): COC50047

PROJECT NAME: Shell Bar D 25kV Power Line

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado
T. 1 S., R. 98 W.,
Sec. 26, lot 9, 16;
Sec. 35, lot 1, 5-8.

APPLICANT: White River Electric Association (WREA)

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional): none

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: The power line will begin at WREA's existing pole location in Section 26, approximately 1 mile south of the Yankee Gulch Substation on Rio Blanco County (RBC) Road 83, and extend 1.6 miles in a southerly direction to the Shell property on Bar D Mesa.

Proposed Action: The proposed action is for the operation, construction, and maintenance of a 25kV, 3-phase overhead distribution power line extending from WREA's existing pole, where the existing power line to Natural Soda crosses the Square S pasture fence at N 39° 55.871 W 108° 20.937. The power line will be constructed within a foot of the fence line remaining within previously disturbed areas for the entire length of the line while on federal lands. The power line will be extended approximately 7,750 feet with a width of 25 feet encompassing 4.45 acres. The power line will be constructed with 25 wooden poles approximately 300 feet apart. All poles will be "raptor friendly" by either maintaining the 60-inch separation of conductors, or the placement of perching deterrents. The center line of this proposed route has been flagged.

Equipment to be used: A 2 Ton – 4-wheel drive digger/derrick truck and basic utility trucks. The job is anticipated to take 20 working days for completion.

The term of the amendment will run concurrent with the original right-of-way grant expiring June 26, 2020. The terms, conditions, and stipulations of the original right-of-way grant will remain in full force and effect.

No Action Alternative: Under the no action alternative, the application would be denied and a different route would have to be found.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: An application has been submitted for the amendment of an existing right-of-way, COC50047.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Pages 2-49 thru 2-52

Decision Language: "To make public lands available for the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations, in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of other resource values."

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The entire White River Resource area has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all pollutants, and most of the area has been designated prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) class II. The proposed action is not located within a thirty mile radius of any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. Overall, the proposed action by itself should not greatly compromise National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) on an hourly or daily basis.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Construction of power lines will result in only minor surface disturbances. Consequences to air quality will be minimal due to lack of exposed soils.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The power line will begin at WREA's existing pole location in Section 26, approximately 1 mile south of the Yankee Gulch Substation on Rio Blanco County (RBC) Road 83, and extend 1.6 miles in a southerly direction to the Shell property on Bar D Mesa. A two-track follows an existing fence line the entire 1.6 miles. There are no recorded sites along this route. On January 11 Archaeologist for the White River Field Office completed a Class III pedestrian survey along the fence line, the two-track and twenty feet on the non fenced side of the two-track. No Cultural Resource materials were found.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Construction of the proposed powerline would not impact any known eligible cultural resources. There will be no new impacts to cultural resources under the Proposed Action.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: 1. An archaeologist will need to be on site to monitor the actual digging of the holes for the poles.

2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be

used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The proposed action traverses mixed pinyon- juniper woodland and Wyoming big sagebrush parks. There are known small infestations of spotted knapweed in the vicinity of the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will create approximately 2 acres of new earthen disturbance, which, if it is not revegetated with desirable species and /or treated with herbicides to eradicate noxious weeds/ cheatgrass, will be invaded and dominated by noxious weeds/cheatgrass, increasing the potential for fire and the consequent further proliferation of cheatgrass.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: The operator will be required to monitor the project area for a minimum of three years post disturbance and eradicate all noxious and invasive species which occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The proposed action is confined to an existing fenceline corridor and parallel 2-track road that traverses Wyoming big sagebrush parks and pinyon-juniper woodlands that have been heavily modified to provide a degree of fire protection to the nearby nahcolite mine. Birds of higher conservation interest associated with the project site include: Brewer's sparrow and green-tailed towhee in the sagebrush parks and black-throated gray warbler, gray flycatcher, and juniper titmouse in the woodlands. The current condition of these

habitats, particularly adjacent to the 2-track road, has likely suppressed breeding bird capacity such that few birds nest in close proximity to the proposed powerline right-of-way.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: This project is scheduled to be constructed prior to 1 April 2006. As such, all construction-related disturbance would occur prior to the return of nesting migrants. In the event work is delayed into the nesting season, and based on the limited extent and intensity of disturbance associated with distribution line installation, few nesting attempts would be disrupted, and in the worst case, it is unlikely that more than 2 or 3 pairs would be involved.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No action would be authorized that would have potential to disrupt migratory bird nest activity.

Mitigation: None.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of at sites included in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this project. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants proposed for use may contain some hazardous constituents, they would be stored, used and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws, and the generation of hazardous wastes would not be anticipated. Solid wastes would be properly disposed of.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative.

Mitigation: The operator shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by this project.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The proposed power line route is located within the Yellow Creek catchment area. Yellow Creek is a tributary to the White River and is situated in stream segment 13b of the White River Basin. Stream segment 13b of the White River consists of the mainstem of Yellow Creek including all tributaries from the source to the confluence with the White River. A review of the Colorado's 1989 Nonpoint Source Assessment Report (plus updates), the 305(b) report, the 303(d) list and the Unified Watershed Assessment was done to see if any water quality concerns have been identified. The State has classified stream segment 13b of the White River Basin as "Use Protected" and further designated as beneficial for the following uses: Warm

Aquatic Life 2, Recreation 2, and Agriculture. The antidegredation review requirements in the Antidegredation Rule are not applicable to waters designated use-protected. For those waters, only the protection specified in each reach will apply. For this reach, minimum standards for three parameters have been listed. These parameters are: dissolved oxygen = 5.0 mg/l, pH = 6.5 - 9.0, Fecal Coliform = 2000/100 ml, and 630/100 ml E. coli. It should be noted that Yellow Creek has been identified as a perennial stream NOT meeting water quality standards with regards to salinity and suspended sediment.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Soil compaction may occur in response to heavy equipment associated with power-line construction. Increased soil compaction will elevate potential for erosive overland flows which will increase sedimentation to lower portions of the affected watershed.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Soil compaction may be mitigated by minimizing the amount of utility vehicle traffic associated with power line construction activities. In addition, unauthorized OHV use must be discouraged (e.g. signs/barriers constructed).

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The White River ROD/ RMP has identified Yellow Creek as NOT meeting water quality standards for suspended sediment and salinity. However, due to the limited amount of surface disturbance associated with the proposed action, water quality in stream segment 13b will not be adversely impacted. Yellow Creek will continue to NOT meet water quality standards as identified in the White River ROD/RMP.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC's, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The following data is a product of an order III soil survey conducted by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Rio Blanco County,

Colorado. The accompanying table highlights important soil characteristics. A complete summary of this information can be found at the White River Field Office.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Slope	Ecological site	Salinity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Bedrock
64	Piceance fine sandy loam	5-15%	Rolling Loam	<2	Medium	Moderate to high	20-40
70	Redcreek-Rentsac complex	5-30%	PJ woodlands/PJ woodlands	<2	Very high	Moderate to high	10-20
73	Rentsac channery loam	5-50%	Pinyon-Juniper woodlands	<2	Rapid	Moderate to very high	10-20
104	Yamac Loam	2-15%	Rolling Loam	<2	Medium	Slight to moderate	>60

64-Piceance fine sandy loam (5 to 15 percent slopes) is a moderately deep, well drained soil found on uplands and broad ridgetops. It formed in eolian material and colluvium derived dominantly from sandstone. The native vegetation is mainly low shrubs, grasses, and a few pinyon trees. Elevation is 6,300 to 7,500 feet. The average annual precipitation is 15 to 18 inches. Typically, the surface layer is brown fine sandy loam 4 inches thick. The upper 5 inches of the subsoil is brown loam, and the lower 13 inches is light yellowish brown loam. The substratum is very pale brown channery loam 8 inches thick. Hard sandstone is at a depth of 30 inches. Depth to sandstone ranges from 20 to 40 inches. Permeability of this Piceance soil is moderate. Available water capacity is moderately low. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Runoff is slow to medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to high.

70-Redcreek-Rentsac complex (5 to 30 percent slopes) is located on mountainsides and ridges. The native vegetation is mainly pinyon and juniper trees with an understory of shrubs and grasses. Elevation is 6,000 to 7,400 feet. The average annual precipitation is 14 to 18 inches. Included in this unit are small areas of Forelle loam, Piceance fine sandy loam, and Yamac loam. Also included are small areas of Rock outcrop and soils that are similar to these Redcreek and Rentsac soils but are 20 to 40 inches deep to bedrock. Included areas make up about 10 percent of the total acreage. The percentage varies from one area to another.

The Redcreek soil is shallow and well drained. It formed in residual and eolian material derived dominantly from sandstone. Typically, the surface layer is brown sandy loam about 4 inches thick. The next layer is brown, calcareous sandy loam about 7 inches thick. The underlying material is very pale brown, calcareous channery loam 5 inches thick. Hard sandstone is at a depth of 16 inches. Depth to hard sandstone or hard shale ranges from 10 to 20 inches. Permeability of the Redcreek soil is moderately rapid. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to high.

The Rentsac soil is shallow and well drained. It formed in residuum derived dominantly from sandstone. Typically, the upper part of the surface layer is grayish brown channery loam about 5 inches thick. The next layer is brown very channery loam about 4 inches thick. The underlying material is very pale brown extremely flaggy loam 7 inches thick. Hard sandstone is at a depth of 16 inches. Depth to hard sandstone or hard shale ranges from 10 to 20 inches. Permeability of

the Rentsac soil is moderately rapid. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to high.

73-Rentsac channery loam (5 to 50 percent slopes) is a shallow, well drained soil located on ridges, foothills, and side slopes. It formed in residuum derived dominantly from calcareous sandstone. The native vegetation is mainly pinyon, juniper, brush, and grasses. Elevation is 6,000 to 7,600 feet. The average annual precipitation is 14 to 18 inches. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown channery loam about 5 inches thick. The next layer is very channery loam about 4 inches thick. The underlying material is extremely flaggy light loam 7 inches thick. Hard sandstone is at a depth of 16 inches. Depth to sandstone ranges from 10 to 20 inches. Permeability of this Rentsac soil is moderately rapid. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to very high.

104-Yamac loam (2 to 15 percent slopes) is a deep, well drained soil located on rolling uplands, terraces, and fans. It formed in eolian and alluvial material. The native vegetation is mainly low shrubs and grasses. Elevation is 5,800 to 7,100 feet. The average annual precipitation is 13 to 16 inches. Typically, the surface layer is brown loam 4 inches thick. The upper 8 inches of the subsoil is brown loam, and the lower 10 inches is highly calcareous loam. The upper 26 inches of the substratum is very pale brown loam, and the lower part to a depth of 60 inches or more is pale brown loam. Permeability of this Yamac soil is moderate. Available water capacity is moderate to high. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is slight to moderate. Maintaining ground cover on or near the surface reduces runoff, minimizes soil blowing, and helps to maintain soil tilth and organic matter content, to conserve moisture, and to reduce erosion.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Soil piping and gully formation may occur if effective ground cover is removed causing soils to become increasingly exposed to erosional processes. Construction of the proposed power-line may result in increased soil compaction which will reduce infiltration and permeability rates increasing the erosive potential of overland flows.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: Minimize surface disturbance and maintain sufficient amounts of ground cover. No construction should take place under thawing soil conditions in order to minimize potential rutting.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: At the present time, soils in the vicinity of the proposed action exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, landform, climate, and geologic processes. Following power-line construction, soils will continue to meet standards.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The proposed action traverses mixed pinyon- juniper woodland and Wyoming big sagebrush parks.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will create small areas of earthen disturbance which will provide safe sites for the invasion of noxious weeds and cheatgrass. In terms of plant community composition, structure and function, the principal negative impact over the long term would occur if cheatgrass or noxious weeds are allowed to establish and proliferate on the disturbed areas resulting from powerline construction

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation

Mitigation: Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas not necessary for production with Native Seed mix #3. Revegetation will commence immediately after construction and will not be delayed until the following fall. Seed mixture rates are Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre. Drill seeding is the preferred method of application.

Seed Mix #	Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per Acre	Ecological Sites
3	Western wheatgrass (Rosanna) Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar) Needle and thread Indian ricegrass (Rimrock) Fourwing saltbush (Wytana) Utah sweetvetch	2 2 1 2 1 1	Gravelly 10"-14", Pinyon/Juniper Woodland, Stony Foothills, 147 (Mountain Mahogany)

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial)*:* Plant communities in the project area meet the Standard and will continue to meet the Standard on a watershed basis following project construction.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The project area is largely encompassed by deer severe winter range, although the project area lies in close proximity to an active nahcolite mine and is bisected by both a county road and the mine access. Mature woodlands within about 500' of the originally submitted alignment were inventoried by consultants for evidence of woodland raptor nest activity in October 2005. No indications of recent raptor nest activity were detected. This survey satisfactorily covered all potential raptor nest habitat traversed by the modified alignment addressed in this document.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Deer wintering in the project area are subject to consistent and predictable forms of human activity throughout the winter. Short term, localized and low intensity construction activity, in close proximity to existing forms of

disturbance are not considered intrusive or particularly disruptive on wintering big game. Since the powerline would be situated immediately adjacent to the existing road and fenceline right-of-way, installation would involve virtually no loss or modification of forage or cover resources. As described in the proposed action, the powerline would be constructed so as to avoid any risk of raptor electrocution. Use of the existing right-of-way would preclude any substantive modification of woodland canopies that may be used for future nest activities.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have potential to disrupt big game wintering activities or woodland raptor nest functions.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The landscape surrounding the project area presently meets the Public Land Health Standard. This proposed action would have no effective influence on forage or cover resources associated with any wildlife group. Because project installation involves only brief and low intensity activity, and is situated in close proximity to ongoing mine operations and traffic, habitat utility would be affected only on the most diminutive of temporal and spatial scales and can be considered discountable. Installation of the proposed powerline would not affect continued meeting of the Standard.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management			X
Forest Management		X	
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights	X		
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise		X	
Paleontology	X		
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations		X	
Recreation		X	
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: Industrial infrastructure related to energy and mineral development are a priority for wildfire protection and are also the largest hindrance to managing naturally occurring fire for ecological benefit in the Piceance Basin. By mitigating wildfire hazards upfront or through post construction treatments BLM can more easily use fire both prescribed and naturally occurring to mimic natural perturbations and minimize large scale wildfire events without the political and economic cost of lost or damaged infrastructure.

BLM-White River Field Office conducted a wildfire mitigation project around the Natural Soda mine facility in 2004-2005. The project thinned pinyon-juniper stands around the powerline (tie-in point for the proposed action) supplying the mine with power, and along access and egress routes leading to the mine. The sagebrush parks around the mine were brush beat to protect outlying powerlines to minimize the potential for running crown fire in surrounding pinion-juniper stands.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: By routing the powerline adjacent to the fence line, the powerline will take advantage of an already cleared corridor devoid of large woody material, which could potentially ignite underneath the line and cause damage or loss to the line. The fence line corridor falls within the Natural Soda Mitigation project which altered the wildland fuels such that there is little opportunity for large fire growth around the proposed power line. The careful selection of the powerline route has resulted in the mitigation of potential impacts by fire to the proposed action.

The proposed action was developed to best take advantage of the reduced fuel situation resulting from the Natural Soda Wildfire Mitigation project conducted by the White River Field Office. The preferred route of the power line takes advantage of natural and constructed fuel breaks that will minimize the potential damage of the power line from wildfire while eliminating the need for additional new disturbance.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The power line would not be constructed and therefore would not be at risk of damage from wildland fire.

Mitigation: Designed into the proposed action.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action is within the upper Yellow Creek pasture of the Square S allotment (06027). The pasture is authorized for fall, winter and spring cattle use on a rotational basis by the Mantle Ranch and Boone Vaughn livestock operations.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: the proposed action could result in an unquantified long term loss of rangeland productivity absent proper reclamation/ revegetation practices.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: None

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The proposed action occurs within the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). BLM custodially manages the ERMA to provide for unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and off-highway vehicle use.

The project areas area has been delineated/most resembles a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). SPM physical and social recreation setting is typically characterized by a natural appearing environment with few administrative controls, low interaction between users but evidence of other users may be present. SPM recreation experience is characterized by a high probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: With the introduction of new infrastructure the sights and sounds associated with the human environment and a less naturally appearing environment is likely in this project area. Cumulatively, this area no longer meets the definition of SPM and is more similar to a Rural ROS class. Rural physical and social recreation setting is culturally modified to the point that it is dominant to the sensitive travel route observer. This may include pastoral, agricultural, intensively managed wildland resource landscapes, or utility corridors. Pedestrian or other slow moving observers are constantly within view of culturally changed landscape. There is strong evidence of designed roads and/or highways. Structures are readily apparent and may range from scattered to small dominant clusters including utility corridors, farm buildings, microwave installations, and recreation sites. Frequency of contact is moderate to high at developed sites and on roads and trails; moderate away from developed sites.
Rural recreation experience is characterized by a low probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No loss of dispersed recreation potential and no impact to hunting recreationists.

Mitigation: None.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed action would be located in an area with a VRM III classification. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management

activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would not be near a route traveled by a casual observer and would parallel an existing linear disturbance, and therefore, would not attract the attention of the casual observer. The level of change to the characteristic landscape would be low, and the objectives of the VRM III classification would be retained.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no environmental consequences.

Mitigation: None

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This action is consistent with the scope of impacts addressed in the White River ROD/RMP. The cumulative impacts of oil and gas activities are addressed in the White River ROD/RMP for each resource value that would be affected by the proposed action.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: None

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Gabrielle Elliott	Archeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation, Rangeland Management
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Melissa Kindall	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Soils
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Keith Whitaker	Natural Resource Specialist	Visual Resources
Valerie Dobrich	Natural Resource Specialist	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the following mitigation measures.

MITIGATION MEASURES: 1. An archaeologist will need to be on site to monitor the actual digging of the holes for the poles.

2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to

proceed by the authorized officer.

4. Promptly revegetate all disturbed areas not necessary for production with Native Seed mix #3. Revegetation will commence immediately after construction and will not be delayed until the following fall. Seed mixture rates are Pure Live Seed (PLS) pounds per acre. Drill seeding is the preferred method of application.

Seed Mix #	Species (Variety)	Lbs. PLS per Acre	Ecological Sites
3	Western wheatgrass (Rosanna) Bluebunch wheatgrass (Whitmar) Needle and thread Indian ricegrass (Rimrock) Fourwing saltbush (Wytana) Utah sweetvetch	2 2 1 2 1 1	Gravelly 10"-14", Pinyon/Juniper Woodland, Stony Foothills, 147 (Mountain Mahogany)

5. The operator will be required to monitor the project area for a minimum of three years post disturbance and eradicate all noxious and invasive species which occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.

6. The operator shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by this project.

7. Soil compaction may be mitigated by minimizing the amount of utility vehicle traffic associated with power line construction activities. In addition, unauthorized OHV use must be discouraged (e.g. signs/barriers constructed).

8. Minimize surface disturbance and maintain sufficient amounts of ground cover. No construction should take place under thawing solid conditions in order to minimize potential rutting.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance will be conducted by the Realty Staff every five years.

NAME OF PREPARER: Penny Brown

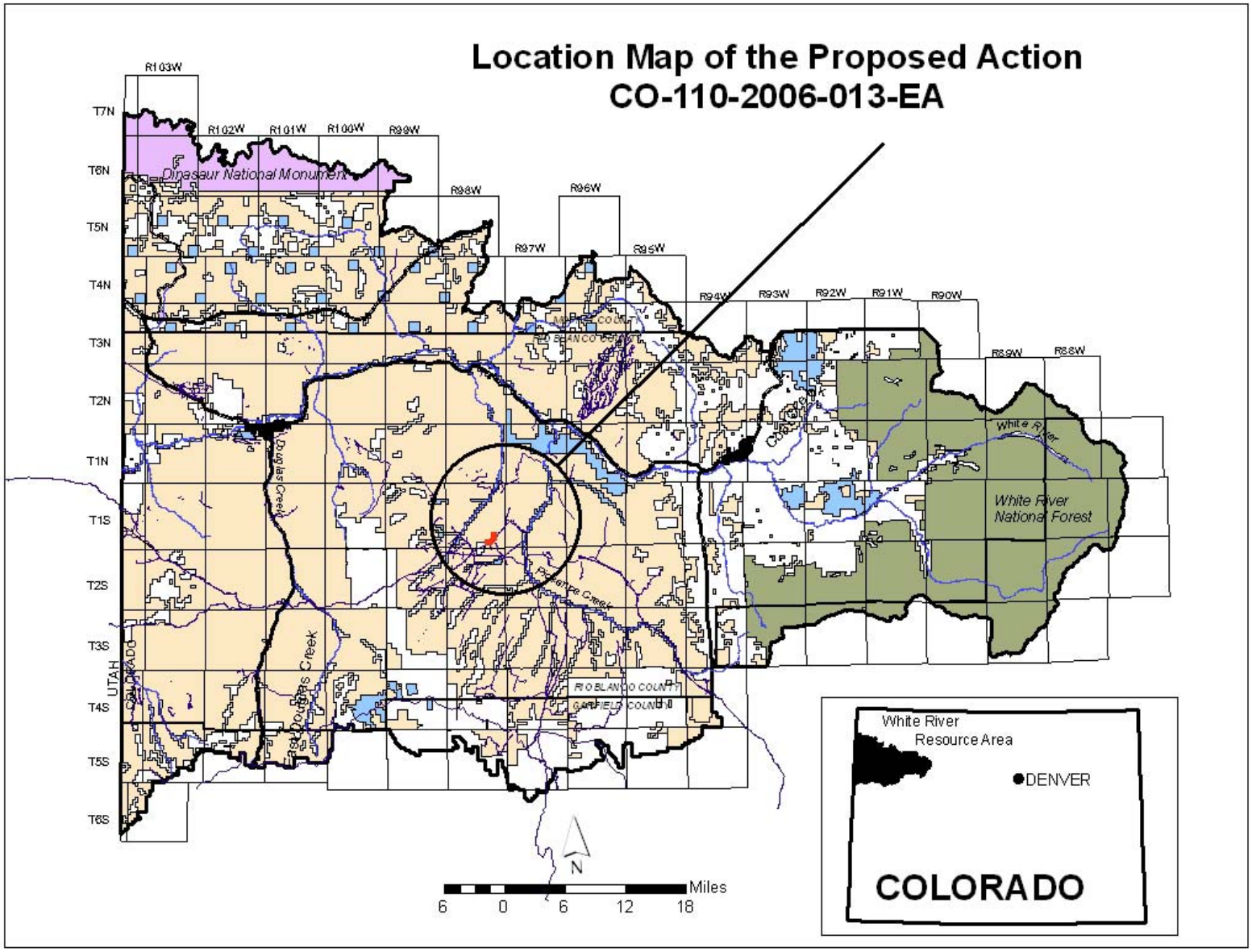
NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Kent C. Walker
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 01/13/06

ATTACHMENTS: Location map of the Proposed Action

CO-110-2006-013-EA 16


Location Map of the Proposed Action
CO-110-2006-013-EA
R103W
R102W
R101W
R100W
R99W
R98W
R96W
R97W
R95W
R94W
R93W
R92W
R91W
R90W
R89W
R88W
T7N
T6N
T5N
T4N
T3N
T2N
T1N
T1S
T2S
T3S
T4S
T5S
T6S
Dinosaur National Monument
Douglas Creek
Douglas Creek
Piceance Creek
White River
White River National Forest
UTAH
COLORADO
RIO BLANCO COUNTY
GARFIELD COUNTY
N
Miles
6 0 6 12 18
White River Resource Area
DENVER
COLORADO