

### 3.21 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Executive Order on Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations (Executive Order 12898, with explanatory memorandum) directs federal agencies to assess whether their actions have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority communities and low-income communities. The Ute Tribe constitutes both a minority community and a low-income community.

Federal minerals are located on 188,500 acres of the Hill Creek Extension, Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation in Uintah County 113,684 acres within the Hill Creek Extension are Indian minerals. The Hill Creek Extension has important cultural and economic values for the Northern Ute Tribe. This area, as with other areas on the reservation, is economically important because of oil and gas royalties, rights-of-way fees and employment opportunities.

The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation has 3,725 Tribal members living on the reservation. The total potential labor force is approximately 1,600, of which about 42% are considered unemployed. Approximately 80% of those who are employed work for the Tribe. Eighty-three percent of those that are employed earn less than \$14,000 annually. Mineral resources, particularly oil, gas, and oil shale, are the greatest economic assets of the Tribe. Other minerals on the reservation include tar sands, coal, gilsonite, bentonite, wurtzilite, phosphate, and sand and gravel. Raising cattle and the growing of livestock feed are other important economic activities that occur on the reservation (BLM 1999).

The southern portion of the Hill Creek Extension, along the Book Cliffs divide, has important traditional life ways and religious values for the Tribe. This area has been distinguished as “wilderness“ by the Tribe because of its relatively pristine condition. Big game hunting is an important traditional lifestyle for Tribal members. Some religious ceremonies of the Ute people require plants and other materials that are located here. Additionally, the Hill Creek Extension contains numerous archaeological sites, including rock art, camps and burials that have sacred meaning (Duncan 1992).

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