

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**FONSI and Decision Record DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034  
March, 2014**

**Newfield Production Company's  
Proposed GMBU East 2013-1  
(3 Directional Wells Drilled from 2 Existing Pads)  
Infill Development in the  
Greater Monument Butte Unit,  
Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah**

*Location:*                    **Section 6, Township 9 South, Range 17 East  
Section 5, Township 9 South, Range 18 East  
Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah**

*Applicant/Address:*    **Newfield Production Company  
10530 South County Road #33  
Myton, Utah 84052**

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Bureau of Land Management  
Field Office  
170 South 500 East  
Vernal, Utah 84078  
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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**Environmental Assessment**

*DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034*

*Newfield Production Company's*

*Proposed GMBU East 2013-1*

*(3 Directional Wells Drilled from 2 Existing Pads)*

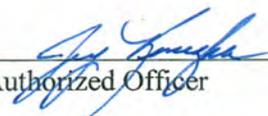
*Infill Development in the*

*Greater Monument Butte Unit,*

*Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah*

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:**

“Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that Newfield Production Company’s proposal to directionally drill 3 wells from 2 existing well pads in the Greater Monument Butte Unit, Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah, as described in the proposed action alternative of DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034-EA will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.”

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Officer

**MAR 06 2014**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DECISION RECORD**  
*Environmental Assessment*  
*DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034*  
*Newfield Production Company's*  
*Proposed GMBU East 2013-1*  
*(3 Directional Wells Drilled from 2 Existing Pads)*  
*Infill Development in the*  
*Greater Monument Butte Unit,*

**DECISION RECORD:**

It is my decision to authorize Newfield Production Company's proposal to directionally drill 3 wells from 2 existing well pads in the Greater Monument Butte Unit, Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah, as described in the proposed action alternative of DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034-EA.

This decision is contingent on the implementation of the applicant committed measures listed in the EA and the conditions of approval, listed below.

**Summary of the Selected Alternative:**

- Directional drilling of up to 3 oil wells from 2 existing well pads. The reserve pit on one well pad would be reopened, resulting in approximately 0.15 acres of redisturbance and 0.1 acre of temporary use area. The other pad would be expanded by 0.29 acres to accommodate a closed loop drilling system. Approximately half of the expansion would occur in areas previously disturbed.

All other components of the proposed action as described in Section 2.1 of DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034-EA.

**Conditions of Approval:**

**Wildlife**

- On level or gently sloping ground (5 percent slope or less) Newfield will elevate surface pipelines (4 inches or greater in diameter) a minimum of 6 inches above the ground to allow passage of small animals beneath the pipe. This ground clearance will be achieved by placing the pipeline on blocks at intervals of 150 to 200 feet.
- Newfield will install noise reduction devices on all pump jacks to reduce intermittent noise to 45 dBA at 660 feet from the source.

## **For protection of T&F Fish if drawing water from the Green River**

- For areas of fresh water collection, an infiltration gallery will be constructed in a Service approved location. An infiltration gallery is basically a pit or trench dug within the floodplain to a depth below the water table. Water is drawn from the pit rather than from the river directly. If this is not possible, limit pumping within the river to off-channel locations that do not connect to the river during high spring flows.
- If water cannot be drawn using the measures above and the pump head will be located in the river channel where larval fish are known to occur, the following measures apply:
  - Avoid pumping from low-flow or no-flow areas as these habitats tend to concentrate larval fish
  - Avoid pumping to the greatest extent possible, during that period of the year when larval fish may be present (see previous bullet); and
  - Avoid pumping, to the greatest extent possible, during the midnight hours (10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.) as larval drift studies indicate that this is a period of greatest daily activity. Dusk is the preferred pumping time, as larval drift abundance is lowest during this time.
  - Screen all pump intakes with 3/32-inch mesh material.
- Report any fish impinged on the intake screen to the FWS office (801.975.3330) and the:  
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
Northeastern Region  
152 East 100 North  
Vernal, UT 84078

## **Air Quality**

1. All internal combustion equipment will be kept in good working order.
2. Water or other approved dust suppressants will be used at construction sites and along roads, as determined appropriate by the Authorized Officer. Dust suppressant such as magnesium chloride or fresh water may be used, as needed, during the drilling phase.
3. Open burning of garbage or refuse will not occur at well sites or other facilities.
4. Drill rigs will be equipped with Tier II or better diesel engines.
5. Low bleed pneumatics would be installed on separator dump valves and other controllers.
6. During completion, venting will not occur, and flaring would be limited as much as possible. Production equipment and gathering lines will be installed as soon as possible.
7. Telemetry will be installed to remotely monitor and control production.
9. When feasible, two or more rigs (including drilling and completion rigs) will not be run simultaneously within 200 meters of each other. If two or more rigs must be run simultaneously within 200 meters of each other, then effective public health buffer zones out to 200 meters (m) from the nearest emission source will be implemented. Examples of an effective public health protection buffer zone include the demarcation of a public access exclusion zone by signage at intervals of every 250 feet that is visible from a distance of 125 feet during daylight hours, and a physical buffer such as active surveillance to ensure the property is not accessible by the public during drilling operations. Alternatively, the proponent may demonstrate compliance with the 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) with appropriate and accepted near-field modeling. As part of this demonstration, the proponent may propose alternative mitigation that could include but is not limited to natural gas-fired drill rigs, installation of NO<sub>x</sub> controls, time/use restrictions, and/or drill rig spacing.

10. All new and replacement internal combustion gas field engines of less than or equal to 300 design-rated horse power must not emit more than 2 grams of NOx per horsepower-hour. This requirement does not apply to gas field engines of less than or equal to 40 design-rated horsepower-hour.
11. All new and replacement internal combustion gas field engines of greater than 300 design rated horsepower must not emit more than 1.0 grams of NOx per horsepower-hour.
12. Green completions would be used for all well completion activities where technically feasible.
13. Employ enhanced VOC emission controls with 95% control efficiency on production equipment having a potential to emit greater than 5 tons per year.

**Rationale for the Decision:**

The selected alternative is in conformance with the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (BLM 2008).

The subject lands were leased for oil or gas development under authority of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as modified by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987. The lessee/operator has the right to explore for oil and gas on the lease as specified in 43 CFR 3103.1-2, and if a discovery is made, to produce oil and/or natural gas for economic gain.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the both the Duchesne County General Plan (Duchesne County 2012) and the Uintah County Plan (Uintah county 2011) which encompasses the Project Area. The county's plans contain specific policy statements addressing public lands (i.e. multiple-use, resource use and development, access, and wildlife management). In general, the county's plan indicate support for development proposals, such as the Proposed Action, through its emphasis of multiple-use of public land management practices, responsible use, and optimum utilization of public land resources. The county, through its plan, supports the development of natural resources as they become available or as new technology allows.

There are no comprehensive State of Utah plans for the vicinity of the selected alternative. However, the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) have leased much of the nearby state land for oil and gas production. Because the objectives of SITLA are to produce funding for the state school system, and because production on federal leases could further interest in drilling on state leases in the area, it is assumed that the selected alternative is consistent with the objectives of the State.

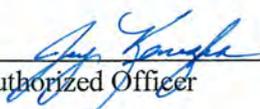
The selected alternative meets the BLM's need to allow development of valid existing leases. The BLM objective to reduce impacts is met by the applicant committed measures and conditions of approval.

Onsite visits were conducted by Vernal Field Office Personnel. The onsite inspection reports do not indicate that any other locations be proposed for analysis.

Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation, National Historic Preservation Act consultation, and Native American Tribes consultation were completed as described in **Section 6.0** of the EA.

**Summary of Public Involvement Efforts and Public Response**

The Proposed Action was posted to the Utah BLM's Environmental Notification Bulletin Board on December 16, 2013 . No public interest has been expressed.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Officer

MAR 06 2014  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appeals:**

This decision is effective upon the date it is signed by the authorized officer. The decision is subject to appeal. Under BLM regulation, this decision is subject to administrative review in accordance with 43 CFR 3165. Any request for administrative review of this decision must include information required under 43 CFR 3165.3(b) (State Director Review), including all supporting documentation. Such a request must be filed in writing with the State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office, 440 W., 200 S. Suite 500 Salt Lake City, Utah, 84101-1345, within 20 business days of the date this Decision is received or considered to have been received.

If you wish to file a petition for stay, the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

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

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze Newfield Production Company's (Newfield) proposed 20-acre infill development and water flood projects within the Greater Monument Butte Unit (GMBU). The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result from the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives to the Proposed Action. The EA assists the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any "significant" impacts could result from the analyzed actions. "Significance" is defined by NEPA and is found in regulation 40 CFR (Code of Federal Register) 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a statement of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A FONSI statement documents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in "significant" environmental impacts (effects). If the decision maker determines that this project has "significant" impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record (DR) would be signed for the EA approving the selected alternative, whether the Proposed Action or another alternative.

During past development of the GMBU, wells were distributed on 40-acre downhole spacing with one well being analyzed per pad. But, since oil and gas reservoirs in the GMBU are contained in low permeability, tight sand formations, production from these reservoirs is hindered by the formations' capability to allow oil and gas to flow to the wellbore. Therefore, to cost-effectively drain a reservoir, additional infill wells must be drilled to increase access to the formation and water must be injected into the older unproductive wells to "push" the oil and gas towards the producing wells in order to optimize recovery of oil and gas from these reservoirs. Newfield has applied directionally drill 3 wells from 2 existing well pads located in:

Section 6, Township 9 South, Range 17 East  
Section 5, Township 9 South, Range 18 East

The wells would be located within Newfield's GMBU, approximately 7 miles southeast of Myton, Utah. The objective for this project is to increase oil recovery from their leases by attaining 20-acre downhole spacing in the GMBU, while minimizing or mitigating to the extent feasible the environmental impacts associated with such development.

## 1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

BLM's need is to respond to the applicant's proposal. BLM's purpose is to allow Newfield to develop its existing Federal leases in order to meet domestic demands for oil while also preventing undue and unnecessary degradation to public land. Development of oil and gas resources is consistent with the mission of the BLM. The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (MLA), as amended and its implementing regulations are to allow lessees or potential lessees to explore for oil and gas or other mineral reserves on Federally-administered lands. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) mandates that the BLM manage public lands on the basis of multiple use [43 U.S.C. § 1701(a)(7)], and that lease rights must be permitted in a manner that assures adequate protection of other resource values. Minerals are identified as one of the principal uses of public lands in Section 103 of FLPMA [43 U.S.C. § 1702(c)].

## 1.2 LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

The management of BLM public lands and resources within the Project Area is directed and guided by the *Vernal Field Office Approved RMP and Record of Decision (RMP/ROD)* (BLM 2008). Although the proposed action is not specifically mentioned in the RMP, it is consistent with its goals and objectives, particularly the following:

- Meet local and national non-renewable and renewable energy and other public mineral needs. (p. 97)
- The BLM recognizes that not all activities authorized by implementation of the Approved RMP will comply with *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*. All authorized activities will require reclamation and rehabilitation to ensure sustainability and productivity of the site. (p. 65)

The RMP ROD recognizes the valid existing rights connected with oil and gas leases that were issued prior to approval of the existing RMP (RMP/ROD p. 21), such as leases in the GMBU. Also, under the no action alternative, oil and gas development within the Castle Peak and Eightmile Flat project area would still be permitted as authorized in the *Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Castle Peak and Eightmile Flat Oil and Gas Expansion Project* (2005). The no action alternative is also consistent with the objectives and goals of the RMP.

## 1.3 RELATION TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PLANS

The Project Area lands were leased for oil or gas development under authority of the MLA, as modified by the FLMPA, the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987, and the Energy Policy Act of 2005. A lessee/operator has the right to explore for oil and gas on its leases as specified in 43 CFR §3101.1-2, and if a discovery is made, to produce oil and/or natural gas for economic gain, so long as those operations are conducted in conformance with the lease terms and 43 CFR §3160.

There is no comprehensive State of Utah plan for the vicinity of the Proposed Action. The State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) have leased much of the nearby State land for oil and gas production. Because the objectives of SITLA are to produce funding for the State school system, and because production on Federal leases could further interest in drilling on state leases in the area, it is assumed that the alternatives analyzed, except the No Action Alternative, are consistent with the objectives of the State.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the both the Duchesne County General Plan (Duchesne County as amended in 2012) and the Uintah County General Plan (Uintah County as amended in 2011), which encompasses the Project Area. The county plans contain specific policy statements addressing public lands (i.e. multiple-use, resource use and development, access, and wildlife management). In general, the county plans indicate support for development proposals, such as the Proposed Action, through its emphasis of multiple-use of public land management practices, responsible use, and optimum utilization of public land resources. The counties, through their plans, support the development of natural resources as they become available or as new technology allows.

Threatened, endangered, and sensitive species in or near the Project Area are managed in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Migratory Bird Act of 1918, and the BLM Special Status Species Manual 6840. The Proposed Action and alternatives carried through in this assessment are in compliance with these Acts, and Manual.

The proposed action is also consistent with the Record of Decision of the *Environmental Impact Statement Castle Peak and Eightmile Flat Oil and Gas Expansion Project Newfield Rocky Mountains Inc.* (2005 EIS), which analyzed a well field development scenario similar to the proposed. After drilling approximately half the wells approved, in 2009 Newfield began concentrating the remaining undrilled wells into already developed areas using existing well pads, thereby reducing impacts to resources of concern. This analysis is tiered to the 2005 EIS.

The Proposed Action is also consistent with the Record of Decision of the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Veg-EIS) (BLM 2007). Action 6A of Objective 6 of the Veg-EIS is to: "Control and manage invasive and noxious weed infestations using principles of integrated weed management including chemical, mechanical, and biological control methods. An approved Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) is required for all planned herbicide applications (on BLM managed lands)." Section 12.4 of Newfield's Standard Operating Practices for the Greater Monument Butte Green River Development Program (Newfield GMBU SOP) (Newfield 2008) states that "A Pesticide Use Proposal will be submitted and approved prior to the application of herbicides or pesticides. Since the Veg-EIS constitutes "national guidance", herbicides used in any approved PUP will be limited to the 14 active ingredients; at or below the maximum rates analyzed within the Veg-EIS or label maximum, whichever is less; listed in Table 1 of the Veg-EIS Record of Decision.

## **1.4 IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES**

A BLM interdisciplinary team reviewed the proposed action and identified the following resources as being potentially impacted by implementation of the proposed action. The Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist in **Appendix A** documents all resources considered, including those resources which were determined to be "Not Present" (NP) or "Not Impacted" (NI), with a rationale for that determination.

### **1.4.1 AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Issue 1: Emissions from earth-moving equipment, vehicle traffic, drilling and completion activities, separators, oil storage tanks, dehydration units, and daily tailpipe and fugitive dust emissions would adversely affect air quality.

Issue 2: Emissions associated with the proposed action may contribute greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

### **1.4.2 LIVESTOCK GRAZING AND RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS**

Issue: The proposed project will create additional ground disturbance and fragmentation of the allotments which may impact both the livestock operation as well as rangeland health.

### **1.4.4 WILDLIFE, INCLUDING THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Issue: Pumping water from the Green River results in a water depletion and the potential for entrapment of larval fish, both of which could adversely affect listed fish species.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

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BLM resource specialists reviewed Newfield's Proposed Action and assessed the type and magnitude of potential impacts to the Project Area. Based on this review, the following alternatives were developed for analysis in this EA:

- Alternative A – Proposed Action: This alternative outlines the action Newfield proposes to take in order to drill 3 directional wells from 2 existing well pads.
- Alternative B – No Action Alternative: Analysis of this alternative provides a baseline for the impact analysis.

These alternatives are discussed in detail in this chapter.

### 2.1 ALTERNATIVE A - PROPOSED ACTION

Due to the extensive amount of pre-existing development via vertical drilling in the Project Area, Newfield has gained an intricate understanding of the sub-surface formations and associated pay zones. Based upon this knowledge, Newfield is able to target additional pay zones via directional drilling in a technically and economically feasible manner, with lower risks for missing these targets.

Specifically, Newfield's Proposed Action includes the following primary components:

- Directional drilling of up to 3 oil wells from 2 existing well pads. The reserve pit on one well pad would be reopened, resulting in approximately 0.15 acres of redisturbance and 0.1 acre of temporary use area. The other pad would be expanded by 0.29 acres to accommodate a closed loop drilling system. Approximately half of the expansion would occur in areas previously disturbed.

Construction activities would follow guidelines described in the "Gold Book," Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Extraction and Development 4th Edition (Gold Book) (BLM and USFS 2007), as appropriate. **Table 2.1** summarizes the proposed wells.

#### 2.1.1 WELL PAD CONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION

As mentioned previously, Newfield plans to utilize 2 existing well pads in order to drill 3 proposed wells. One reserve pit (0.15 acre) would be reopened. Prior to digging each reserve pit, the existing topsoil and any existing vegetation would be cleared and topsoil would be stockpiled at predetermined storage sites (i.e., areas where original soil piles were located).

Prior to drilling operations, the reserve pit would be lined with a protective felt liner and 16-millimeter thick synthetic reinforced liner. The pit liner would overlap the pit walls and be covered with dirt and/or rocks to secure it in place. The pit liner would be resistant to deterioration by hydrocarbons. The reserve pit would be fenced to prevent access by wildlife and unauthorized personnel. The reserve pit fencing would be installed on three sides during drilling operations and on the fourth side when the rig moves off location and until the pit is backfilled.

**Table 2.1 Proposed Wells**

Well	Host Location	Pit Redisturbance	Pad Expansion	TUA	Total Surface Disturbance (acres)
126-6-9-17	33-6-9-17	CL	0.29		0.29
Q-5-9-18	11-5-9-18	0.15	0.05	0.1	0.30
N-5-9-18					
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.59</b>

**2.1.2 ACCESS ROADS**

Existing roads would be utilized to access the proposed drilling locations and no upgrades would be required. All County road maintenance activities implemented by Newfield would be coordinated with Duchesne and Uintah Counties, as appropriate. Utilized roads would be maintained in good repair during all drilling, completion, and production operations. All required road upgrades would follow guidelines described in the Gold Book (BLM and USFS 2007).

**2.1.3 DRILLING OPERATIONS**

Wells would be drilled utilizing a conventional, mechanically-powered mobile drilling rig. The exact type and size of drilling rig would be dependent upon rig availability at the time of project implementation. Newfield anticipates that no more than one drilling rig would be operating in the Project Area at any one time. Each well would take approximately 5 days to drill.

The proposed wells would target sandstone intervals within the Green River Formation and the average depth of each well would be approximately 6,300 feet. Any shallow water zones encountered during drilling would be isolated by both casing and cement. All potentially productive hydrocarbon zones would be cemented and tested. The casing and cementing program would be designed to isolate and protect the shallower formations encountered in the well bore and to prohibit pressure communication or fluid migration between zones. In addition, the cement would protect the well by preventing formation pressure from damaging the casing and retarding corrosion by minimizing contact between the casing and formation fluids. The type of casing used and the depth to which it is set would depend upon the physical characteristics of the formations that are drilled. Surface casing would be installed to protect near-surface aquifers. Production casing would subsequently be installed to the total depth. All casing would be new or reconditioned and tested in accordance with applicable regulations. Site-specific descriptions of drilling procedures are included in the Applications for Permits to Drill (APDs) previously submitted to the BLM.

**2.1.4 WELL COMPLETION AND PRODUCTION**

If drilled wells indicate economic potential, completion operations would commence. Completion operations would involve setting production casing to the total drilled depth and perforating the casing in target production zones, followed by hydraulically fracturing (fracing) the productive formation under high pressure. The fracing material would likely contain sand or other proppant material to keep the fractures open, thereby allowing hydrocarbons to flow more freely into the casing. The next phase would be to flow and test the well to determine rates of production. Completion and testing would take approximately 18 days per well.

Should testing suggest the potential for commercial production, facilities including a wellhead, pumping unit, separator, dehydrator, and condensate tanks would be installed at each location. All permanent (on

site for 6 months or longer) structures constructed or installed would be painted Covert Green. All facilities would be painted within 6 months of installation.

Periodically, a workover or recompletion on a well may be required to ensure that efficient production is maintained. Workovers can include repairs to the well bore equipment (casing, tubing, rods, or pump), the wellhead, or the production facilities. These repairs would usually be completed in 7 days per well, during daylight hours. The frequency for this type of work cannot be accurately projected because workovers vary by well; however, an average work time may be one workover per well per year after about five years of production. In the case of a recompletion, where the wellbore casing is worked on or valves and fittings are replaced to stimulate production, all byproducts would be stored in tanks and hauled from the location. For workover operations, it may be necessary to rework the existing surface location to accommodate equipment. At the completion of the work, the surface location would be regraded to pre-work contours and reclaimed.

### **2.1.5 WATER**

#### ***Water Supply***

Newfield anticipates that water would be used for dust suppression during construction and operational activities for a small percentage of the proposed project. Use of water for dust suppression would typically be performed under hot, windy, and/or dry conditions, and would depend on soil types and the moisture content of soils where activities are taking place. Dust suppression would most commonly be implemented during the summer months. Water-based dust abatement would be implemented using standard commercial water trucks, which hold approximately 130 barrels (bbls) of water (0.017 acre-feet).

Newfield assumes that approximately 1,000 bbls (0.13 acre-feet) of water would be needed annually for dust suppression per well pad and associated access road during project operation. Based on these assumptions, Newfield would use approximately 0.26 acre-feet of water per year for dust abatement during production, or a total of 5.2 to 7.8 acre-feet of water for dust suppression during operations over the 20 to 30 year life of the project. All or part of this water usage was probably disclosed/accounted for when analyzing impacts for drilling the host wells.

Typically, 13,500 bbls (1.75 acre-feet) of water would be required to drill and complete an individual Green River Formation well, so total water use for drilling and completion of all 3 wells would be about 5.25 acre-feet.

Water for drilling the proposed wells would come from an underground water well (Johnson Water District - Water Right 43-10136), Neil Moon Pond (Water Right 43-11787), Tributary to Pleasant Valley Wash (Maurice Harvey Pond - Water Right 47-1358), or the Green River (Newfield Collector Well - Water Right 47-1817). Water would be hauled by a licensed trucking company. Water wells would not be drilled on the leases.

#### ***Produced Water Disposal***

Upon completion of a productive well, all produced water would be confined to a steel storage tank. If the production water meets water quality standards, it would then be transported to the Ashley, Monument Butte, Jonah, South Wells Draw, or Beluga water injection facilities by company or contract trucks unless and until the well is serviced by a flowline. The produced water would then be injected into approved Class II wells to enhance Newfield's secondary recovery water flood project. Water not meeting water quality standards would be disposed of at Newfield's Pariette No. 4 disposal well (Section 7, T9S R19E). Federally approved surface disposal facilities or at State of Utah approved surface disposal facilities (Newfield 2008).

### **2.1.6 NOXIOUS WEEDS**

Newfield will control noxious weeds along access roads, pipelines, well sites, or other applicable facilities. Any invasive or noxious weed outbreaks directly attributed to the activities of Newfield will be the responsibility of Newfield to control. On BLM administered lands, a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) will be submitted and approved prior to the application of herbicides or other pesticides or possibly hazardous chemicals. (Newfield 2008)

### **2.1.7 WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Drill cuttings would be contained and buried in the reserve pit. Drilling fluids, including salts and chemicals, would be contained in the reserve pit. In accordance with Onshore Order No. 7, the surface of the pit will be kept reasonably free of from surface accumulation of liquid hydrocarbons and immediately upon well completion, any hydrocarbons would be removed (Newfield 2008). Any oil that accumulates in the pit will be handled in accordance with 43 CFR 3160.7-1(b). Drilling fluids would be removed from the pit within 120 days of completion (Newfield 2008).

No hazardous wastes (as defined in 40 CFR 355 or subject to reporting under SARA Title III) would be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of annually in association with the drilling, testing, or completing of this well (Newfield 2008).

Self-contained, chemical portable toilets would be provided for human waste disposal. Upon completion of operations, or as needed, the toilet holding tanks would be pumped and the contents disposed of in the nearest, approved, sewage disposal facility.

Garbage, trash, and other waste materials would be collected in portable, self-contained, fully enclosed trash cages during operations. Accumulated trash would be disposed of at an authorized sanitary landfill. Trash would not be burned on location.

All debris and other waste materials not contained in the trash cage would be cleaned up and removed from the location promptly after removal of the completion rig, weather permitting.

### **2.1.8 SPILL PROCEDURES**

As each new well is completed, Newfield would update their field-wide existing Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plans. If spills of condensate, produced water, or other fluids were to occur in reportable amounts, as defined in BLM Notice to Lessees (NTL) 3A, Newfield or their contractors or sub-contractors would immediately contact the BLM and any other regulatory agencies (e.g., EPA National Response Center, State of Utah) as required by law or regulation. Strict cleanup efforts would be initiated immediately.

### **2.1.9 RECLAMATION.**

#### **Interim Reclamation**

Interim reclamation will begin within 6 months of well completion. Interim reclamation activities will consist of spreading the stockpiled topside around the perimeter and areas of the well not needed for active operations. The topsoil seed will be broadcast and harrowed or drilled into the soil in the fall time period of August 1 to ground freezing. The well pad will not be ripped or recontoured as part of interim reclamation.

Interim reclamation monitoring will be conducted as directed by the authorized office with the objective of restoring a sufficient vegetative cover to maintain active topsoil and control erosion.

#### Reserve Pit Reclamation

Reserve pits shall be reclaimed within 120 days for the date of well completion, weather permitting. Before any dirt work occurs the pit shall be as dry as possible. If a synthetic, nylon-reinforced liner is used, the excess liner will be cut and removed and the remaining liner torn and perforated while backfilling the reserve pit. Alternatively, the pit will be pumped dry, the liner folded into the pit and buried to a minimum of four (4) feet deep.

Reclamation will be completed by 1) recontouring the surface to the approximate natural contours and spreading topsoil over the disturbed areas; 2) seeding the topsoil. The topsoil seed will be broadcast and harrowed into the soil or drilled into the soil in the fall time of August 1 to ground freezing.

#### *Final Reclamation of Well Locations at the End of Project Life*

Final reclamation of well locations and roads would take place within 180 days after the last well on the pad is plugged and abandoned. All production equipment and surface pipeline would be removed and the well locations, access roads, and other disturbed areas would be restored to their approximate original condition. All well casings would be cut off and capped according to BLM requirements. The cap would be welded in place and the well location and identity would be permanently inscribed on the cap. The cap would also be constructed with a weep hole. If requested, GPS coordinates of the cap would be provided to the BLM. Well locations, associated roads that would no longer be used, and other disturbed areas would be restored as near as practical to their original condition. All disturbed areas would be re-contoured to the approximate natural contours.

*Reseeding:* Reclaimed areas would be seeded with following stock seed mixture obtained from Utah Seed. The mix is certified free of noxious weeds. (Foote 2013)

**Table 2.2 Interim and Pipeline Seed Mixture**

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Latin Name</b>	<b>Lbs/acre</b>
<b>Grasses</b>		
Squirreltail Bottlebrush	<i>Elymus elymoides</i>	2.44
Snake River Wheatgrass	<i>Elymus wawawaiensis</i>	2.22
Siberian Wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron fragile</i>	2.13
Indian Ricegrass	<i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>	2.07
Galleta Grass	<i>Pleuraphis jamesii</i>	1.56
Needle & Threadgrass	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>	1.20
<b>Forbs</b>		
Blue Flax	<i>Linum Lewisii</i>	0.27
Munro Globemallow	<i>Sphaeralcea munroana</i>	0.27
<b>Shrubs</b>		
Mat Saltbrush	<i>Atriplex corrugata</i>	4.76
Fourwing Saltbrush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	4.55
Shadscale Saltbrush	<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>	4.35
Gardner Saltbrush	<i>Atriplex gardnerii</i>	4.35
Greasewood	<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>	0.56
Black Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia nova</i>	0.30
Rubber Rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	0.28

<b>Total</b>		<b>31.31</b>
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In addition, if reclamation occurs in the spring or summer sterile barley is planted to compete with weeds, stabilize the soil and act as a mulch for the emerging perennials.

#### **2.1.10 APPLICANT-COMMITTED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES**

The following applicant-committed environmental protection measures (ACEPMs) would be applied to all activities on BLM lands within the Project Area.

##### **2.1.10.1 Cultural Resources**

- Newfield is responsible for informing all persons in the area who are associated with this project that they may be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.

#### **2.2 ALTERNATIVE B - NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed infill project would not be approved. Selection of this alternative would not preclude other oil and gas activities or proposals within the Project Area. The host well pads would continue to exist until the wells on those pads are plugged.

#### **2.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS**

No other alternatives were identified by the BLM.

## 3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

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This section discusses the physical, biological, and social factors, as they currently exist within the Project Area. All resources considered during preparation of this EA are listed in **Appendix A**, the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist. Resources that were considered but dismissed from further analysis are also listed in **Appendix A**. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in **Chapter 4**.

Mineral extraction activities, transportation corridors, agricultural and ranching activities, livestock grazing, and erosion have historically affected the project area. The geology of the Project Area consists of Tertiary Eocene member B of the Uinta formation and some Quaternary Holocene undivided Piedmont alluvium. The soils range from fine sandy loam to extremely channery loam that is shallow to moderately deep and well drained, with rocky material on the surface and with a number of rocky outcrops in some locations. The vegetation community types of the proposed well locations include desert shrub, black sagebrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, and badland. Terrain is generally flat, with rolling hills and drainages in some locations. Average annual precipitation ranges from 8 to 12 inches.

### 3.1 AIR QUALITY INCLUDING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The Project Area is located in the Uinta Basin, a semiarid, mid-continental climate regime typified by dry, windy conditions, limited precipitation and wide seasonal temperature variations. The Uinta Basin is subject to abundant sunshine and rapid nighttime cooling. Existing point and area sources of air pollution within the Uinta Basin include the following:

- Exhaust emissions (primarily CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and HAPs) from existing natural gas fired compressor engines used in transportation of natural gas in pipelines;
- Natural gas dehydrator still-vent emissions of CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and HAPs;
- Gasoline and diesel-fueled vehicle tailpipe emissions of VOCs, NO<sub>x</sub>, CO, SO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>;
- Oxides of sulfur (SO<sub>x</sub>), NO<sub>x</sub>, fugitive dust emissions from coal-fired power plants, and coal mining/ processing;
- Fugitive dust (in the form of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) from vehicle traffic on unpaved roads, wind erosion in areas of soil disturbance, and road sanding during winter months; and,
- Long-range transport of pollutants from distant sources.

The Uinta Basin is designated as unclassified/attainment by the EPA under the Clean Air Act. This classification indicates that the concentration of criteria pollutants in the ambient air is below National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), or that adequate air monitoring is not available to determine attainment. NAAQS are standards that have been set for the purpose of protecting human health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety. Pollutants for which standards have been set include ground level ozone, (O<sub>3</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>) or 2.5 microns in diameter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). Airborne particulate matter (PM) consists of tiny coarse-mode (PM<sub>10</sub>) or fine-mode (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) particles or aerosols combined with dust, dirt, smoke, and liquid droplets. PM<sub>2.5</sub> is derived primarily from the incomplete combustion of fuel sources and secondarily formed aerosols, whereas PM<sub>10</sub> is primarily from crushing, grinding, or abrasion of surfaces. **Table 3-1** lists ambient air quality background values for the Uinta Basin and NAAQS standards.

Table 3.1. Ambient Air Quality Background Values

Pollutant	Averaging Period(s)	Uinta Basin Background Concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )	NAAQS ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )
SO <sub>2</sub>	Annual	0.8 <sup>2</sup>	-- <sup>1</sup>
	24-hour	3.9 <sup>2</sup>	-- <sup>1</sup>
	3-hour	10.1 <sup>2</sup>	1,300
	1-hour	19.0 <sup>2</sup>	197
NO <sub>2</sub>	Annual	8.1 <sup>3</sup>	100
	1-hour	60.2 <sup>3</sup>	188
PM <sub>10</sub>	Annual	7.0 <sup>4</sup>	-- <sup>6</sup>
	24-hour	16.0 <sup>4</sup>	150
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Annual	9.4 <sup>3</sup>	15
	24-hour	17.8 <sup>3</sup>	35
CO	8-hour	3,450 <sup>4</sup>	10,000
CO	1-hour	6,325 <sup>4</sup>	40,000
O <sub>3</sub>	8-hour	100.0 <sup>3,5</sup>	75
1 – The 24-hour and annual SO <sub>2</sub> NAAQS have been revoked by USEPA 2 – Based on 2009 data from Wamsutter Monitoring Station Data (USEPA AQS Database) 3 – Based on 2010/2011 data from Redwash Monitoring Station (USEPA AQS Database) 4 – Based on 2006 data disclosed in the Greater Natural Buttes FEIS. (BLM, 2012) 5 – Ozone is measured in parts per billion (ppb) 6 – The annual PM <sub>10</sub> NAAQS has been revoked by USEPA			

Two year-round air quality monitoring sites were established in summer 2009 near Red Wash (southeast of Vernal, Utah) and Ouray (southwest of Vernal). The monitors were certified as Federal Reference Monitors in fall of 2011. These monitors can be used to make NAAQS compliance determinations. The complete EPA Ouray and Redwash monitoring data can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/airexplorer/index.htm>

Both monitoring sites have recorded numerous exceedences of the 8-hour ozone standard during the winter months (January through March 2010, 2011 and 2013). It is thought that high concentrations of ozone are being formed under a “cold pool” process. This process occurs when stagnate air conditions form with very low mixing heights under clear skies, with snow-covered ground, and abundant sunlight. These conditions, combined with area precursor emissions (NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs), can create intense episodes of ozone. These episodes didn’t occur in Jan-March 2012 due to lack of snow cover. This phenomenon has also been observed in similar locations in Wyoming. Winter ozone formation is a newly recognized issue, and the methods of analyzing and managing this problem are still being developed. Existing photochemical models are currently unable to reliably replicate winter ozone formation. This is due to the very low mixing heights associated with unique meteorology of the ambient conditions. Further research is needed to definitively identify ozone precursor sources that contribute to observed ozone concentrations.

The Castlepeak-Eightmile Flat EIS (BLM, 2005) analyzed air quality impacts, including estimates of VOC and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, for existing and future activities in the Greater Monument Butte Unit. A VOC and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions inventory of Newfield’s existing operations was completed to determine if emissions associated with current and near future infrastructure, drilling, and production is within the scope of the Castlepeak-Eightmile Flat EIS. As shown in **Table 3-2**, and due to changing technology, the current emissions for the Greater Monument Butte Unit are within the scope of the referenced EIS.

Table 3.2. Greater Monument Butte Unit Emissions

Source	Source Subset	VOC Emissions (tons per year)	NO <sub>x</sub> Emissions (tons per year)
<b>EIS Predicted Emissions</b>	Existing Permitted Infrastructure	108	230
	Drilling <sup>1</sup>	45	568
	Production	1,037	4,311
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>5,109</b>
<b>Infrastructure Emissions</b>	Current	57	202
	Proposed to 2014	18	80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Drill Rig Emissions</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>129<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Production Emissions</b>	Pumpjack Engines <sup>3</sup>	125	1,003
	Natural Gas Fueled Burners	59	488
	Stock Tanks	557	--
	<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>1,491</b>
<b>Total Current Emissions</b>		<b>845</b>	<b>1,902</b>

1 - Assumed six Tier 0 rigs drilling 130 wells per year at an engine load factor of 0.47.  
2 - Assumes three Tier II rigs drilling 200 wells per year at an engine load factor of 0.47.  
3 - Based upon 1.8 tons per year NO<sub>x</sub> and 0.58 tons per year VOC per engine.

The UDAQ conducted limited monitoring of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in Vernal, Utah in December 2006. During the 2006-2007 winter season, PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels were higher than the PM<sub>2.5</sub> health standards that became effective in December 2006. The PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels recorded in Vernal were similar to other areas in northern Utah that experience wintertime inversions. The most likely causes of elevated PM<sub>2.5</sub> at the Vernal monitoring station are those common to other areas of the western U.S. (combustion and dust) plus nitrates and organics from oil and gas activities in the Basin. PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring that has been conducted in the vicinity of oil and gas operations in the Uinta Basin by the Red Wash and Ouray monitors beginning in summer 2009 have not recorded any exceedences of either the 24 hour or annual NAAQS.

HAPs are pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects, such as reproductive effects or birth defects, or adverse environmental impacts. The EPA has classified 187 air pollutants as HAPs. Examples of listed HAPs associated with the oil and gas industry include formaldehyde, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, isomers of xylene (BTEX) compounds, and normal-hexane (n-hexane). There are no applicable Federal or State of Utah ambient air quality standards for assessing potential HAP impacts to human health.

### Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse gases keep the planet's surface warmer than it otherwise would be. However, as concentrations of these gases increase the Earth's temperature is climbing above past levels. According to NOAA and NASA data, the Earth's average surface temperature has increased by about 1.2 to 1.4° F in the last 100 years. The eight warmest years on record (since 1850) have all occurred since 1998, with the warmest year being 1998. However, according to the British Meteorological Office's Hadley Centre (BMO 2009), the United Kingdom's foremost climate change research center, the mean global temperature has been relatively constant for the past nine years after the warming trend from 1950 through 2000. Predictions of the ultimate outcome of global warming remain to be seen.

The analysis of the Regional Climate Impacts prepared by the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) (2009) suggests that recent warming in the region (including the project area) was nationally

among the most rapid. Past records and future projections predict an overall increase in regional temperatures, largely in the form of warmer nights and effectively higher average daily minimum temperatures. They conclude that this warming is causing a decline in spring snowpack and reduced flows in the Colorado River. The USGCRP projects a region-wide decrease in precipitation, although with substantial variability in interannual conditions. For eastern Utah, the projections range from an approximate 5 percent decrease in annual precipitation to decreases as high as 40 percent of annual precipitation.

### 3.2 LIVESTOCK GRAZING & RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS

#### LIVESTOCK GRAZING:

The proposed project is located in the Antelope Powers and Castle Peak Allotments; used for cattle and Sheep grazing (see table below).

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Livestock Number	Livestock Kind	Begin	End	Type Use	AUMS
15879	ANTELOPE POWERS	220	CATTLE	10/01	5/01	ACTIVE	1541
15879	ANTELOPE POWERS	2207	SHEEP	10/01	5/01	ACTIVE	3091
05886	CASTLE PEAK	461	CATTLE	11/01	04/15	83 Active	2088

The allotments are primarily located within the semi-arid saltshrub ecosystem; undisturbed areas are characterized by native low-lying shrubs, grasses and forbs. Disturbed areas of the allotments are currently characterized by invasive weeds such as halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) and cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) as well as bare ground. The allotments are currently dissected by hundreds, possibly thousands, of miles of pipelines, roads and road spurs, as well as other infrastructure such as compressor stations, which characterize dense oil and gas development.

The current livestock operator of the Antelope Powers and Castle Peak allotments have been unable to utilize their full permitted AUMs within the allotments due to the current level of disturbance, fragmentation, daily traffic, development, and most recently, drought.

#### RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS:

Rangeland Health Standards were assessed for the Antelope Powers Allotment in 2008; the Determination of Rangeland Health was signed in 2010 and the allotment was considered to be meeting Rangeland Health Standards throughout the interspaces of oil and gas development areas. However, Rangeland Health Standards are scheduled to be done during the field season of 2014, due to a severe increase in oil and gas energy development throughout the allotment – as well as projected increases in development due to the ongoing Monument Butte Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Large portions of the vegetative surface have been removed and/or disturbed as a result of the development of oil and gas resources in the area.

Rangeland Health Standards were assessed for the Eight Mile Flat allotment in 2008. The allotment was meeting Rangeland Health requirements, although location # (Eight Mile 2) EM2 did not meet all criteria for biotic integrity, and invasive encroachment was determined to be moderate to extreme for halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*). The Eight Mile Flat Allotment is scheduled to be re-evaluated for Rangeland Health Standards during the 2013-14 field season.

### **3.5 FISH AND WILDLIFE; THREATENED, ENDANGERED, OR CANDIDATE SPECIES; AND MIGRATORY BIRDS**

#### ***Colorado River Fish Species***

The USFWS has identified four Federally listed fish species historically associated with the Upper Colorado River Basin, including the Green River: Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail, and razorback sucker. These fish are Federally and State-listed as endangered and have experienced severe population declines due to flow alterations, habitat loss or alteration, and introduction of non-native fish species. Portions of the Green River and its 100-year floodplain have been designated critical habitat for these four endangered fish species (USFWS 1994). The Project Area does not occur within critical habitat for the Colorado endangered fish species. The average downstream distance (following natural washes and drainages) from the Project Area to razorback sucker and Colorado pikeminnow habitat within the Green River is approximately 16 miles, and to humpback chub and bonytail chub habitat within the Green River is 51 miles. Three additional species are endemic to the Colorado River Basin, including the Green River: roundtail, flannelmouth sucker, and bluehead sucker. The roundtail chub is a State-listed threatened species, while the two suckers are species of special concern due to declining population numbers and distribution.

## 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

### 4.1 PROPOSED ACTION

This chapter describes the impacts that are anticipated to occur upon implementation of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives to the resources described in Chapter 3.

#### 4.1.1 AIR QUALITY INCLUDING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

This Proposed Action is considered to be a minor source under the Clean Air Act and is not controlled by regulatory agencies. At present, control technology is not required by regulatory agencies since the Uinta Basin is designated as unclassified/attainment. The Proposed Action would result in different emission sources associated with two project phases: well development and well production. Annual estimated emissions from the Proposed Action are summarized in **Table 4.1**.

**Table 4.1. New Wells Annual Emissions (tons/year)<sup>1</sup>**

Pollutant	Development	Production	Total
NO <sub>x</sub>	6.94	1.95	8.89
CO	2.20	3.67	5.87
VOC	0.66	3.67	4.33
SO <sub>2</sub>	0.04	0.01	0.04
PM <sub>10</sub>	0.81	10.86	11.67
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	0.20	1.20	1.40
Benzene	0.00	0.01	0.01
Toluene	0.00	0.01	0.01
Ethylbenzene	0.00	0.00	0.00
Xylene	0.00	0.00	0.00
n-Hexane	0.00	0.00	0.00
Formaldehyde	0.00	0.08	0.08

<sup>1</sup> Emissions include development and production from 3 wells and associated operations traffic during the year in which the project is developed.

Well development includes NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and CO tailpipe emissions from earth-moving equipment, vehicle traffic, drilling, and completion activities. Fugitive dust concentrations would occur from vehicle traffic on unpaved roads and from wind erosion where soils are disturbed. Drill rig and fracturing engine operations would result mainly in NO<sub>x</sub> and CO emissions, with lesser amounts of SO<sub>2</sub>. These emissions would be short-term during the drilling and completion phases.

During well production, continuous NO<sub>x</sub>, CO, VOC, and HAP emissions would originate from well pad separators, condensate storage tank vents, and daily tailpipe and fugitive dust emissions from operations traffic. Road dust (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) would also be produced by vehicles servicing the wells.

Under the proposed action, emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC, ozone precursors from the producing wells would be 8.89 tons/yr for NO<sub>x</sub> and 4.33 tons/yr of VOC (**Table 4-1**). Emissions would be dispersed and/or diluted to the extent where any local ozone impacts from the Proposed Action would be indistinguishable from background conditions.

The primary sources of HAPs are from oil storage tanks and smaller amounts from other production equipment. Small amounts of HAPs are emitted by construction equipment. These emissions are estimated to be minor and less than 1 ton per year.

### **Greenhouse Gases**

The assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change remains in its earliest stages of formulation. Applicable EPA rules do not require any controls and have yet to establish any emission limits related to GHG emissions or impacts. The lack of scientific models that predict climate change on regional or local level prohibits the quantification of potential future impacts of decisions made at the local level, particularly for small scale projects such as the Proposed Action. Drilling and development activities from the Proposed Action are anticipated to release a negligible amount of greenhouse gases into the local air-shed.

### **Mitigation:**

1. All internal combustion equipment shall be kept in good working order.
2. Water or other approved dust suppressants will be used at construction sites and along roads, as determined appropriate by the Authorized Officer. Dust suppressant such as magnesium chloride or fresh water may be used, as needed, during the drilling phase.
3. Open burning of garbage or refuse shall not occur at well sites or other facilities.
4. Drill rigs shall be equipped with Tier II or better diesel engines.
5. Low bleed pneumatics will be installed on separator dump valves and other controllers.
6. During completion, no venting can occur, and flaring will be limited as much as possible. Production equipment and gathering lines will be installed as soon as possible.
7. Telemetry will be installed to remotely monitor and control production.
8. When feasible, two or more rigs (including drilling and completion rigs) will not be run simultaneously within 200 meters of each other. If two or more rigs must be run simultaneously within 200 meters of each other, then effective public health buffer zones out to 200 meters (m) from the nearest emission source will be implemented. Examples of an effective public health protection buffer zone include the demarcation of a public access exclusion zone by signage at intervals of every 250 feet that is visible from a distance of 125 feet during daylight hours, and a physical buffer such as active surveillance to ensure the property is not accessible by the public during drilling operations. Alternatively, the proponent may demonstrate compliance with the 1-hour NO<sub>2</sub> National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) with appropriate and accepted near-field modeling. As part of this demonstration, the proponent may propose alternative mitigation that could include but is not limited to natural gas-fired drill rigs, installation of NO<sub>x</sub> controls, time/use restrictions, and/or drill rig spacing.
9. All new and replacement internal combustion gas field engines of less than or equal to 300 design-rated horse power must not emit more than 2 grams of NO<sub>x</sub> per horsepower-hour. This requirement does not apply to gas field engines of less than or equal to 40 design-rated horsepower-hour.
10. All new and replacement internal combustion gas field engines of greater than 300 design rated horsepower must not emit more than 1.0 grams of NO<sub>x</sub> per horsepower-hour.
11. Green completions will be used for all well completion activities where technically feasible.
12. Employ enhanced VOC emission controls with 95% control efficiency on production equipment having a potential to emit greater than 5 tons per year.

### **4.1.3 LIVESTOCK GRAZING & RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS**

#### **LIVESTOCK GRAZING**

The Antelope Powers and Castle Peak Allotments have been impacted by full field energy development. Past reclamation within the allotments has been relatively unsuccessful. The large amount of fragmentation, disturbance and forage loss throughout the allotments has led to multiple years of moderate to minimal use by the current grazing permittees.

Under the Proposed Action approximately 0.59 acres of surface disturbance would occur. The allotments would continue to be used below authorized levels due to the increase in the amount of disturbance. The increase in disturbance and development activity, although slated for ancillary reclamation usually increases weed vegetation and general fragmentation of the landscape, which continues to hinder livestock operations. Therefore, both direct (loss of forage, invasive weeds, etc.) and indirect (increase in vehicle traffic, landscape fragmentation, etc.) impacts affect the livestock grazing operation on the allotments.

#### **RANGELAND HEALTH**

Rangeland Health assessments have been done on the allotments. Throughout the last few years energy development has continued to boom in the area through the implementation of the Castlepeak-Eightmile Flat EIS ROD. There has been a large increase in the level of disturbance as a result of oil and gas development in the area. Impacts from large amounts of disturbance and fragmentation contribute to factors (weeds, bare ground, shifts in ecological community structure, erosion, etc.) that often lead to areas not meeting rangeland health.

Under the Proposed Action approximately 0.59 acres of new surface disturbance would occur. This would contribute to soil loss, weed invasion, and continued fragmentation of grazing allotments, affecting livestock movement patterns and forage availability.

Although, much of the disturbed landscape is slated for reclamation; those efforts have not proven to be highly successful within the area for rangeland forage. Therefore, it is assumed that ecological impacts are continuing to occur which has the potential to directly and indirectly affect Rangeland Health Standards.

### **4.1.4 FISH AND WILDLIFE; THREATENED, ENDANGERED, OR CANDIDATE SPECIES; AND MIGRATORY BIRDS**

#### ***Colorado River Fish Species***

The Proposed Action would result in 5.51 acre-feet of water depletion from removal of water from the Upper Colorado River Drainage System for construction and drilling operations. Water depletions reduce the ability of the river to create and maintain the primary constituent elements that define critical habitats.

Water depletions from the Upper Colorado River Drainage System, along with a number of other factors, have resulted in such drastic reductions in the populations of the Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail, and razorback sucker that the USFWS has listed these species as endangered and has implemented programs to prevent them from becoming extinct.

Food supply, predation, and competition are also important elements of the biological environment. Food supply is a function of nutrient supply and productivity, which could be limited by reduction of high spring flows brought about by water depletions. Predation and competition from nonnative fish species have been identified as factors in the decline of the endangered fishes. Water depletions contribute to alterations in flow regimes that favor nonnative fishes.

The potential exists for water intake structures placed in the Upper Colorado River Drainage System (flowing rivers and streams) to result in mortality to eggs, larvae, young-of-the-year, and juvenile life stages. BLM and their applicants would minimize this potential by following applicant committed conservation measures (listed below and in **Chapter 2**). Key habitat components for foraging or cover may be removed or altered due to equipment, including decreased water quantity for aquatic species from dewatering during low flow periods.

Therefore, the Proposed Action would have a “*may affect, likely to adversely affect*” determination for the endangered Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail, and razorback sucker. The Proposed Action would also adversely affect the bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker, and the roundtail chub, but it is not likely to result in a trend toward the listing of the species. Water for drilling the proposed wells would come from an underground water well (Johnson Water District - Water Right 43-10136), Neil Moon Pond (Water Right 43-11787), Tributary to Pleasant Valley Wash (Maurice Harvey Pond - Water Right 47-1358), or the Green River (Newfield Collector Well - Water Right 47-1817). The Maurice Harvey Pond and Johnson Water District are historic depletions (permitted prior to January 1988). The USFWS addresses new and historic depletions differently under the Section 7 agreement of March 11, 1993. Historic depletions, regardless of size, do not pay a depletion fee to the Recovery Program. Also, consultation for historic depletions was conducted in association with that 1993 agreement.

*Mitigation:*

1. The best method to avoid entrainment is to pump from an off-channel location – one that does not connect to the river during high spring flows. An infiltration gallery constructed in a service approved location is best.
2. If the pump head is located in the river channel the following stipulations apply:
  - a. Do not situate the pump in a low-flow or no-flow area as these habitats tend to concentrate larval fishes.
  - b. Limit the amount of pumping, to the greatest extent possible, during that period of the year when larval fish may be present (April 1 to August 1).
  - c. Limit the amount of pumping, to the greatest extent possible, during the midnight hours (10 pm to 2 am), as larval drift studies indicate that this is a period of greatest daily activity. Dusk is the preferred pumping time, as larval drift abundance is lowest during this time.
3. Screen all pump intakes with 3/32” mesh material.
4. Approach velocities for intake structures should follow the National Marine Fisheries Service's document "fish screening criteria for anadromous salmonids". For projects with an in-stream intake that operate in stream reaches where larval fish may be present, the approach velocity should not exceed 0.33 feet per second (ft/s).
5. Report any fish impinged on the intake screen or entrained into irrigation canals to the service (801.975.3330) or the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources:

Northeastern Region  
318 N Vernal Ave,  
Vernal, UT 84078  
Phone: (435)781-9453

## **4.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

### **4.2.1 AIR QUALITY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed gas wells would not be drilled and the existing wells would not be converted to injection. There would be no emissions increases or reductions to air quality.

Effects on ambient air quality would continue at present levels from existing oil and gas development in the region and other emission producing sources. The host well pads would continue to exist until the wells on those pads are plugged. Dust and other emissions from the existing wells will continue at current higher levels because the liquids gathering system would not be installed.

#### **4.2.2 LIVESTOCK GRAZING & RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS**

Under the No Action alternative, there would be no additional contributions to the existing disturbance and fragmentation resulting in no change in impacts from the project to the allotments, to livestock grazing or Rangeland Health Standards.

#### **4.2.4 FISH AND WILDLIFE; THREATENED, ENDANGERED, OR CANDIDATE SPECIES; AND MIGRATORY BIRDS**

Under the No Action alternative, there would be no direct disturbance and mortality, indirect effects or cumulative effects to threatened, endangered, and proposed, candidate, or sensitive fish and wildlife species/habitat, migratory birds and non-listed wildlife from construction, drilling, and completion activities associated with the Proposed Action. However, the host well pads would continue to exist until the wells on those pads are plugged. Surface disturbance, human activity, displacement, and weed impacts will continue as a result of the maintenance of the existing wells, pads, roads, and pipelines.

## 5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ANALYSIS

Cumulative impacts are those impacts that result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, regardless of which agency or person undertakes such other actions.

Cumulative effects under the ESA include the effects of the future State, Tribal, local, or private actions that are reasonably certain to occur in the project area; future Federal actions that are unrelated to the Proposed Action are not required to be considered because they require separate consultation pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA. However, NEPA requires the full disclosure of all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities regardless of surface owner so this analysis includes future federal actions.

### 5.1 AIR QUALITY INCLUDING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The cumulative impact area for air quality is the Uinta Basin. The potential impact of the Proposed Action to Uinta Basin ozone levels cannot be accurately modeled due to limitations of the modeled monitors in detecting small projects such as this. The project was accounted for in the Greater Natural Buttes (GNB) air quality study, which is the most recent regional air model available for the Uinta Basin. The GNB Final EIS Section 5.3.1 model results are incorporated by reference and summarized below. The GNB Final EIS discloses that most of the cumulative emissions in the Uinta Basin are associated with oil and gas exploration and production activities. Consequently, past, present and reasonably foreseeable wells in the Uinta Basin are a part of the cumulative actions considered in this analysis. **Table 5.1** summarizes the 2006 Uinta Basin emissions as well as the incremental impact of this project's alternatives. The Proposed Action comprises a small percentage of the Uinta Basin emissions summary.

**Table 5.1. 2006 Uinta Basin Oil and Gas Operations Emissions Summary**

County	NO <sub>x</sub> (tpy)	CO (tpy)	SO <sub>x</sub> (tpy)	PM (tpy)	VOC (tpy)
Uintah	6,096	4,133	247	344	45,646
Carbon	995	814	22	40	2,747
Duchesne	3,053	2,448	96	173	19,019
Grand	337	207	16	22	2,360
Emery	273	199	9	14	453
<b>Uinta Basin Total</b>	<b>10,754</b>	<b>7,800</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>70,226</b>
Proposed Action Increment	2.22	3.76	0.01	10.89pm <sub>10</sub> 1.21pm <sub>2.5</sub>	3.69
No Action Increment	0	0	0	0pm <sub>10</sub> 0pm <sub>2.5</sub>	0

The GNB model predicted the following impacts to air quality and air quality related values for the GNB proposed action, which encompassed 3,675 new wells:

- Cumulative impacts from criteria pollutants to ambient air quality are well below the NAAQS at Class I airsheds and selected Class II areas;
- The incremental impacts to visibility would be virtually impossible to discern and would not contribute to regional haze at the Class I areas;
- The 2018 projected baseline emissions would result in impacts of 1.0 deciview for at least 201 days per year at the Class II areas;
- Discernible impacts at Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area and Dinosaur National Monument are anticipated under the GNB Final EIS proposed action;

- The GNB Final EIS proposed action would contribute less than 1 percent to the acid deposition in Class I areas, and 4.3 percent at the Flaming Gorge Class II area;
- Project-related acid deposition impacts at sensitive lakes were below the USFS screening threshold; and,
- Ozone levels are below the current ozone standard of 75 ppb for the fourth highest annual level in the Uinta Basin for the 2018 projected baseline, and the proposed action would be approximately 3.2 percent of the cumulative ozone impact within the Uinta Basin.

Based on the GNB model results, it is anticipated that the impact to ambient air quality and air quality related values associated with the Proposed Action would be indistinguishable from, and dwarfed by, the margin of uncertainty associated with the model and Uinta Basin emission inventory. The No Action alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

## 5.2 LIVESTOCK GRAZING & RANGELAND HEALTH STANDARDS

The cumulative impact analysis area (CIAA) for Rangeland Resources is the Antelope Powers, Castle Peak and Eight Mile Flat Allotments. The allotments include approximately 40,466, 51,824, 27,546 acres, respectively. Within the CIAA, negative impacts have occurred and continue to occur for grazing resources as a result of disturbance from oil and gas energy development. Invasive species such as: halogeton, tumbleweed, tumble mustard and cheatgrass usually dominate disturbed sites throughout the CIAA. The current landscape within the CIAA is heavily fragmented by hundreds of miles of surface pipelines, roads, well pads (abandoned and active), compressor stations, and other infrastructure typically associated with the oil and gas industry. Table 5.2 depicts existing disturbance. Cumulative existing disturbance for the CIAA is approximately 5,782 acres, including 453 miles of ancillary roads. The Proposed Action would contribute an additional 0.59 acres to the overall cumulative disturbance. The No Action alternative would not contribute additional disturbance impacts in the CIAA.

The amount of total surface disturbance reduces the available forage for livestock and wildlife within the allotments, and would continue to result in direct effects to grazing operation via probable AUM reductions as a direct result of forage loss and fragmentation. Surface impacts include increased traffic and landscape fragmentation and disturbance near water improvements that are specifically managed for livestock grazing.

**Table 5.2 Cumulative Disturbance for Livestock Grazing & Rangeland Health**

Type of Disturbance (11.10.2012)	Count	Acreage*	Other Metrics	Source
<b>Energy Development</b>				
Drilling Locations	54	270	NA	DOGM Data
Operations Center	6	30	NA	DOGM Data
Producing Wells	1237	6,185	NA	DOGM Data
Shut In Well Locations	91	455	NA	DOGM Data
Temporarily Abandoned	12	40	NA	DOGM Data
Newfield Major Pipelines (estimated 3.5 acres/mile)	Approx. 80	280	80 miles	Available Newfield GIS Data
Reasonably Foreseeable Well Pads				

Gasco	198	990	NA	DOGM Data
MBU	946	4730	NA	DOGM Data
<b>Other (County, Livestock, Etc.)</b>				
Ponds and/or Guzzlers recorded in RIPs	Approx. 33	Estimated 20		
Ancillary Roads		1,492	373 miles	Assumption for acreage is based on an average width of 30 feet/mile of road (approx. 4 acres/mile)
<b>Total <i>Estimated</i> existing Cumulative Disturbance</b>		<b>5,782 acres</b>	<b>453 miles</b>	
<b>*Acreage is based on GPS data and is a rough estimate</b>				

The estimated cumulative disturbance is 4.8% of the total acres on the three allotments. This roughly equates to 359 AUMs for livestock, not including wildlife. There are 8,893 AUMs in the cumulative impact area.

### **5.3 FISH AND WILDLIFE; THREATENED, ENDANGERED, OR CANDIDATE SPECIES; AND MIGRATORY BIRDS**

The cumulative impacts analysis area for this resource is defined as the boundary of the Castle Peak Eight Mile Flat FEIS in Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah, which contains approximately 65,381 acres. As disclosed in the Castle Peak Eight Mile Flat FEIS, past activity in the cumulative impact area includes 671 oil, gas, and waterflood wells and present activity includes 778 oil gas, and waterflood wells. Assuming 1.3 acres of disturbance for well pads (after interim reclamation) and 2.5 acres of disturbance for ancillary facilities (per well), the past and present disturbance is approximately 5,506 acres. Reasonably foreseeable development includes the Newfield Greater Monument Butte Development Plan consisting of 5,750 wells including supporting facilities. Assuming 1.3 acres of disturbance per well including ancillary facilities, because there are multiple wells on most pads, the reasonably foreseeable development would result in approximately 7,404 acres of disturbance after interim reclamation. Total cumulative disturbance would be 12,910 acres.

Cumulative impacts resulting from the surface disturbance and other actions include decreased available cover, carrying capacity, foraging opportunities, breeding habitat, and habitat productivity for white-tailed prairie dog, mountain plover, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, and migratory birds. In general, the severity of the cumulative effects would depend on factors such as the sensitivity of the species affected, seasonal intensity of use, type of project activity, and physical parameters (e.g., topography, forage quality, cover availability, visibility, and noise presence). The proposed action would add 0.59 acres of disturbance.

The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

#### **Colorado River Fish Species**

The cumulative impacts analysis area for this resource is the Colorado River system. Cumulative impacts in this area include oil and gas exploration and development, irrigation, urban development, recreational

activities, and activities associated with the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. Cumulative impacts such as decreased water quality and quantity, decreased habitat quality, habitat fragmentation, and mortality result from decreased stream flow, erosion, improperly placed culverts, elevated salinity, and contamination. Decreased stream-flows reduce or eliminate both the extent and quality of suitable habitat by increasing stream temperatures, and subsequently by reducing dissolved oxygen levels. Such impacts may be more pronounced during periods of natural cyclic flow reductions (fall and winter or periods of drought). A loss of streamflow can also reduce a stream's ability to transport sediment downstream. Sediment amount is influenced by the number of road/stream crossings, bank slope, amount of exposed soil, type of vegetation in the area, frequency and intensity of rainfall, soil type (amount of salinity), soil contamination, and the implementation and effectiveness of erosion control measures. Sediment loads above background levels can reduce pool depths, bury stream substrates and spawning gravels, adhere to aquatic insects and the gills of fish, alter channel form and function, and result in other forms of habitat degradation. Elevated salinity levels, over extended periods of time, may become toxic for aquatic ecosystems and fish species. In addition, improperly placed, shaped, and sized culverts in roads can act as fish barriers on key streams or exacerbate erosion and cause headcutting. The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts. The proposed action would add 5.51 acre feet of water depletion.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

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### 6.1 SECTION 7 CONSULTATION UNDER THE ESA

On October, 2011, BLM prepared a programmatic Biological Assessment (BA) for Newfield Production Company's 20-acre Infield Program. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion (BO) for threatened and endangered *Sclerocactus ssp.*, and for four federally listed Colorado River fish species whereby they concurred with BLM effects determinations on November 21, 2011. This project falls within the scope of that B.O for both cactus and fish.

### 6.2 SECTION 106 CONSULTATION UNDER THE NHPA

A recommendation of "no historic properties affected" pursuant to Section 106 of 36 CFR 800 is proposed for this project based on the proposed mitigation measure and the results of a Class III survey. Copies of the cultural resource reports were provided by the BLM to the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO), along with a request to consult under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The BLM received a concurrence determination of "no historic properties affected" from the SHPO for all the reports associated with this project.

### 6.3 SUMMARY OF TRIBAL CONSULTATION

A request for Tribal concurrence regarding Native American Religious Concerns was conducted for the entire Monument Butte EIS, which encompasses the Project Area, on December 22, 2010. No comments were received from the requisite tribes within the 30 days allotted.

### 6.4 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This EA was posted on the BLM Land Use Planning and NEPA Register on December, 16, 2013. No public interest has been expressed to date.

### 6.5 LIST OF BLM PREPARERS

NAME	TITLE	RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE FOLLOWING SECTION(S) OF THIS DOCUMENT
Sheri Wysong	Physical/Environmental Scientist	Team Lead
Stephanie Howard	Environmental Coordinator	Chapters 3, 4 & 5: Air Quality
Maggie Marston	Botanist	Chapters 3, 4 & 5 Threatened and Endangered Plants
Brandon McDonald	Wildlife Biologist	Chapters 3, 4 & 5: Wildlife Excluding USFWS Designated Species; Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Animal Species, Migratory birds
Alec Bryan	Rangeland Management Specialist	Chapters 3, 4 and 5 Rangeland Resources - Livestock Grazing, Rangeland Health Standards

## 7.0 REFERENCES

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- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) 2012. *Final Biological Opinion for Newfield Exploration Company and Ute Energy, LLC's proposed Rocky Point Exploration and Development*.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST

Project Title: Newfield Production Company's GMBU East 2013-1 Development in the Greater Monument Butte Unit, Duchesne and Uintah Counties, Utah

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-LLUT-G010-2014-0034

File/Serial Number: Lease #: Various

Project Leader: Sheri Wysong

**DETERMINATION OF STAFF: (Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)**

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section D of the DNA form. The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
<b>RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)</b>				
PI	Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Emissions from earth-moving equipment, vehicle traffic, drilling and completion activities, separators, oil storage tanks, dehydration units, and daily tailpipe and fugitive dust emissions could adversely affect air quality.  No standards have been set by EPA or other regulatory agencies for greenhouse gases. In addition, the assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is still in its earliest stages of formulation. Global scientific models are inconsistent, and regional or local scientific models are lacking so that it is not technically feasible to determine the net impacts to climate due to greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions associated with this action and its alternative(s) would be negligible.	Stephanie Howard	12/16/2013
NP	BLM Natural Areas	None present as per 2008 Vernal RMP and ROD/GIS layer review.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Cultural: Archaeological Resources	No cultural properties were identified within the APE of the proposed project.	Leticia Neal	12/16/2013
NI	Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	No Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) are identified within the APE. The proposed project will not hinder access to or use of Native American religious sites.	Leticia Neal	12/16/2013
NP	Designated Areas: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	None present as per 2008 Vernal RMP and ROD/GIS layer review.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NP	Designated Areas: Wild and Scenic Rivers	None present as per 2008 Vernal RMP/ROD and GIS layer review	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013

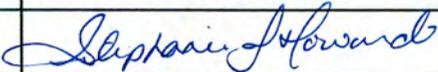
Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NP	Designated Areas: Wilderness Study Areas	None Present as per 2008 Vernal RMP/ROD and GIS layer review	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Environmental Justice	The Ute Tribe benefits financially from the oil and gas development in the region and is not disproportionately affected by environmental impacts. There are no other minority or economically disadvantaged groups in the region that are positioned to be disproportionately affected.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NP	Farmlands (prime/unique)	Prime or unique farmlands must be irrigated to be designated as such. None of the lands in the project area are irrigated, therefore there are no prime or unique farmlands in the project area.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	No fuel management activities are planned for the project area. The proposed project would not conflict with fire management activities due to the use of existing pads.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Geology/Minerals/Energy Production	Encounters with gilsonite during any surface or drilling operation must be reported to the BLM Vernal Field Office. Please provide location and depth encountered. Natural gas, oil, gilsonite, oil shale, and tar sand are the only mineral resources that could be impacted by the project. Production of natural gas or oil would deplete reserves, but the proposed project allows for the recovery of natural gas and oil per 43 CFR 3162.1(a), under the existing Federal lease. Compliance with "Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2, Drilling Operations" will assure that the project will not adversely affect gilsonite, oil shale, or tar sand deposits. Due to the state-of-the-art drilling and well completion techniques, the possibility of adverse degradation of tar sand or oil shale deposits by the proposed action will be negligible.  Well completion must be accomplished in compliance with "Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2, Drilling Operations". These guidelines specify the following: <i>... proposed casing and cementing programs shall be conducted as approved to protect and/or isolate all usable water zones, potentially productive zones, lost circulation zones, abnormally pressured zones, and any prospectively valuable deposits of minerals. Any isolating medium other than cement shall receive approval prior to use.</i> <sup>3</sup>	Betty Gamber	2/20/2014
NI	Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation	In accordance with the Green River Reclamation Guidelines, compliance with requirements of the Guidelines will be a COA for all BLM authorizations within the jurisdiction of the Green River District Office. Compliance with the COA will prevent impacts to soils and vegetation and prevent the spread of Invasive and noxious weeds to the extent that detailed analysis is not necessary..	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Lands/Access	Current land use within the area consists of existing oil and gas development, gilsonite mining, wildlife habitat, recreational use, and sheep and cattle ranching. No existing land uses would be changed or modified by the implementation of the Proposed Action; therefore there would be no impact.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)	None present as per 2008 Vernal RMP and ROD/GIS layer review.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
PI	Livestock Grazing & Rangeland Health Standards	The proposed project would create additional ground disturbance and fragmentation of the allotments which may impact both the livestock operation as well as the fundamentals of rangeland health.	Alec Bryan	12/17/2013
NP	Paleontology	No scientifically important fossils were found at any of the well sites (Wade Miller reports: June 17, 2013, June 7, 2003)	Betty Gamber	2/20/2014
NI	Plants: BLM Sensitive	Sterile Yucca ( <i>Yucca sterilis</i> ), a UT BLM Sensitive plant species, could inhabit sandy locations near the proposed action. Known individuals are present approximately one-half mile north of the 33-6-9-17 well pad. Clearance surveys were conducted at both proposed locations in May and June, 2013 and were negative for sterile yucca within 300' of the edge of all ground disturbance and project areas.  Additional BLM Sensitive species are precluded based on soil, elevation, geography and plant population VFO GIS data. Green River shale-derived soils are not present at either location.	Maggie Marston	2/21/2014
NI	Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate	Ground disturbance for the proposed action falls within the 2013 USFWS <i>Sclerocactus</i> ssp. polygons, but outside of core 400m and 1000m core habitats. Surveys for <i>Sclerocactus</i> species were conducted in May and June, 2013 and no individuals were located within designated survey buffers.  The 33-6-9-17 is approximately 0.4 miles from 1000m core habitat and nearest known <i>Sclerocactus</i> individuals are approximately 0.9 miles distant. The 11-5-9-18 is approximately 0.85 miles from nearest known <i>S. brevispinus</i> individuals.  The project falls within the analyzed parameters of the Final BO for Newfield Production's 20-acre Infield Development Project and all SOP's and mitigation from the BA and BO that apply have been incorporated in the proposed action. This project, therefore, "may affect, is not likely to adversely affect" both listed <i>Sclerocactus</i> species.  Green River shale outcrops are not evident from VFO GIS inventory and special status species survey reports. Additional TEPC plant species are precluded based on GIS soil, elevation, known location data, and onsite field review for riparian and Green River shale habitats.	Maggie Marston	2/24/2014
NP	Plants: Wetland/Riparian	No inventoried or observed riparian areas are located at or near the other well locations.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Recreation	Proposed project takes place in the Vernal Extensive Recreation Management Area; currently the VFO does not track quantifiable visitor use data within the project area. Limited recreation has been observed within the project area during field visits, however; predominate recreational activity is based on driving to the Pariette wetlands or Sandwash Boat Ramp, but these are not within the project area.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Socio-Economics	No impact to the social or economic status of the county or nearby communities would occur from this project due to its small size in relation to ongoing development throughout the basin.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Visual Resources	The viewshed within the project area is characterized by landscape based high desert look consisting of natural browns and reds, rock outcrops, horizontal and vertical broken lines with sparse, low lying vegetation. Existing structures include abandoned well pads in various states of reclamation, existing drilling structures with associated movement, form, lines, textures, and colors. Based on management objectives for the project area, the project meets VRM class III and IV requirements.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Wastes (hazardous/solid)	No chemicals subject to reporting under SARA Title III in amounts greater than 10,000 pounds would be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of annually in association with the project. Trash and other waste materials would be cleaned up and removed immediately after completion of operations. The pit liner would be trimmed or folded and buried so that it will not reemerge at a later date.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Water: Floodplains	GIS and onsite review indicates the proposed activities are not located within floodplains.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Water: Groundwater Quality	Compliance with "Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1, will assure that the project will not adversely affect groundwater quality. Due to the state-of-the-art drilling and wells completion techniques, the possibility of adverse degradation of groundwater quality or prospectively valuable mineral deposits by the proposed action would be negligible. Pipelines: Groundwater may be at about 75ft below ground surface. Groundwater is not likely to be affected by the pipeline construction.	Betty Gamber	2/20/2014
NI	Water: Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The Monument Butte area is arid, with few storm events that result in drainage from the disturbed areas. BMPs and adherence to Gold Book Standards to control erosion would prevent transport of sediments from runoff.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Water: Surface Water Quality	Surface water quality would be impacted to a small degree with surface disturbing development causing soil erosion and also potential chemical spills onto soils. However the project is consistent with the Castle Peak Eight-Mile Flat EIS and the VFO/RMP and no significant impacts beyond those analyzed in those EISs would occur.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Water: Waters of the U.S.	GIS and onsite review indicates no navigable waters or waters of the U.S. are within the project area.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NP	Wild Horses	No herd areas or herd management areas are present in the project area per BLM GIS database.	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013
NI	Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including raptors)	Migratory bird foraging and nesting habitat is present; however, the project wells will be constructed and drilled on existing well pads. There are no known or documented raptor nests within ½ mile of the proposed project area.	Brandon McDonald	02/25/2014
NI	Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated	General wildlife may occur in the area (i.e. coyote rabbit, etc.); however, the BLM does not designate crucial big game habitat within the proposed project	Brandon McDonald	02/25/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		area. Water depletion would occur for the proposed project; however, the depletion was consulted on under the two Biological Opinions referenced in Section 6.1 of the document.		
PI	Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate	GIS layers and field data was reviewed and found no federally listed species and / or habitat within the proposed project area; however, water depletion will occur for the proposed project; however, the proposed project well has been analyzed under the two Biological Opinions referenced in Section 6.1 of the document. Is the proposed project in sage grouse PPH or PGH? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the answer is yes, the project must conform with WO IM 2012-043.	Brandon McDonald	02/25/2014
NP	Woodlands/Forestry	None Present as per 2008 Vernal RMP/ROD and GIS layer review	Sheri Wysong	12/16/2013

**FINAL REVIEW:**

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator		2/28/14	
Authorized Officer		3-6-2014	