

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2004-033-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): COC 64201

PROJECT NAME: APD well #6502

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T 2S, R 99W, sec. 23

APPLICANT: Encana Oil and Gas (USA) Inc.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: The applicant is proposing to drill a gas well to 11,300 ft. Applicant will construct an access road with a right-of-way approximately 4496' x 30' (3.10 ac.), and well pad (3.02 ac.). If production is established, applicant will install pipeline. However, the pipeline plan was not submitted with, and is not part of the proposed action. Total surface disturbance would be approx. 6.12 acres. If the well is a producer, areas not needed for production will be contoured and seeded. If the well is a non-producer, all disturbed areas will be contoured and seeded.

No Action Alternative: No well would be developed. No access road or well pad would be constructed.

NEED FOR THE ACTION: To respond to the request by the applicant to exercise their Federal mineral lease rights and develop hydrocarbon reserves.

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: Page 2-5:

Decision Language: “Make federal oil and gas resources available for leasing and development in a manner that provides reasonable protection for 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: There are no special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas nearby that would be affected by the proposed action. During periods of low precipitation, air quality in the area of the proposed action is often diminished by dust caused by human disturbance.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would result in short term, local impacts to air quality during and after construction, due to dust being blown into the air. After adequate vegetation is reestablished, blowing dust should return to pre-construction levels.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No increase in dust would occur.

Mitigation: The operator will spread water on the road surfaces to control fugitive dust.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed well pad and access road have been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Pennefather-O’Brien 2003, Compliance Dated 1/13/2004) with no new cultural resources identified in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would not impact any known cultural resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no new impacts to cultural resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: 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.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no known noxious weeds in the area of the proposed well location or access road. The invasive annual, cheatgrass is found along roadside disturbed areas that have not been properly revegetated.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will create earthen disturbance which if it is not properly revegetated, will provide numerous safe sites for the establishment of noxious weeds and cheatgrass.

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

Mitigation: Promptly recontour and revegetate all disturbed areas with Native seed mix #3. The operator will monitor the well location and access road for a minimum of three years post construction for the occurrence of noxious weeds and invasive species. The operator will eradicate all noxious and invasive species which occur on site using materials and methods approved by the authorized officer.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Non-game populations associated with these ranges are widespread and common throughout sagebrush and juniper habitats in this Resource Area (e.g., green-tailed and spotted towhee, vesper and lark sparrows). There are no specialized or narrowly endemic species known to occupy the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Much of the proposed new road construction would actually be located along an existing two-track road. The pad and road would occur in mature, closed canopy pinyon-juniper woodlands. Although this action would represent an incremental and longer term reduction in the extent of pinyon-juniper habitat available for migratory bird breeding functions, implementation of this project would have no measurable influence on the abundance or distribution of breeding migratory birds even at the smallest landscape scale.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Incremental reductions of pinyon-juniper woodlands would not occur at this time or place.

Mitigation: None.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: No threatened or endangered animals are present in, or in the vicinity of, the proposed project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: There is no reasonable likelihood that the proposed action or no action alternative would have an influence on the condition or function of Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive animal species.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: There are no Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive plant species occurring in the area of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: There is no reasonable likelihood that the proposed action or no action alternative would have an influence on the condition or function of Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive plant species.

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 this site.

Impact of 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.

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

Mitigative Measures: 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: Proposed action is in Stakes Springs, which is tributary to Yellow Creek and the White River. It is identified in segment 13b, the main stem 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. All actions are within the White River watershed.

The State has designated this segment as "Use Protected". They further classified this stream segment as Warm Aquatic Life 2, Recreation 2, and Agriculture. The state has further defined water quality parameters with table values. These standards reflect the ambient water quality and define maximum allowable concentrations for the various water quality parameters. The anti-degradation rule does not apply to segments that are considered to be use protected. For these drainages, on the parameters listed in the table apply.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The area where the proposed action would be located appears not to be a very defined drainage. One problem that could arise from the proposed action would be an increase in sediment transport. Annual runoff from this watershed is dynamic and dependent on some aspects we control, such as the amount of vegetation retained for watershed protection and vegetation density. Depleting the vegetation cover needed to protect watersheds from raindrop impact and runoff could cause short-term erosion problems and increased sedimentation to Yellow Creek and on down to the White River until successful best management practices have been implemented and proven to be successful.

The magnitude of these impacts would be dependent on the amount of surface disturbance and climatic conditions during the time the soils are exposed to the elements.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Impacts from the no-action alternative are not anticipated.

Mitigation: Efforts need to be made to keep sediment from leaving the site. Apply the following Conditions of Approval listed in Appendix B of the White River ROD/RMP to help minimize surface disturbing impacts:

4. When preparing the site, all suitable topsoil should be stripped from the surface of the location and stockpiled for reclamation once the drilling is completed. If well becomes a producing well, the pad will be graded and the topsoil pile will be distributed and seeded to reduce wind and water erosion.

6. All sediment control structures or disposal pits will be designed to contain a 100-year, 6-hour storm event. Storage volumes within these structures will have a design life of 25 years.

8. All activity shall cease when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer.

24. Provide vegetative or artificial stabilization of cut and fill slopes in the design process. Avoid establishment of vegetation where it inhibits drainage from the road surface or where it restricts safety or maintenance.

35. Eliminate undesirable berms that retard normal surface runoff.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The proposed action will not affect achievement of the land health standard.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: No wetland or riparian areas occur within the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: No wetland or riparian areas occur within the project area. The proposed action would not affect achievement of the land health standard.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers exist within the area affected by the proposed action. 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 soils have been mapped in an order III soil survey by NRCS which is available for review at the field office. Refer to the table below for the type of soils affected by the proposed action.

Proposed Action	Soil Number	Soil Name	Soil pH	Permeability	Water Capacity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Range site	Slope
Access Road	70	Redcreek-Rentsac complex	7.4-8.4	2.0-6.0	0.12-0.16	Very high	Moderate to high	PJ woodlands/PJ woodlands	5-30%
Access Road and Well Pad	73	Rentsac channery loam	6.6-8.4	2.0-6.0	0.12-0.16	Rapid	Moderate to very high	Pinyon-Juniper woodlands	5-50%

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Short-term impacts would be expected from any surface disturbing activity. Impacts from the proposed action would be loss of the protective vegetation cover, possible increase in salt and sedimentation during storm events and soil compaction from trenching equipment. These impacts could continue until successful re-vegetation has occurred.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: In the no-action alternative, neither the surface disturbance nor the impacts to soils resources would occur.

Mitigation: Re-establishing vegetation as soon as allowable would be favorable to control any erosion problems that may occur. Best management practices will need to be implemented if salts leaching from soils become a problem on the surface.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: The proposed action will not affect achievement of the Land Health Standard.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The area of the proposed action is dominated by mature pinyon-juniper woodlands interspersed with Wyoming big sagebrush parks.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will disturb the existing vegetation on a small, but not significant scale.

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

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): The plant communities in the area of the proposed action currently meet the standard. Implementation of this action will not impact their ability to meet the standard in the future.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife occurring within the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): There is no aquatic wildlife occurring within the project area. The proposed action would not affect achievement of the land health standard.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Pad #6502 consists of 6.1 acres of disturbance, approximately 3.1 acres of which is located on an existing two-track road (road improvement). The elevation is 7058 feet and the pad aspect is northwest. The access road via the two-track crosses contiguous, mature, relatively closed canopy pinyon-juniper woodlands. The pad and .15 miles of new road consist of mature to young pinyon-juniper woodlands with some occurrence of sagebrush in the understory. Several old growth juniper trees were observed on the pad location. The entire length of the project area holds a high potential for the presence of woodland nesting raptors though no nesting evidence was observed during a field visit, conducted on 12 February 2004. Extensive use by cottontail rabbits was noted while no recent big game use was observed. Snow depth was 1-2 feet of powder depending upon slope exposure. The project site occurs within normal winter range for both mule deer and elk.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The construction of this project will result in a long-term increase of road traffic associated with commercial oil/gas related activities. It will result in a net loss of mature pinyon-juniper habitat of approximately 6.1 acres, although nearly half of this is represented by improving a two-track road (e.g., disturbance does not entirely involve the loss of pinyon-juniper woodlands). The development of oil/gas facilities in areas previously undisturbed by commercial oil/gas activities results in incremental reductions

of normal winter range habitat for big game. Additionally, it will result in increase the activity in an area holding high potential for nesting by raptors.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Failure to construct this well would reduce short-term construction activity levels in this area as well as longer term activity associated with increased road traffic. However, avoiding the disturbance associated with this well would not be considered advantageous to wildlife resources since new locations, potentially involving greater surface disturbance and more involved access, would likely be proposed to offset the loss.

Mitigation: A locked gate shall be placed at the intersection of the existing two-track and the site of new road construction, or as close as practical, to preclude the use by motorized vehicles to minimize disturbance to big game.

A current raptor survey must be obtained if construction of the project occurs between February 1 and August 15. It is the responsibility of EnCana to contact the BLM to have this survey conducted prior to beginning construction, should it be scheduled in this window.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This project would not jeopardize the viability of any animal population. It would have no significant consequence on terrestrial habitat condition, utility, or function, nor have any discernible affect on animal abundance or distribution at any landscape scale. Thus, potential for meeting the land health standard would not be affected.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

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	
Paleontology			X
Rangeland Management		X	
Realty Authorizations		X	
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: Well #6502 involves approximately 0.85 miles of new road construction/improvement that traverses through mature pinyon-juniper woodlands. The pad, likewise is composed of pinyon-juniper woodlands, some of which consists of old growth juniper.

The National Fire Plan calls for “firefighter and public safety” to be the highest priority for all fire management activities. In the pinyon, juniper, and brush types common on the White River Resource Area, roads and other man-made openings are commonly used as fuel breaks or barriers to control the spread of both wildland and prescribed fires. By reducing the potential fuels, created from this proposal, future fire management efforts in this area should be safer for those involved and more effective.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Due to the existing tree cover of pinyon and juniper, there will be a need for the operator to clear some of these trees. If not adequately treated, these trees will result in elevated hazardous fuels conditions and remain on-site for many years. These accumulations of dead material are very receptive to fire brands and spotting from wind driven fires and can greatly accelerate the rate of spread of the fire front. The road associated with this project may be used by the general public for a variety of uses, including access for fire wood gathering, hunting and other dispersed recreational activities. Increased public use of an area will nearly always result in an increased potential for man-caused wildland fires. If not treated the slash and woody debris will create an elevated hazardous dead fuel loading which could pose significant control problems in the event of a wildfire. Additionally there would be greater threat to the public, operator personnel, and fire suppression personnel.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The increased fuel build up along a public access route would not occur.

Mitigation: The operator has two options for treatment of slash from this project. A hydro-ax or other mulching type machine could be used to remove the trees. The machines are capable of shredding trees up to 12" in diameter and 15' tall as well as mowing brush like a conventional brush beater. It generally leaves small branches and pieces of wood from pencil size up to bowling ball size. The mulch is evenly scattered across the surface and the tires or tracks distribute the weight of the equipment. This would effectively breakdown the woody fuel and scatter the debris thereby eliminating any hazardous fuel load adjacent to the new road and well pad. The other option would be to cut trees and have them removed for firewood, posts, or other products. The branches and tops should be lopped and scattered to a depth of 24 inches or less. If the boles of the trees are left for collection by the general public, they should be stacked in small manageable piles along the roadside or pad to facilitate removal.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The access road and well pad are in a sagebrush/Pinyon intermix. The pinyons are primarily saplings of less than 30 years age and of small diameter. There are a few larger pinyons. This area is not within the commercial woodland base on which removal would be considered within the limits set by the White River RMP. This site is the proper age class for harvest of Christmas trees.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There will be a few larger trees removed during construction of the access road and well pad. The amount of wood is not significant and the operator will not be charged for the wood volume. Following reclamation pinyons will encroach on the site and over time a mature woodland would be formed. Initial establishment would take approximately 30 years and development of a climax community would take 300 to 400 years.

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

Mitigation: See mitigation in Fire Management.

GEOLOGY AND MINERALS

Affected Environment: The proposed action would be located in the area identified in the White River ROD/RMP as being available for oil shale leasing. The surface geologic formation of the well location is Uinta and EnCana's targeted zone is in the Mancos. During drilling potential water, oil shale, and gas zones will be encountered from surface to the targeted zone. Aquifers that will be encountered during drilling are the Perched in the Uinta, the A-groove, B-groove and the Dissolution Surface in the Green River formation. This area is known for difficulties in drilling and cementing. Oil shale resources are also found in the Green River formation.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Drilling and completion of this well may adversely affect the aquifers if there is loss of circulation or problems cementing the casing. However, the proposed cementing and completion procedure of the proposed action isolates the formations and will prevent the migration of gas, water, and oil between formations. Development of this well will deplete the hydrocarbon resources in the targeted formation.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The proposed well pad and access road are in an area mapped as the Uinta Formation (Tweto 1970) which the BLM has classified as a Category I fossil bearing formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically important fossil resources.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: If it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying bedrock to construct the road, level the well pad or excavate the reserve/blooiie pit there is a potential to impact scientifically important fossil resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no new impacts to fossil resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: 1) All exposed rock outcrops shall be inventoried for fossil resources with a report detailing the fossils found, if any, and recommended mitigation. 2) If at any time it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying bedrock to construct the road, level the well pad or excavate the reserve/blooiie it a paleontological monitor shall be present during construction. 3) If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AO). The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS

Affected Environment: A right-of-way will be required for access to the proposed well.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will require a right-of-way for the access road from the point where it leaves County Road 68 until it meets the lease boundary. BLM will process this right-of-way concurrent with the APD.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

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.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The public will lose approximately seven acres of dispersed recreation potential while wells are in operation. The public will most likely not recreate in the vicinity of these facilities and will disperse elsewhere. If action coincides with hunting seasons (September through November) it will most likely disrupt the experience sought by those recreationists and will most likely result in complaints from hunters that have historically used this area.

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 within a VRM class III area. 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 be located on the side of a ridge below the crest of the ridge line with a backdrop of pinyon/juniper. There are numerous roads in the area located on ridge lines and in the bottoms of drainages. A casual observer would be able to view the proposed action from one of the roads on an adjacent ridge, approximately one mile away. The proposed action would attract the attention of a casual observer, but would not dominate the view. By painting all production facilities Juniper Green, the predominant natural features (Pinyon/Juniper trees) would be mimicked and the change to the characteristic landscape would be low. The standards of the VRM III classification would be met.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no additional environmental impacts from the no action alternative.

Mitigation: Paint all production facilities Juniper Green.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts from oil and gas development were analyzed in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) completed in June 1996. Current development, including the proposed action, has not exceeded the cumulative impacts from the foreseeable development analyzed in the PRMP/FEIS.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Carol Hollowed	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	NRS	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	NRS	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Glenn Klingler	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Glenn Klingler	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Marty O'Mara	HazMat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Carol Hollowed	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Glenn Klingler	Wildlife Biologist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	Recreation Planner	Wilderness
Carol Hollowed	Hydrologist	Soils
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Vegetation
Scott Pavey	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	NRS	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Dagget	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Rangeland Management
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	Recreation Planner	Recreation
Keith Whitaker	Natural Resource Specialist	Visual Resources
Valerie Dobrich	NRS	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 development of Well #6502 as described in the proposed action, with mitigation listed below. This development, with mitigation, is consistent with the decisions in the White River ROD/RMP, and environmental impacts will be minimal.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. The operator will spread water on the road surfaces to control fugitive dust.

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. Promptly recontour and revegetate all disturbed areas with Native seed mix #3. The operator will monitor the well location and access road for a minimum of three years post construction for the occurrence of noxious weeds and invasive species. The operator will eradicate all noxious and invasive species which occur on site using materials and methods approved by the authorized officer.
4. The operator shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by this project.
5. Efforts need to be made to keep sediment from leaving the site.
6. When preparing the site, all suitable topsoil should be stripped from the surface of the location and stockpiled for reclamation once the drilling is completed. If well becomes a producing well, the pad will be graded and the topsoil pile will be distributed and seeded to reduce wind and water erosion.
7. All sediment control structures or disposal pits will be designed to contain a 100-year, 6-hour storm event. Storage volumes within these structures will have a design life of 25 years.
8. All activity shall cease when soils or road surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer.
9. Provide vegetative or artificial stabilization of cut and fill slopes in the design process. Avoid establishment of vegetation where it inhibits drainage from the road surface or where it restricts safety or maintenance.
10. Eliminate undesirable berms that retard normal surface runoff.
11. Re-establishing vegetation as soon as allowable would be favorable to control any erosion problems that may occur. Best management practices will need to be implemented if salts leaching from soils become a problem on the surface.
12. A locked gate shall be placed at the intersection of the existing two-track and the site of new road construction, or as close as practical, to preclude the use by motorized vehicles to minimize disturbance to big game.
13. A current raptor survey must be obtained if construction of the project occurs between February 1 and August 15. It is the responsibility of EnCana to contact the BLM to have this survey conducted prior to beginning construction, should it be scheduled in this window.
14. The operator has two options for treatment of slash from this project. A hydro-ax or other mulching type machine could be used to remove the trees. The machines are capable of shredding trees up to 12" in diameter and 15' tall as well as mowing brush like a conventional

brush beater. It generally leaves small branches and pieces of wood from pencil size up to

bowling ball size. The mulch is evenly scattered across the surface and the tires or tracks distribute the weight of the equipment. This would effectively breakdown the woody fuel and scatter the debris thereby eliminating any hazardous fuel load adjacent to the new road and well pad. The other option would be to cut trees and have them removed for firewood, posts, or other products. The branches and tops should be lopped and scattered to a depth of 24 inches or less. If the boles of the trees are left for collection by the general public, they should be stacked in small manageable piles along the roadside or pad to facilitate removal.

17. All exposed rock outcrops shall be inventoried for fossil resources with a report detailing the fossils found, if any, and recommended mitigation.

18. If at any time it becomes necessary to excavate into the underlying bedrock to construct the road, level the well pad or excavate the reserve/bloolie it a paleontological monitor shall be present during construction.

19. If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials, and contact the authorized officer (AO). The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

20. Paint all production facilities Juniper Green.

NAME OF PREPARER: *Samara Meadey*

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: *Scott Perry*

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: *Deann Rhell*
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: *3/5/04*

APPENDICES:

ATTACHMENTS: Map of the Location of the Proposed Action.

Location of Proposed Action CO-110-2004-033-EA

