

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2004-092-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): COC3902

PROJECT NAME: Greasewood Compressor Station Expansion

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado
T. 2 S., R. 96 W.,
Sec. 5, lot 26.

APPLICANT: Xcel Energy (Public Service Company)

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional):

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: Xcel Energy has applied to expand their existing compressor station located at Greasewood.

Proposed Action: The proposed project is for the expansion of the existing Public Service Company of Colorado Greasewood Compressor Station (also known as Xcel Energy) and will be an amendment to an existing right-of-way COC3902. The present site currently has two compressor units in operation. The proposed expansion will add two additional compressor units at this location. The project includes an expansion of the existing lease site to facilitate the new equipment. The facility will include two gas compressor units, a building to house the compressor units, a control room building, possibly a new gas meter building, and associated buried and above ground piping, instrumentation, control and electrical systems. The existing site will be doubled in size, expanded to the south from its current 170 ft. x 170 ft. dimensions (0.6635 acres) to a new 170 ft. x 340 ft. dimension (1.327 acres). The proposed new compression will provide approximately 14 MMSCFD of compressed natural gas throughput, in conjunction with the current capability of the facility. All construction activities will be contained within the bounds of the proposed new site, the existing site, and the adjacent BLM road. The term of this amendment will run concurrent with the original grant.

No Action Alternative: Under the no action alternative, the application would be denied and the existing compressor station would remain the same.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD:

NEED FOR THE ACTION: The expansion of this compressor station is required to handle the increased production that is happening in the Piceance Creek Basin and points south.

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: 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: None

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The area of the proposed compressor expansion has been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Pointkowski 2003, Compliance Dated 7.16.2003) with no new cultural resources identified in the area where the compressor site is located.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will 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: 1. 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.

2. 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/ RECLAMATION

Affected Environment: The area of the proposed action has a wide variety of noxious weeds including houndstongue, yellow toadflax, black henbane, leafy spurge, mullein, bull thistle, Canada thistle, and Russian and spotted knapweed. The invasive alien cheatgrass is also found on disturbed, unvegetated sites throughout the project area. The Magnolia are in general is a noxious weed 'hotbed' due to the almost continuous level of earthen disturbance which occurs there.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will create a large disturbed area which, even if it is promptly and effectively revegetated or treated to suppress all vegetation growth, will nevertheless provide numerous sites for noxious weed and cheatgrass invasion and proliferation. Excel Energy should therefore have a proposed treatment plan (Pesticide Use Proposal) in place that addresses the noxious weed species present in the area so that the problem can be dealt with immediately.

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

Mitigation: Due to the abundance and continuing reoccurrence of noxious weeds in this area, as part of the authorization for this plant, Xcel should submit a vegetation management plan whereby they list the materials and methods for controlling/eradicating noxious weeds and cheatgrass that will inevitably occur. That is, they should submit a Pesticide Use Proposal as a condition for approval of this action unless they intend to control all weeds by hand. Promptly recontour and revegetate all disturbed areas with Standard Seed Mix #3. eradicate all noxious and invasive species using materials and methods approved by the authorized officer.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: An array of migratory birds fulfills nesting functions throughout Magnolia's sagebrush and serviceberry dominated habitats from late May through early August. Species associated with these shrubland communities are typical and widely represented in the Resource Area and region. Those bird populations identified as having higher conservation interest (i.e., Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Partners in Flight program) include Brewer's sparrow and green-tailed towhee. These birds are well distributed and common across Magnolia's extensive sagebrush and mixed shrub habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Project construction may occur soon after authorization and could coincide with the later stages of nesting activity (late June-early July). However, this project would be situated immediately adjacent to a busy graveled county road and existing compressor facility. Because breeding birds tend avoid roadsides and industrial activity centers, nest densities can be expected to be about half that of undisturbed habitats within about 300' of such disturbance. The small size of this expansion (about 0.7 acre)

and that fact that much (75%) of potential nesting habitat lies within 85' of existing forms of disturbance drastically limits the utility of this habitat parcel, as well as the likelihood of it supporting any more than 1 pair of breeding birds.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The utility of this tract of land for breeding birds use would remain influenced by the county road and existing compressor plant as discussed above, but the incremental expansion of direct habitat occupation (0.7 acre) and disturbance of surrounding habitat (about 1.7 acres) would be avoided.

Mitigation: None

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

Affected Environment: There are no listed, proposed, or candidate special status animals known to inhabit or derive important benefit from the project locale. Issues associated with the greater sage grouse, a species that has recently been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act, is discussed in the terrestrial wildlife section below.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would have no conceivable impact on listed, proposed, or candidate species or associated habitats.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The proposed action would have no effect on achieving the land health standard.

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

Affected Environment: No threatened or endangered plants 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 plant species. Thus there would be no effect on achieving the land health standard.

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.

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.

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: Proposed action is in Cole Gulch, which is tributary to Piceance Creek and the White River; segment 16, all tributaries to Piceance Creek, including all wetlands, lakes and reservoirs from the source to the confluence with the White River except for specific listings in segments 17-20. (Segments 16a and 16b were combined and renamed segment 16.)

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 classified this segment as a "Use Protected" reach. Its designated beneficial uses are: Warm Aquatic Life 2, Recreation 2, and Agriculture. The antidegradation review requirements in the Antidegradation 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. This segment retained its Recreation Class 2 designation after sufficient evidence was received that a Recreation Class 1a use was unattainable.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: One problem that could arise from the proposed action would be an increase in sediment transport to the White River. Annual runoff from these watersheds 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 the White River until successful best management practices (BMPs) have been implemented and proven successful. The magnitude of these impacts is 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: No impacts from the no-action alternative are anticipated.

Mitigation: Through the use of BMPs, keep sediment from leaving the proposed site.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The water quality of the drainages discussed above is well within the criteria set by the state, thus meeting the land health standard. The proposed action will not change this status.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC’s, flood plains, riparian/wetland communities, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness Study Areas, 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: Baseline soils data have been collected for Rio Blanco County by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and are published in an order III Soil Survey. This survey is available for review from the White River Field Office. Refer to the table below for characteristics of soils intersected by the proposed action.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Slope	Range site	Salinity	RunOff	Erosion Potential	Bedrock
43	Irigul-Parachute complex	12-45% 5-30%	Loamy Slopes/Mountain Loam	<2	Rapid	Moderate to very high	10-20
59	Parachute-Rhone loams	5-30%	Mountain Loam	<2	Medium	Moderate to high	20-40
104	Yamac Loam	2-15%	Rolling Loam	<2	Medium	Slight to moderate	>60

The majority of the soils in the ROW are mapping unit # 43, Irigul-Parachute complex. This map unit is on ridges and mountainsides. The Irigul soil is shallow and well drained. It formed in residuum derived from sandstone and hard shale. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown channery loam 5 inches thick. Permeability of the Irigul soil is moderate. Available water capacity is very low. Runoff is medium to rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very high. The Parachute soil is moderately deep and well drained. It formed in residuum derived dominantly from sandstone. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown loam 4 inches thick. Permeability of the Parachute soil is moderate. Available water capacity is low. Effective rooting depth is 20 to 40 inches. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is moderate to very high.

If this unit is seeded, the main limitations are slope, shallow rooting depth, and a short growing season. The plants selected for seeding should meet the seasonal requirements of livestock or wildlife, or both. For successful seeding, prepare a seedbed and drill in the seed. The Irigul soil is in Loamy Slopes range site, and the Parachute soil is in Mountain Loam range site.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: General impacts associated with the proposed action include but are not limited to, loss of topsoil, soil compaction and possible increase in sediment loads to the White River. The primary surface-disturbing impact would be a potential increase in sediment transport from runoff events after the protective vegetative cover has been removed.

BMPs used to slow runoff, trap sediment and prepare reclaimed areas for seeding would help reduce soil loss. With an explanation of how BMPs would be used and implementation of these BMPs, impacts are expected to be short in duration, during the construction phase and for a short time after construction until successful reclamation is achieved.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Impacts are not anticipated from not permitting the proposed action.

Mitigation: When erosion is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site. In addition, straining or filtration mechanisms may also contribute to sediment removal from runoff.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Soils at the proposed location meet the criteria established in the Public Land Health Standard. The proposed action would not change this status.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Vegetation in the project area is dominated by mountain big sagebrush with scattered Utah serviceberry and an understory of a variety of grasses and forbs. Due to the virtually continuous earthen disturbance which occurs in this area, noxious weeds are prominent. The primary range site here is Loamy Slopes.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The primary impact of the action on vegetation will be an increase in noxious weeds and the invasive alien, cheatgrass. Without implementation of an aggressive noxious weed management plan as mitigation, there will be a long term negative impact on native plant communities in the project area.

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

Mitigation: See mitigation listed under Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): With the exception of areas infested with noxious weeds, upland plant communities in the project area currently meet the Standard. With noxious weed/invasive species and reclamation mitigation properly applied, plant communities in the project area will continue to meet the Standard.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: There are no aquatic habitats directly or indirectly involved with this proposal. The nearest aquatic habitat in Piceance Creek is separated from the project proposal by about 10 miles of ephemeral channel.

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): The proposed action would have no conceivable effect on the condition or function of far-removed aquatic habitats and would, therefore, have no effective influence on land health standards for aquatic wildlife.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The compressor station would be housed within a 170' x 340' fenced facility yard (1.3 acres) that fronts on a maintained extension of Rio Blanco County Road 76. The proposed expansion involves about 0.5 acre of big sagebrush that lies immediately adjacent and northeast of the county road and southeast of the existing compressor facility.

The Magnolia area hosts a small, remnant population of greater sage grouse that are the target of population and habitat restoration efforts by the BLM and CDOW. This sagebrush stand is situated on a narrow (500' wide) neck of habitat separating Magnolia's core sage-steppe habitats to the east (presently occupied by grouse) from ridgelines extending to the west and north.

These westerly ridgelines support about 600 acres of former sage-steppe habitats that are now dominated by large serviceberry and encroaching pinyon pine. This part of Magnolia has probably been unsuitable for occupation by grouse for over 30 years. The project site is bisected by a heavily traveled field access road along which a series of other gas compressor stations extends to the east.

Big game occupy the serviceberry and sagebrush steppe in and around the Magnolia complex, primarily from May through November.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Although compressor expansion would have no further influence on physically obstructing access to grouse habitats available to the west and north (i.e., currently unsuitable for use), with the cumulative concentration of compressor facilities, roads and other forms of energy-related surface occupation (e.g., newly constructed pipeline right-of-ways, well pads) this site may, to a diminutive degree, further inhibit free movement of birds across this juncture in the event these habitats are restored in the future. Conversely, the placement of this facility in close proximity to a number of pre-existing facilities and heavily traveled access offers the advantage of limiting the effective expansion of development into suitable and occupied sage grouse habitats.

Construction and operation of this facility would likely have little further influence on the Magnolia lek or surrounding potential nest habitat, which lies over 2 miles to the north-south-east. The natural gas-driven compressors would be enclosed within a steel building and (based on applicant drawings) noise emitted from the fans would be oriented to the northeast (i.e., same direction as the existing pair of compressors). From BLM's experience with similar compressor stations equipped with hospital grade mufflers (recommended mitigation), noise levels are limited to about 80 decibels or less at 100 feet and tend to attenuate to background levels within 0.5 mile.

In order to encourage the long-term success of any pioneering grouse in and around this facility, it is recommended that any structure associated with the compressor station that may serve as a raptor perch (e.g., electric, telephone poles) be as low in stature as is safe and practical and conditioned to effectively deter use by large raptors (i.e., eagles, buteo hawks, great horned owls) that may predate adult or young grouse.

The proximity of this facility to the intersection of 2 major county roads and the existing industrial complex limits the overall influence on big game (i.e., direct and indirect habitat loss) to minor proportions.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Failure to site this facility at this location may reduce the potential for further constricting the sagebrush corridor that provides a semblance of habitat continuity through this industrial complex. However, alternate locations would likely have involved more extensive long-term removal of sagebrush habitats at locations more distant from existing forms of disturbance and providing more functional value to the sage grouse population on Magnolia.

Mitigation: --It is recommended that the new compressor motors be equipped with hospital grade mufflers that reduce facility-emitted noise to the greatest possible extent. As inferred by the applicant's map, the new compressors should be fully enclosed within a building and the fans oriented in the same direction as the existing pair of fans. Further, in the event that the existing pair of compressors are not similarly equipped, it is recommended in the interest of enhancing the utility of surrounding sage-steppe habitats for greater sage grouse that they be retro-fitted with hospital grade mufflers.

--Any structure associated with the compressor station that may serve as a perch (e.g., electric, telephone poles) be as low in stature as is safe and practical and conditioned to effectively deter use by large raptors (i.e., eagles, buteo hawks, great horned owls). The methods selected for implementing this objective, as well as scaled drawings detailing these methods, should be provided for approval by the BLM Authorized Officer and included in the official case file.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The proposed facility location is comprised of a sagebrush habitat patch (500' wide) where past and current land uses impair its utility for species requiring larger or more contiguous expanses of habitat (e.g., sage grouse). On a localized basis, the project area (0.7 acre) would not meet Standard 3, but at larger spatial scales and in the context of this existing industrial-dominated site, the proposed action would have no substantive influence on the health and productivity of surrounding rangelands as habitat for terrestrial wildlife, and thus no effect on achieving the land health 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			
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		

ACCESS & TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment: The proposed action encompasses in part BLM Road 1078.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will temporarily increase the traffic on BLM Road 1078 during the construction phase of 7 months. As existing active wells persist north of the proposed action, access to these wells may be slowed during site construction.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impact.

Mitigation: Warning signs should be placed along BLM 1078 if traffic is to be impeded.

PALEONTOLOGY

Affected Environment: The proposed compressor station is located in an area mapped as the Uinta formation (Tweto 1979) which the BLM has classified as a Category I formation, meaning it is a known producer of scientifically important fossil resources.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: It is possible that during excavation for the footings for the compressors and the control building important fossil resources could be impacted.

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

Mitigation: All excavations into the underlying bedrock formation for leveling for the site or excavation of footers for buildings or compressors must be monitored by an approved Paleontologist. 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.

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 2 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 be dispersed 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: This compressor station construction is in an area managed as Visual Resource Management Area (VRM) Class 3. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to 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.

This construction will enlarge an existing facility. It is in an area containing several industrial facilities.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The visual affects from this project will result in a moderate change to the characteristic landscape. VRM Class 3 objectives will be met.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Pointkowski, Michael

2003 A Report of the Class III Inventory of the Magnolia WUI Project, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Uncompahgre Archaeological Consultants, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Tweto, Ogden, compiler

1979 Geology Map of Colorado. United States Geologic Survey, Department of Interior, Reston, Virginia.

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Caroline 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
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Marty O'Mara	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	ORP	Wilderness
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Soils
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Vegetation
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	ORP	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	NRS	Fire Management
		Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Rangeland Management
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	ORP	Recreation
Max McCoy	NRS	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 proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Due to the abundance and continuing reoccurrence of noxious weeds in this area, as part of the authorization for this plant, Xcel should submit a vegetation management plan whereby they list the materials and methods for controlling/eradicating noxious weeds and cheatgrass that will inevitably occur. That is, they should submit a Pesticide Use Proposal as a condition for approval of this action unless they intend to control all weeds by hand. Promptly recontour and revegetate all disturbed areas with Standard Seed Mix #3. Eradicate all noxious and invasive species 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. Through the use of BMPs, keep sediment from leaving the proposed site.
6. When erosion is anticipated, sediment barriers shall be constructed to slow runoff, allow deposition of sediment, and prevent it from leaving the site. In addition, straining or filtration mechanisms may also contribute to sediment removal from runoff.
7. The new compressor motors need to be equipped with hospital grand mufflers that reduce facility-emitted noise to the greatest possible extent. As inferred by the applicant's map, the new compressors should be fully enclosed within a building and the fans oriented in the same direction as the existing pair of fans. Further, in the event that the existing pair of compressors are not similarly equipped, it is recommended in the interest of enhancing the utility of surrounding sage-steppe habitats for greater sage grouse that they be retro-fitted with hospital grade mufflers.
8. Any structure associated with the compressor station that may serve as a perch (e.g., electric, telephone poles) be as low in stature as is safe and practical and conditioned to effectively deter use by large raptors (i.e., eagles, buteo hawks, great horned owls). The methods selected for implementing this objective, as well as scaled drawings, detailing these methods, should be provided for approval by the BLM authorized officer and included in the official case file.
9. Warning signs should be placed along BLM 1078 road if traffic is to be impeded.
10. All excavations into the underlying bedrock formation for leveling for the site or excavation of footers for buildings or compressors must be monitored by an approved Paleontologist. 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. The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best option for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance will be conducted when construction is completed and every five years thereafter.

NAME OF PREPARER: Penny Brown

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline P. Hollowed
6/15/04

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Wesley D. Bell
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 6/15/04

ATTACHMENTS: Map of the Location of the Proposed Action
Layout of Proposed Action

Location of Proposed Action CO-110-2004-092-EA

