United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Decision Record
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0090-EA

February 2014

AXIA Energy LLC
Three Rivers Phase 1 & 2 Lateral Pipelines
Rights-of-way UTU-89170 and UTU-89171

Location: ***T. 7 & 8S., R. 20 E., SLM, Utah***
Sections 3,9,35

Applicant/Address: ***Axia Energy LLC***
1430 Larimer, Suite 400
Denver, Colorado 80202

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vernal Field Office
170 South 500 East
Vernal Utah 84078
Phone: (435) 781-4400
Fax: (435) 781-3420

BLM

DECISION RECORD
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DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0090-EA

Three Rivers Phase 1& 2 Lateral Pipelines

The proposed action consists of the Three Rivers Phase 1 Lateral including any associated infrastructure (valves, meters, pigging facilities, etc.). The total project would cross 40,433 feet (7.6 miles) of federal, state and private lands (see maps attached to EA) beginning at the producing state well Three Rivers 36-11-720 well pad (T7S,R20E, Section 36) and ending at the proposed Quester Exploration and Production (QEP) pipeline in Section 16, T8S, R20E, SLB&M. QEP has filed an application with the USF&WS for the proposed pipeline in Section 16. The federal segment would traverse the following lands:

Salt Lake Meridian,
T. 7 S., R. 20 E.,
sec. 35, Lot 2, SE¼NW¼, E½SW¼, SW¼SE¼.

T. 8 S., R. 20 E.,
sec. 3, SW¼NW¼, W½SW¼;
sec. 9, E½SE¼;
sec. 10, W½NW¼.

The surface disturbance and vehicular travel for the proposed action would be limited to the existing roads and pipeline rights-of-way. The proposed action would follow procedures specified by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as well as other applicable BMP's and guidelines, including ASME B31.8 "Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems", latest edition and API 1104, "Welding of Pipelines and Related Facilities", latest edition. Members of the project workforce would commute from surrounding towns and cities. Equipment needed to construct the corridor would include track excavators, transport trucks, backhoes, sided booms, water trucks, and pick-up trucks. Vehicle traffic during the construction phase would include the transportation of materials and heavy equipment, the commuting of the workforce, and the daily operation of the construction equipment. Signs providing traffic control would be installed as necessary, new staging areas are not required since well pads on federal surface and previously disturbed areas on state and private lands exist where staging could occur.

Axia is proposing the Three Rivers Phase 1 Lateral be completed in two phases due to the exploratory nature of development in the area and because Axia does not currently have a field-wide water and residue pipeline system. Under both phases, the Three Rivers Phase 1 Lateral would be located within the 50 foot wide corridor; however, two separate ROW authorizations would need to be issued. The natural gas and residue pipelines would need to be authorized under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended and the produced water pipeline would need to be authorized under the Federal Land Management and Policy Act of October 21, 1976, as amended through September 1999. (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761).

Phase One: Axia would construct a surface, 10-inch polyethylene natural gas gathering pipeline from State well Three Rivers 36-11-720, ML-50510, located in Sec. 36, T7S., R. 20E, SLB&M(state lands) to Questar Exploration and Production's (QEP) proposed pipeline in Sec.

16, T.8S, R20E,SLB&M (State Lands). The surface line would cross 14,895 feet (2.82 miles) of federal surface. The pipeline has been proposed to make the best use of existing disturbance and parallel existing roads (State HWY 88 and Uintah County ROW UTU-69125-84). The pipeline would have an anticipated operating pressure of +/- 800 to 1,100 psig.. The pipeline would be gas or air tested to 125% of maximum operating pressure prior to going on-line. No water would be utilized for testing of the pipeline. It is estimated to require a one (1) month construction period.

Phase Two: Axia would upgrade the Phase one 10-inch, surface poly gas gathering pipeline to a buried, 12-inch, steel, pipeline for natural gas within two years based on exploratory success and at such time the additional infrastructure is necessary. They would also construct a new, buried 10-inch, polyethylene pipeline to transport produced water and a new, buried, steel 4-inch residue gas pipeline. The three buried pipelines would be constructed in a single trench within a 50 foot wide right-of-way as shown in Appendix A. The Phase one, surface 10-inch natural gas pipeline would then be removed after the three pipelines are buried and operational. The proposal includes any necessary associated infrastructure (i.e. valves, meters, pigging facilities, etc.) and would be located on State lands. Cathodic Protection Sites would also be installed along the pipeline and be contained within the 50 foot right-of-way width. The buried pipelines would be a permanent facility with an anticipated 30 year lifespan.

The anticipated operating pressure of +/- 800 to 1,100 psig.. The pipeline would be gas or air tested to 125% of maximum operating pressure prior to going on-line. No water would be utilized for testing of the pipeline. The approximated construction period for the buried pipelines is one (1) month. The entire right-of-way would be reclaimed upon completion of the installation, and the permanent width of the right-of-way would be 50 feet.

Surface Disturbance for the proposed action would be as follows:

Pipeline Right-of-way includes Phase I and Phase II

Surface Owner	**Length**	**Temporary Disturbance Acres (50 foot Width)**	**Permanent Disturbance acres**
BLM	14,895-ft (2.8 mi)	17.10 ac	0
State	11,797-ft (2.2 mi)	13.54 ac	0
Private	13,741-ft (2.6 mi)	15.77 ac	0
TOTAL	40,433-ft (7.6 mi)	46.41 ac	

Location and type of Water Supply

a. Water for the drilling and completion would be trucked from the following location:

Water Right No. and Application or Change No.	Applicant	Allocation	Date	Point of Diversion	Source
49-2367	RNI, LLC	20 acre-feet	4-27-2012	Green River	Green River

b. No new water well is proposed with this application.

c. Should additional water sources be pursued they would be properly permitted through the State of Utah – Division of Water Rights.

d. Water use would vary in accordance with the formations to be drilled but would be up to approximately five acre feet for drilling and completion operations.

Applicant Committed Measures

1. Appropriate erosion and sedimentation control structures would be incorporated into the pipeline corridor.
2. Dust control measures would be implemented as necessary.
3. Noxious and Invasive Weeds: To reduce the likelihood of the introduction of noxious and invasive weed species via project-related Vehicles and equipment into the area, the following measures would be implemented:
    a. Axia and their contractors would power-wash all construction equipment and vehicles prior to the start of construction. Any vehicles traveling between the project location and outside area would be power-washed on a weekly basis.
    b. An intensive weed control program beginning the first growing season after project completion. Weed control would be conducted through an Approved Pesticide Use and Wee Control Plan from the BLM.
4. Trash containers and a portable toilet would be located on the construction site during construction. Upon completion of construction, the toilet and its contents would be transported to Vernal, Utah's municipal sewage facility in accordance with applicable rules and regulations regarding sewage treatment and disposal. Accumulated trash and nonflammable waste materials would be hauled to the Duchesne and Uintah county landfills. All debris and waste materials not contained in the trash containers would be cleaned up, remove, and disposed of at the landfill. No potentially harmful materials or substances would be left in the area. Scrap metal and other recyclable refuse would be hauled to the Axia yard. Vehicle traffic during the construction phase would include the

transportation of materials and heavy equipment, the commuting of the workforce, and the daily operation of the construction equipment.

5. Stabilization, Rehabilitation and Reclamation: Reclamation efforts for the proposed pipeline would consist of re-seeding the area with a BLM approved seed mixture. Reclaimed areas receiving incidental disturbance during the life of the project would be re-contoured and reseeded as soon as practical. A reclamation plan for the existing road would be provided prior to reclamation activity initiation. Following BLM published Best management Practices the interim reclamation would be completed within 90 days of completion of the pipeline corridor, weather permitting as required by the Green River district Reclamation Guidelines and the submitted Axia General Reclamation Plan. All equipment and debris would be removed from the reclamation areas. The areas would be re-contoured where necessary. Disturbed areas would be re-contoured to blend with the surrounding area and reseeded as prescribed by BLM. Reclaimed areas receiving incidental disturbance during the life of the pipelines would be re-contoured and reseeded as soon as practical . Final reclamation efforts would be approved by the BLM prior to implementation and meet current guidelines and plans at the time of reclamation.

Authorities: "The authority for this decision is Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761) and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920."

Compliance and Monitoring:

- Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation
- Plants: Threatened, endangered, Proposed or Candidate
- Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including Raptors)
- Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated
- Wildlife: "Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate

Terms / Conditions / Stipulations:

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

- All vehicles and equipment shall be cleaned either through power-washing, or other approved method, if the vehicles or equipment were previously operated outside the Uinta Basin, to prevent weed seed introduction.

Plants: Threatened, endangered, Proposed or Candidate

- Re-survey for Sclerocactus species will be required for ground disturbance if construction has not commenced prior to cactus survey season 2015, and beyond. The survey must be approved by the Authorized Officer of the BLM and copied to USFWS prior to construction.

- ***Discovery Stipulation***: Re-initiation of section 7 consultation with the USFWS will be sought immediately if any loss of plants or occupied habitat for Uinta Basin hookless cactus is anticipated as a result of project activities.

Wildlife: "Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate

Colorado River Fish Species

- 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 BLM and Service approved location is best.
- If the pump head is located in the river channel where larval fish are known to occur, the following measures 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 31); and
    c. limit the amount of pumping, to the greatest extent possible, during the pre-dawn hours as larval drift studies indicate that this is a period of greatest daily activity.
- Screen all pump intakes with 3/32 inch mesh material.
- Approach velocities for intake structures will 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 will not exceed 0.33 feet per second (ft/s).
- Report any fish impinged on the intake screen to the Service (801.975.3330) and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources:

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

Raptors

Prior to any surface-disturbing activities, if the project area is encompassed by the current raptor timing and spatial buffers, a BLM biologist or a BLM-approved contractor would survey all areas within a range of 0.5 mile from proposed surface disturbances. If occupied/active raptor nests are found, construction would not occur during the nesting season for that species within the species-specific buffer described in "BLM Best Management Practices for Raptors and their Associated Habitats in Utah."

Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia) If the surface disturbing activities are planned during the current timing restrictions for the Burrowing Owl (March 1st through August 31st) a survey for nesting Burrowing Owl is required. Depending on the results from the survey the BLM's Authorized Officer may or may not give permission to proceed.

PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY:

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with one or more of the following BLM Land Use Plans and the associated decision(s):

The proposal would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 31, 2008). The RMP/ROD decision allows for processing applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases on public lands in accordance with policy and guidance and allows for management of public lands to support goals and objectives of other resources programs, respond to public requests for land use authorizations, and acquire administrative and public access where necessary (RMP/ROD p. 86). It has been determined that the proposed action and alternative(s) would not conflict with other decisions throughout the plan.

This decision is also consistent with the Uintah County General Plan amended in 2007. (See Chapter 1 of the EA).

Alternatives Considered:

No Action

No other alternatives were considered because the route of the pipelines was the shortest and most direct route.

Rationale for Decision:

The decision to authorize phase 1 and 2 pipelines has been made in consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. This decision has been made after considering impacts to resources within the Vernal Field Office while accommodating Axia Energy LLC. desire to construct the pipelines.

Identification of issue(s) for this assessment was accomplished by considering any resources that could be affected by implementation of one of the alternatives. Public involvement consisted of posting the proposal on the Utah BLM Environmental Notification Bulletin Board on February 3, 2014. A public comment period was not offered because no interest in the proposal has been expressed.

As discussed in the EA, concerns are sometimes raised as to BLM's ability to ensure that terms and conditions of the grant are satisfactorily completed. A performance bond will be required for these rights-of-way in the amount of $25,000.00 in a form acceptable to BLM. This amount was determined by estimating the costs to BLM to carry out the terms and conditions in the event that the holder, for whatever reason, did not. The documentation used to estimate the bond amount was provided by Axia Energy's agent, Don Hamilton, and is contained in the case file. The bond will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is adequate. If it is inadequate, the holder will be required to provide a new bond in the required amount. The holder will not be allowed to conduct any surface disturbing actions until the performance bond is accepted and approved by BLM. The bond shall be furnished prior to authorizing the grants.

Since the completion of this EA, Ultra Resources, Inc. (Ultra) has acquired the Three Rivers project area from Axia Energy, LLC. Ultra has reviewed the pending ROW applications

submitted by Axia and has agreed with the plan of developments, statements, and stipulations within the pending applications. The ROWs would therefore be issued to Ultra Resources, Inc.

Protest/Appeal Language: This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (request) pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 2801.10 or 43 CFR 2881.10 for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal 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 immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and

(4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

FEB 2 7 2014

Authorized Officer

Date

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Finding of No Significant Impact

for

Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0090-EA

AXIA Energy LLC
Three Rivers Phase 1 & 2 Lateral Pipelines
Rights-of-way UTU-89170 and UTU-89171
February 2014

Location: T. 7 & 8 S., R. 20 E., sections 3,9,35

Applicant/Address: ***Axia Energy LLC***
1430 Larimer, Suite 400
Denver, Colorado 80202

Vernal Field Office
170 South 500 East
Vernal, Utah 84078
Phone: 435-781-4400
Fax: 435-781-4410

BLM

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the environmental assessment and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

FEB 2 7 2014

Jerry Kenczka
Assistant Field Manager
Lands and Minerals

Date

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0090-EA

February 2014

AXIA Energy LLC
Three Rivers Phase 1 & 2 Lateral Pipelines
Rights-of-way UTU-89170 and UTU-89171

Location: T. 7 & 8 South, Range 20 East, Sections 3, 9, 35.

Applicant/Address: Axia Energy LLC
1430 Larimer, Suite 400
Denver, Colorado 80202

U.S. Department of the Interior
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170 South 500 East
Vernal, Utah 84078
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BLM

Project Title

AXIA Energy LLC
Three Rivers Phase 1& 2 Lateral Pipelines

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to analyze the potential impacts of Axia Energy LLC's (Axia) proposed 10-inch surface gas gathering pipeline (known as Phase 1), and a 12-inch buried natural gas line, a 10-inch produced water pipeline and a 4-inch residue gas pipeline (known as Phase 2).

Axia's need for the proposed action is to:

Receive a right-of-way to install approximately 14,895 feet of surface and buried pipelines to collect and transport gas for Axia Energy LLC. Recent exploration efforts on the west side of the Green River has demonstrated the need for additional development and expansion of the gathering network. These pipelines would provide for future development in the area as well as allow future use of water transfer systems and residue gas lines. A 2003 USGS assessment of the area indicates a high-probability of gas resource's in-place sufficient to justify an economic developments project.

The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action. An EA assists the BLM in project planning and 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 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 is a document that briefly presents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in "significant" environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan (VFORMP), October 2008. 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 may be signed for the EA approving the alternative selected.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Axia Energy LLC has requested right-of-way authorizations to install approximately 14,895 feet of pipelines on federal lands. The BLM's need is to:

Consider approval of the application in a manner that avoids or reduces impacts on sensitive resource values associated with the project area and prevent unnecessary or undo degradation of the public lands.

CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLAN(S)

The proposed pipelines and related facilities would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office (VFO) Record of Decision (ROD) and Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved October 31, 2008. As stated in the VFO Approved ROD (pg. 86), the BLM's primary management objectives for the lands and realty programs are to:

- Process applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases, and other use authorizations for public lands in accordance with policy and guidance;
- Manage public lands to support goals and objectives of other resources programs: and
- respond to public requests for land use authorizations.

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

This EA was prepared by the BLM in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and in compliance with all applicable regulations and laws passed subsequently, including the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and the U.S. Department of Interior requirements and guidelines listed in the BLM *Manual Handbook H-1790-1*. This EA assesses the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

The proposed action is also consistent with the Uintah County General Plan (Uintah County 2011-as amended). The Uintah County General Plan contains specific policy statements addressing public and multiple-use resource use and development, access, and wildlife management. In general, the Plan indicates support for development proposals through its emphasis on multiple-use public land management practices and responsible use and optimum utilization of public land resources. The County, through the Plan, supports the development of natural resources as they became available as new technology allows.

IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

As part of internal scoping, BLM resource specialists in the Vernal Field Office reviewed Axia's Proposed Action and conferred with other agencies to assess the type and magnitude of potential impacts to affected resources. The potential issues listed below are consistent with relevant concerns and potential issues presented in **Appendix A** (Interdisciplinary Team [IDT] Checklist). These potential issues are carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Consequences section (**Chapter 4**) of this EA.

Resources Affected:

- **Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation**
- **Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate**
- **Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including Raptors)**
- **Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated**
- **Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate**

CHAPTER 2
DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This EA focuses on the Proposed and No Action Alternatives. The No Action Alternative is considered and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts of the proposed action.

PROPOSED ACTION

Recent exploration efforts on the west side of the Green River has demonstrated the need for additional development and expansion of the gathering network. A 2003 USGS assessment of the area indicates a high-probability of gas resource in-place sufficient to justify an economic development project. These pipelines would provide for future development in the area as well as allow future use of water transfer systems and residue gas lines.

The proposed action consists of the Three Rivers Phase 1 Lateral including any associated infrastructure (valves, meters, pigging facilities, etc.). The total project would cross 40,433 feet (7.6 miles) of federal, state and private lands beginning at the producing state well Three Rivers 36-11-720 well pad (T7S,R20E, Section 36) and ending at the proposed Quester Exploration and Production (QEP) pipeline in Section 16, T8S, R20E, SLB&M. QEP has filed an application with the State for the proposed pipeline in Section 16. The federal segment would traverse the following lands:

Salt Lake Meridian,
T. 7 S., R. 20 E.,
sec. 35, Lot 2, SE¼NW¼, E½SW¼, SW¼SE¼.

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sec. 10, W½NW¼.

The surface disturbance and vehicular travel for the proposed action would be limited to the existing roads and pipeline rights-of-way. The proposed action would follow procedures specified by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as well as other applicable BMP's and guidelines, including ASME B31.8 "Gas Transmission and Distribution Piping Systems", latest edition and API 1104, "Welding of Pipelines and Related Facilities", latest edition. Members of the project workforce would commute from surrounding towns and cities. Equipment needed to construct the corridor would include track excavators, transport trucks, backhoes, sided booms, water trucks, and pick-up trucks. Vehicle traffic during the construction phase would include the transportation of materials and heavy equipment, the commuting of the workforce, and the daily operation of the construction equipment. Signs providing traffic control would be installed as necessary, new staging areas are not required since well pads on federal surface and previously disturbed areas on state and private lands exist where staging could occur.

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c. Should additional water sources be pursued they would be properly permitted through the State of Utah – Division of Water Rights.

d. Water use would vary in accordance with the formations to be drilled but would be up to approximately five acre feet for drilling and completion operations.

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NO ACTION

The No Action Alternative would be to deny the application as proposed. With this alternative BLM would not approve the pipeline rights-of-way.

Measures Common to All Alternatives:

Concerns are occasionally raised as to how BLM would ensure that mitigation measures would be satisfactorily completed in the event that the applicant were issued a ROW grant(s) and for whatever reason either did not comply with the terms and conditions of the grant(s), or was unable to rehabilitate the ROW area upon termination of the grant(s). To respond to these concerns, BLM would require a performance bond prior to allowing any surface disturbing actions. National BLM direction to require ROW bonds is contained in draft BLM Manual 2805.12(d). The performance bond would be of sufficient amount to ensure that mitigation and rehabilitation measures were effectively and satisfactorily completed by BLM in the event of default by the holder. The performance bond would be periodically reviewed to ensure sufficiency. This measure would be common to all alternatives that involve issuance of a ROW grant(s).

CHAPTER 3
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SETTING

The affected environment was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist. The checklist indicates which resources of concern are either not present in the project area or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis. Resources which could be impacted to a level requiring further analysis are described in Chapter 3 and impacts on these resources are analyzed in Chapter 4 below

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

Soils are sandy loams with a very low percentage of rock. The terrain is low rolling hills. The vegetation noted during the onsite include: Indian ricegrass (Achnatherum hymenoides), four-wing saltbush (Atriplex canescens), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugate*), milkvetch (*Astragalus spp*), mustard *Brassica sp.*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), Mormon tea (*Ephedra vididis*), Native American pipeweed (*Eriogonum fusiforme*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), Winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia sp.*), bud sage (*Picrothamnus desetorum*), galleta grass (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), Sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), and horsebrush sp. (*Tetradymia sp.*)

Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate

Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus wetlandicus*)

Uinta Basin hookless cactus is a perennial herb and a member of the cactus family. It is

federally listed as threatened and is endemic to the Uinta Basin It consists of a perennial succulent shoot, solitary or rarely branching, globose, ovoid or cylindrical. Individuals are usually 3 to 9 centimeters in diameter and 4 to 12 centimeters tall. Each spine cluster, areoles, usually consists of one large (15 to 29 millimeters) central spine, three to four lateral central spines, and six to ten radial spines. From late April to May, Uinta Basin hookless cactus produces 2.5 to 5-centimeter high, pink to violet flowers.

The ecological amplitude of Uinta Basin hookless cactus is wide, being found from clay badlands up to the pinyon-juniper habitat. The preferred habitat occurs on river benches, valley slopes, and rolling hills consisting of xeric, fine textured, clay soils, derived from the Duchesne River, Green River, Mancos, and Uinta formations, overlain with a pavement of large, smooth, rounded cobble. The typical plant community in Uinta Basin hookless cactus habitat is the salt desert shrub community.

The proposed project is located partially within an area that the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has identified as being potential habitat for Uinta Basin hookless cactus (13,951 of the 40,433 foot long project). The proposed project was surveyed by Kleinfelder in October and November 2012 and by Grasslands Consulting, Inc. in August 2013. During these surveys, no plants were identified.

Migratory Birds Including Raptors

Migratory Birds

The MBTA was implemented for the protection of migratory birds. Unless permitted by regulations, the MBTA makes it unlawful to pursue, hunt, kill, capture, possess, buy, sell, purchase, or barter any migratory bird, including the feathers or other parts, nests, eggs, or migratory bird products. In addition to the MBTA, Executive Order 13186 sets forth the responsibilities of Federal agencies to further implement the provisions of the MBTA by integrating bird conservation principles and practices into agency activities and by ensuring that Federal actions evaluate the effects of actions and agency plans on migratory birds.

This section identifies migratory birds that may inhabit the project area, including those species classified as High-Priority birds by Utah Partners in Flight (Parrish et al 2002). High-Priority species are denoted by an asterisk (*). Without conducting comprehensive migratory bird surveys, it is not known if these species are present or not. Species listed below are based on GIS reviews, and a field review during onsite inspections.

Migratory bird species commonly associated with the sagebrush-steppe community within the project area are identified in **Table 3.5-1**.

Table 3.5-1 Migratory Bird Species Commonly Associated with the Sagebrush-steppe community

Common Name	Scientific Name
Mountain bluebird*	*Sialia currucoides*
Grasshopper sparrow*	*Ammodramus savannarum*

Table 3.5-1 Migratory Bird Species Commonly Associated with the Sagebrush-steppe community	
Common Name	**Scientific Name**
Brewer's sparrow*	*Spizella breweri*
Sage sparrow*	*Amphispiza belli*
Sage thrasher*	*Oreoscoptes montanus*
Green-tailed towhee*	*Pipilo chlorurus*
Horned lark	*Eremophila alpestris*
Loggerhead shrike	*Lanius ludovicianus*
Western kingbird	*Tyrannus verticalis*
Northern mockingbird	*Mimus polyglottos*
Vesper sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus*
Western meadowlark	*Sturnella neglecta*

Source: Parrish et al 2002
* Utah Partners-in-Flight (UPIF) priority bird species.

Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia)

The burrowing owl is a Utah State species of concern. In Utah, prairie dog burrows are the most important source of burrowing owl nest sites. Burrowing owl use of abandoned prairie dog towns is minimal, and active prairie dog towns are the primary habitat for the owls (Butts 1973). As the range and abundance of these burrowing mammals have decreased, so too has the status of the burrowing owl. If burrowing owls are using prairie dog colonies in the Project Area as nest sites, there are potential impacts to burrowing owls as a result of the Proposed Action. Burrowing owl habitat is present within project area.

Fish and Wildlife Excluding USFWS Designated Species

White-tailed Prairie Dog (Cynomys leucurus)

The white-tailed prairie dog is listed as a Utah State sensitive species. Comprehensive prairie dog colony surveys and burrow density estimates have not been completed within the Project Area. During the onsite inspection and within a half mile of the project areas white-tailed prairie dog burrows were observed.

Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated

Special Status Fish:
This project would remove water from the Green River or White River in order to control dust during construction of the pipelines. There are three special status fish species that are endemic to the Colorado River Basin, including the Green River: roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*), flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), and bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*). 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.

Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate

Colorado River Fish Species:
This project would remove water for the Green River or White River in order to control dust during construction of the pipelines. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has identified four federally listed fish species historically associated with the Upper Colorado River Basin, including the Green River, as being within the project area: Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), bonytail (*Gila elegans*), and razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*). 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. The Green River and its 100-year floodplain have been designated Critical Habitat for these four endangered fish species (USFWS 1994).

CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

This section analyzes the impacts of the proposed action to those potentially impacting resources described in the affected environment Chapter 3, above.

PROPOSED ACTION

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

The Proposed Action would disturb approximately 46.41 new acres of soils and vegetation. Under the Proposed Action, reclamation would occur on 100 percent of the total disturbance. Impacts to soils and vegetation would be partially mitigated by reclamation of disturbed areas with native vegetation and control of noxious and invasive weeds by mechanical and chemical treatment (see Chapter 2).

Direct and indirect impacts to soils and vegetation include mixing of soil horizons, soil compaction, short-term loss of topsoil and site productivity, loss of soil/topsoil through erosion, clearing of vegetation, invasion and establishment of introduced, undesired plant species. Loss of soil/topsoil in disturbed areas would reduce the re-vegetation success of seeded native species due to increased competition by annual weed species. Annual weed species are adapted to disturbed conditions, and have less stringent moisture and soil nutrient requirements than do perennial native species. The severity of these invasions would depend on the success of reclamation and re-vegetation, and the degree and success of noxious weed control efforts.

The project would contribute an estimated additional 3.0 tons of soil per acre per year above the current natural erosion rate for the first year of development. After the first year, the soil erosion attributed to the project would reduce to 1.5 tons per acre per year until the access roads,

pipelines, and well pads are fully reclaimed. Erosion rates are higher during the first year due to disturbance during construction.

Mitigation for Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils, and Vegetation:

- All vehicles and equipment shall be cleaned either through power-washing, or other approved method, if the vehicles or equipment were previously operated outside the Uinta Basin, to prevent weed seed introduction.

Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate

Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus wetlandicus*)

As there are no individuals within the proposed surface disturbance area, no direct physical damage will occur to Uinta Basin hookless cactus individuals as a result of the Proposed Action.

Possible dispersed direct and indirect negative impacts which may result from implementation of the Proposed Action include: loss of up to 16 acres of suitable habitat, loss of habitat and forage opportunities for pollinators of the species, habitat modification by invasive weed species which may compete with individuals, accidental spray or drift of herbicides used during invasive plant control, and the deposition of fugitive dust from construction activities and vehicle traffic on unpaved roads. Due to these indirect negative impacts the Proposed Action warrants a ***"may affect, is not likely to adversely affect"*** determination for Uinta Basin hookless cactus. Informal Section 7 consultation with the USFWS has been completed as described in Chapter 5.

Mitigation for Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate Plant Species:

- Re-survey for Sclerocactus species will be required for ground disturbance if construction has not commenced prior to cactus survey season 2015, and beyond. The survey must be approved by the Authorized Officer of the BLM and copied to USFWS prior to construction.

Discovery Stipulation: Re-initiation of section 7 consultation with the USFWS will be sought immediately if any loss of plants or occupied habitat for Uinta Basin hookless cactus is anticipated as a result of project activities.

Migratory Birds Including Raptors

Migratory Birds:

The proposed action would result in a loss of habitat for migratory birds. Direct impacts to nesting and breeding migratory birds may occur, depending upon the time of construction. If development occurs in the spring, during the nesting season for most migratory birds, impacts would be greater than if development occurred between late summer and late winter. Impacts to birds during the spring could include nest abandonment, reproductive failure, displacement, and destruction of nests. Construction and drilling would likely have a greater impact on Utah Partners in Flight high-priority migratory bird species that may be utilizing the project area due to their smaller population sizes and limited distribution.

Successful reclamation efforts would return disturbed habitats to pre-disturbance levels and loss of vegetation would be a temporary impact to migratory bird habitat. Thus, direct and indirect

impacts to migratory bird species occurring in the project area would be minimal. These impacts are not seen as contributing to the decline in overall migratory bird species' populations such that special protection measures are necessary.

Raptors
Implementation of the Proposed Action could affect nesting and breeding burrowing owl which utilize the Project Area. Impacts to these species will almost certainly occur. Some impacts include displacement from suitable nesting habitations during the breeding season due to increased noise levels and visual disturbances on the landscape, nest abandonment, reduced habitat values in foraging areas due to prey displacement, potential loss of prey habitat, and an increased potential for collisions with vehicles traveling in the Project Area.

Prior to any surface-disturbing activities, if the project area is encompassed by the current raptor timing and spatial buffers, a BLM biologist or a BLM-approved contractor would survey all areas within a range of 0.5 mile from proposed surface disturbances. If occupied/active raptor nests are found, construction would not occur during the nesting season for that species within the species-specific buffer described in "BLM Best Management Practices for Raptors and their Associated Habitats in Utah."

Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia) If the surface disturbing activities are planned during the current timing restrictions for the Burrowing Owl (March 1st through August 31st) a survey for nesting Burrowing Owl is required. Depending on the results from the survey the BLM's Authorized Officer may or may not give permission to proceed.

Non-USFWS Designated

White-tailed Prairie Dog
Direct impacts to prairie dogs from the Proposed Action could include increased mortality due to prairie dog-vehicle collisions caused by vehicles traveling in/near colonies. As traffic volumes and/or project-related activities increase, adjacent habitats may be avoided due to human presence and noise. Increased traffic volumes in the Project Area would be temporary and restricted to the construction activities. After construction is complete, traffic volumes would most likely return to pre-project levels. Habitat quality for these species would also be degraded by the introduction of noxious and invasive weeds. Weed invasions may lead to a decrease in the amount of native perennials and bare ground, thereby degrading habitat for prairie dogs by decreasing visibility, forage quality, and burrow development. Axia would implement a weed control plan to deter the spread of invasive plants or noxious weeds in the Project Area; therefore, weed invasions should be minimal and should not adversely impact prairie dog colonies.

Special Status Fish:
The analysis for the three special status fish species excluding USFWS designated species is the same as the analysis for threatened, endangered or candidate fish species; therefore, the same mitigation measures apply. It is not anticipated that the proposed action would result in the listing any fish species.

Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate

Colorado River Fish Species:
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 Service has listed these species as endangered and has implemented programs to prevent them from becoming extinct.

Water depletions reduce the ability of the river to create and maintain the primary constituent elements that define critical habitats. Food supply, predation, and competition are 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.

The proposed action would result in a 5 acre-feet per year of water depletion based on removal of water from the Upper Colorado River Drainage System for construction and drilling operations. Therefore, the proposed action will have a ***"may affect, likely to adversely affect"*** determination for the endangered Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail, and razorback sucker. A programmatic Water Depletion Biological Assessment was prepared by the UWSFWS and the Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Field Office. These associated impacts are within the scope of this consultation. Therefore, the consultation for the water depletion impacts to the four Colorado River fish and their designated critical habitat has been previously completed.

Article I. ***Mitigation for Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Animal Species:***

- 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 BLM and Service approved location is best.
- If the pump head is located in the river channel where larval fish are known to occur, the following measures 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 31); and
    c. limit the amount of pumping, to the greatest extent possible, during the pre-dawn hours as larval drift studies indicate that this is a period of greatest daily activity.

- Screen all pump intakes with 3/32 inch mesh material.
- Approach velocities for intake structures will 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 will not exceed 0.33 feet per second (ft/s).
- Report any fish impinged on the intake screen to the Service (801.975.3330) and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources:

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

NO ACTION

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no direct disturbance or indirect effects to soils and vegetation from surface-disturbing activities associated with proposed action. Invasive plants/noxious weeds would remain at current levels. Current land use trends in the area would continue, including increased industrial development, increased off-highway vehicles (OHV) traffic, and increased recreation use for hunting, fishing, bird watching, and sightseeing.

Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate

Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus wetlandicus*)

Under the no action alternative, there would be no direct disturbance or indirect effects to Uinta Basin hookless cactus individuals or their associated habitat from surface disturbing activities associated with the construction activities. Current land use trends in the area would continue, including increased industrial development, increased OHV traffic, increased recreational use for hunting, bird watching, and sightseeing.

Migratory Birds Including Raptors

Under the no action alternative, there would be no direct disturbance or indirect effects to threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, or sensitive wildlife species from surface disturbing activities associated with the construction activities. Current land use trends in the area would continue, including increased industrial development, increased OHV traffic, increased recreational use for hunting, bird watching, and sightseeing.

Non-USFWS Designated

Special Status Fish:

Under the no action alternative, there would be no direct disturbance or indirect effects to threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, or sensitive wildlife species from surface disturbing activities associated with the construction activities. Current land use trends in the area would continue, including increased industrial development, increased OHV traffic, increased recreational use for hunting, bird watching, and sightseeing.

Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate

Colorado River Fish Species:
Under the no action alternative, there would be no direct disturbance or indirect effects to threatened, endangered, or candidate, species from surface disturbing activities associated with the construction of the pipieline. Current land use trends in the area would continue, including increased industrial development, increased OHV traffic, increased recreational use for hunting, bird watching and sightseeing.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

The CIAA for Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils, and Vegetation is the 18,515-acre Pelican Lake Subwatershed. Cumulative impacts include soil disruption, dust impacts, plant and pollinator habitat destruction, and weed invasion. Surface disturbance is a good indicator of the extent of these cumulative impacts.

Within the CIAA, 7,228 acres have been converted to agriculture or urban development (39.0% of the CIAA). There is one active approved field development NEPA document within the CIAA, QEP Energy Company's Greater Deadman Bench Oil and Gas Producing Region EIS (265 acres of the 98,785 acre project area is in the CIAA). A total of 4,561 acres of surface disturbance was authorized across the analysis area of this document. If the disturbance is relatively uniform throughout the project area, then approximately 12 acres will occur within the CIAA. Of these 12 acres, approximately 5 acres is likely to be found in previously undisturbed areas (0.0% of the CIAA).

Within the CIAA there also are oil and natural gas wells that do not tier to this NEPA document and are located within previously undeveloped areas. As of 9/13/2012, there are 3 abandoned oil and gas locations outside of the scope of the field development document. Using the assumption contained within the Greater Uinta Basin Cumulative Impacts Technical Support Document, 16 acres of the CIAA were disturbed some point in the past and are in various stages of reclamation (0.1% of the CIAA). There are currently 10 well pads that serve as platforms for actively producing wells not permitted under this document. Using the above assumption, this has resulted in 47 acres of surface disturbance (0.3% of the CIAA). Finally, 35 wells are currently proposed that do not tier to this document that will result in 104 acres of surface disturbance (0.6% of the CIAA).

Within the CIAA, there are approximately 74 miles of roads. There are no currently proposed field developments within the CIAA. Thus, in total 172 acres (0.9% of the CIAA) have been or will be disturbed within the CIAA due to energy development activities. The Proposed Action would add 46.41 acres of new surface disturbance. The No Action alternative would not result in an additional accumulation of impacts.

Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate

Uinta Basin hookless cactus (Sclerocactus wetlandicus)

The CIAA for Uinta Basin hookless cactus is the area delineated by the USFWS as potential habitat for the species. This area covers approximately 537,564 acres on BLM, Ute tribal, state

of Utah, and privately held lands. Within the CIAA, there are approximately 1,875 miles of roads. Past, present and reasonably foreseeable disturbance from oil and gas will affect 44,690 acres (8.3% of the CIAA), as shown below. Cumulative impacts include dust impacts to plants, and plant and pollinator habitat destruction. Surface disturbance is a good indicator of the extent of these cumulative impacts.

	Project Area Acreage	**Surface Disturbance Analyzed**	**Project Area Acreage within the CIAA**	**Surface Disturbance within the CIAA[1]**
Ongoing Field Development				
Chapita Wells-Stagecoach Area	31,872	1,735	22,678	1,235
Gasco Natural Gas Field Development EIS	236,165	3,604	77,339	1,180
Greater Deadman Bench Oil and Gas Producing Region EIS	98,785	1,239	22,444	282
Greater Natural Buttes Project EIS	162,911	8,147	97,529	4,877
North Alger Natural Gas Expansion Project EA	2,320	192	943	78
North Chapita Natural Gas Well Development Project EA	31,872	1,735	9,191	500
River Bend Unit Infill Development EA	17,719	924	14,892	823
Rock Point EDA Leasing and Exploratory Drilling EA	92,098	340	11,344	42
Saddletree Draw Leasing and Rock House Development EA	4,826	106	4,774	105
West Bonanza Area Natural Gas Well Development Project EA	24,813	608	1,070	26
West Tavaputs EIS	137,930	1,603	30,704	357
Past Developments and Current and Future Developments Not Covered by a Field				

Development NEPA Document				
729 abandoned wells"[3]	NA[4]	NA	NA	3,565 acres
5,239 existing wells"[3]	NA	NA	NA	19,158 acres
752 proposed well[3]	NA	NA	NA	2,377 acres
Field Development Proposals				
Greater Chapita Wells Natural Gas Infill Project EIS	40,027	3,696	31,741	2,931
Monument Butte Area Oil and Gas Development Project EIS	119,850	15,612	43,964	5,727
Randlett EDA Area Programmatic Leasing and Exploration Project	53,380	2,613	28,817	1,411
Total CIAA disturbance from oil and gas				
	--	--	--	44,674 acres (8.3%)
Current Project				
Proposed Action	NA	NA	NA	16
No Action	NA	NA	NA	0
Total CIAA disturbance from oil and gas				
	--	--	--	44,690 acres (8.3%)

[1]Assumes surface disturbance was authorized evenly across the analysis area of the document.
[2]Uses the assumption contained within the Greater Uinta Basin Cumulative Impacts Technical Support Document.
[3]As of 4/8/2013
[4]NA = not applicable

Due to inclusions of areas of unsuitable habitat within the potential habitat area, the total acreage of suitable habitat is less than 537,564 acres. However, a complete survey of suitable habitat has not been performed and thus the amount of suitable habitat has not been quantified. Impacts to the species from past, current, and reasonably foreseeable actions may be greater or smaller than those described for the total area depending upon the exact distribution of actions relative to suitable habitat.

Migratory Birds Including Raptors

The CIAA is the Vernal RMP area. Cumulative impacts include decreased available cover, carrying capacity, foraging opportunities, breeding habitat, and habitat productivity for white-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl, 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 17.1 acres of new surface disturbance. The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

Colorado River Fish Species

The CIAA 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 stream flow can also reduce a stream's ability to transport sediment downstream. The Proposed Action would add 5 acre-feet for the dust control. The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

CHAPTER 5
PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

During preparation of the EA, the public was notified of the proposed action on February 3, 2014. The process used to involve the public included posting the proposed action on the Utah ENBB (Electronic Notification Bulletin Board) and ePlanning NEPA register. A public comment period was not offered because very little interest in the proposal has been expressed.

Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Information on Consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (17 USC 1531)	The Service agrees, by letter dated February 11, 2014, that the proposed action" may affect, is not likely to adversely affect" the Pariette cactus or the Uinta Basin hookless cactus because of the conservation measures included in the environmental assessment.
Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Consultation for undertakings, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 USC 470) 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1)	No Historic Properties affected 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Request sent for consultation on August 21, 2012 and concurrence was received on August 28, 2012.

Tribal Consultation: No Traditional Cultural Properties are identified within the APE.

List of Preparers

BLM staff specialists who determined the affected resources for this document are listed in Appendix A. Those who contributed further analysis in the body of this EA are listed below.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST

Project Title: Axia Energy LLC. Three Rivers Phase 1 and 2 Lateral Pipelines

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0090-EA

File/Serial Numbers: UTU-89179 and UTU-89171

Project Leader: Cindy McKee

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
RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)				
NI	Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Dust and other emissions would occur from vehicles supporting the proposed installation. Overall, summertime air quality in the Basin was modeled as being within attainment of the NAAQS (UBAQS model, GNB model, and Gasco model). Preliminary monitoring results are showing exceedences of the ozone NAAQS in the Uinta Basin during the winter when snow cover is present. However, ozone formation from its component parts (NOx and VOCs) is a non-linear, photo-reactive process, and no models exist for predicting winter-time ozone formulation. It is anticipated that the incremental change from this project's alternatives would be so small as to be undetectable by both models and monitors. 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	Cindy McKee	1-30-13

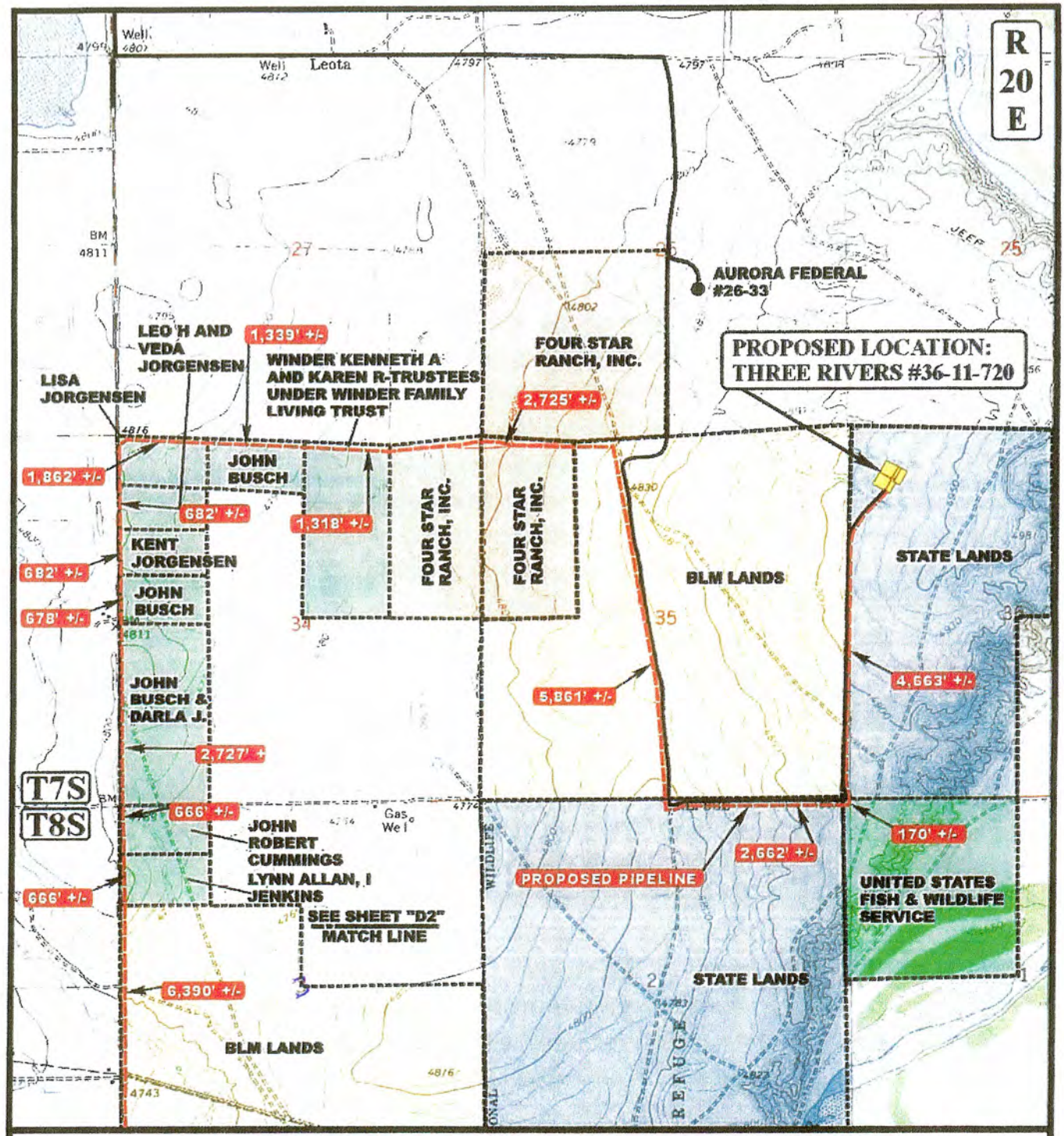
Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		are lacking so that it is not technically feasible to determine the net impacts to climate due to greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions associated with this action and its alternative(s) would be negligible.		
NP	BLM Natural Areas	No BLM Natural Areas exist within the identified project area.	Dan Gilfillan	2/1/13
NP	Cultural: Archaeological Resources	No cultural resources were identified within the APE of the proposed well pad, associated access roads and pipelines.	Cameron Cox	4-1-2013
NP	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.	Cameron Cox	4-1-2013
NP	Designated Areas: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	No ACEC exist within the identified project area.	Dan Gilfillan	2/1/13
NP	Designated Areas: Wild and Scenic Rivers	No Wild and Scenic River segments exist within the identified project area.	Dan Gilfillan	2/1/13
NP	Designated Areas: Wilderness Study Areas	No wilderness areas have been designated by the U. S. Congress on BLM lands in the VFO.	Dan Gilfillan	2/1/13
NI	Environmental Justice	No minority or economically disadvantaged communities or populations would be disproportionately adversely affected by the proposed action or alternatives because there are no such communities or populations located in the project area.	Cindy McKee	1-30-13
NI	Farmlands (prime/unique)	All prime farmlands in Uintah County are irrigated. All unique farmlands in Uintah County are orchards. No irrigated lands or orchards are located in the project area; therefore this resource will not be carried forward for analysis.	Cindy McKee	1-30-13
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	There are no planned fuels projects in the immediate area. Applying the Green River District Reclamation Guidelines should prevent additional hazardous fuels.	Blaine Tarbell	2/5/13
NI	Geology/Minerals/Energy Production	The proposed location is in an area that is open to stone collection under the 2008 Vernal Field Office RMP. However, pipeline construction activities would not inhibit stone collection in this area. No known gilsonite is in the project area. If gilsonite is encountered during construction activities, please report that information to BLM VFO. The depth and thickness of the vein is important information that should be provided to BLM. If blasting is required during construction activities, the operator must notify any active Gilsonite operation within 2 miles of the location 48 hours prior to any blasting for this project. No other known resources will be impacted by this project.	Andy McCormick	1/30/2013
IP/NW: PI Soils: PI Veg: PI	Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation	IP/NW: Surface disturbance associated with the proposed project will result in the creation of potential habitat for establishment and spread of non-native plant species Soils: Approximately 46.41 acres of new soil disturbance would occur during construction until reclamation is successful. Soils would be re-contoured and reseeded during reclamation.	IP/NW: Aaron Roe Soils: David Gordon Veg: Aaron Roe	8/27/2013 9/04/2013 8/27/2013

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		• The proposed project is located within the 2013 potential habitat polygon for Uinta Basin hookless cactus.		
NI	Plants: Wetland/Riparian	Based on site visits and GIS data the project avoids wetland/riparian areas. Also the erosion and reclamation activities will reduce impacts to wetlands /riparian areas.	David Gordon	9/05/2013
NI	Recreation	No developed recreation sites/trails or Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) exist within the project area. Limited recreational use in the area. Considered part of the Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA), where limited recreation management takes place. Recreational use of off highway vehicles (OHVs) is restricted to existing roads and trails.	Dan Gilfillan	2/1/13
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.	Cindy McKee	1-13-13
NI	Visual Resources	The identified project area occurs within VRM Class III Lands. The objective of VRM III is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. The proposed action would be in conformance with this VRM objective.	Dan Gilfillan	2/1/13
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.	Cindy McKee	
NI	Water: Floodplains	The pipeline crosses the area known as Ouray Canal and its associated floodplain in Sec. 3 of T8S R20E; this is a manmade canal. Although a manmade flood zone exists it will not be affected to a degree that would require detailed analysis, since the company plans on minimal disturbance through this zone and have plans of reclamation no detailed analysis is required at this time.	James Hereford II	4/4/2013 Updated: 2/20/2014
NI	Water: Groundwater Quality	Groundwater may be present at about 40 ft below ground surface. Groundwater would not likely be affected unless a major leak occurs in the 10-inch produced water pipeline or the 4-inch residue gas pipeline.	Elizabeth Gamber	2/21/2012
NI	Water: Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The proposal is within an area that has many ephemeral type drainages and associated tributaries. The type of sediment in the area is conducive to movement during high precipitation events, which is typical of a High Desert type ecosystem. Although hydrologic conditions exist detailed analysis is not needed at this time due to the small amount of surface disturbance that will take place in the proposed action and because the company plans on doing reclamation.	James Hereford II	4/4/2013 Updated: 2/20/2014
NI	Water: Surface Water Quality	There are no major perennial waters within the project area. However, there are a number of ephemeral type drainages within the proposed area. These if modified can result in increases in sedimentation reaching the	James Hereford II	4/4/2013 updated: 2/20/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		Green River during high flood type events. Since the company plans on doing reclamation, and will stay on approved routes and minimizing dirt work during muddy conditions, affects to surface water quality will be negligible. If found later to have an affect not covered by this rationale, additional analysis must take place.		
NP	Water: Waters of the U.S.	There are no waters of the U.S. present on the proposed project area as per GIS review and on the ground observations.	James Hereford II	4/4/2013 Updated: 2/20/2014
NP	Wild Horses	Proposed project is not located within a wild horse & burro herd or management area per VFO GIS data layer.	Cindy McKee	2-25-2013
PI	Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including raptors)	Migratory birds are present within project area. Burrowing owl habitat is present within project area.	Dan Emmett	1/31/2013
PI	Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated	Water would be used for this proposed project so sensitive fish species need to be analyzed. White-tailed prairie dog habitat is present within project area.	Dan Emmett	1/31/2013
PI	Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate	Water would be used for this proposed project so T&E fish species need to be analyzed. Is the proposed project in sage grouse PPH or PGH? Yes ☐ No ☒ If the answer is yes, the project must conform with WO IM 2012-043.	Dan Emmett	1/31/2013
NP	Woodlands/Forestry	Not present in project area per review of GIS.	David Palmer	1/30/2013

FINAL REVIEW:

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	Stephanie J Howard	2/21/14	
Authorized Officer		2-25-2014	



APPROXIMATE TOTAL PIPELINE DISTANCE = 40,433' +/-

LEGEND:

EXISTING ROAD

PROPOSED PIPELINE

EXISTING FENCE

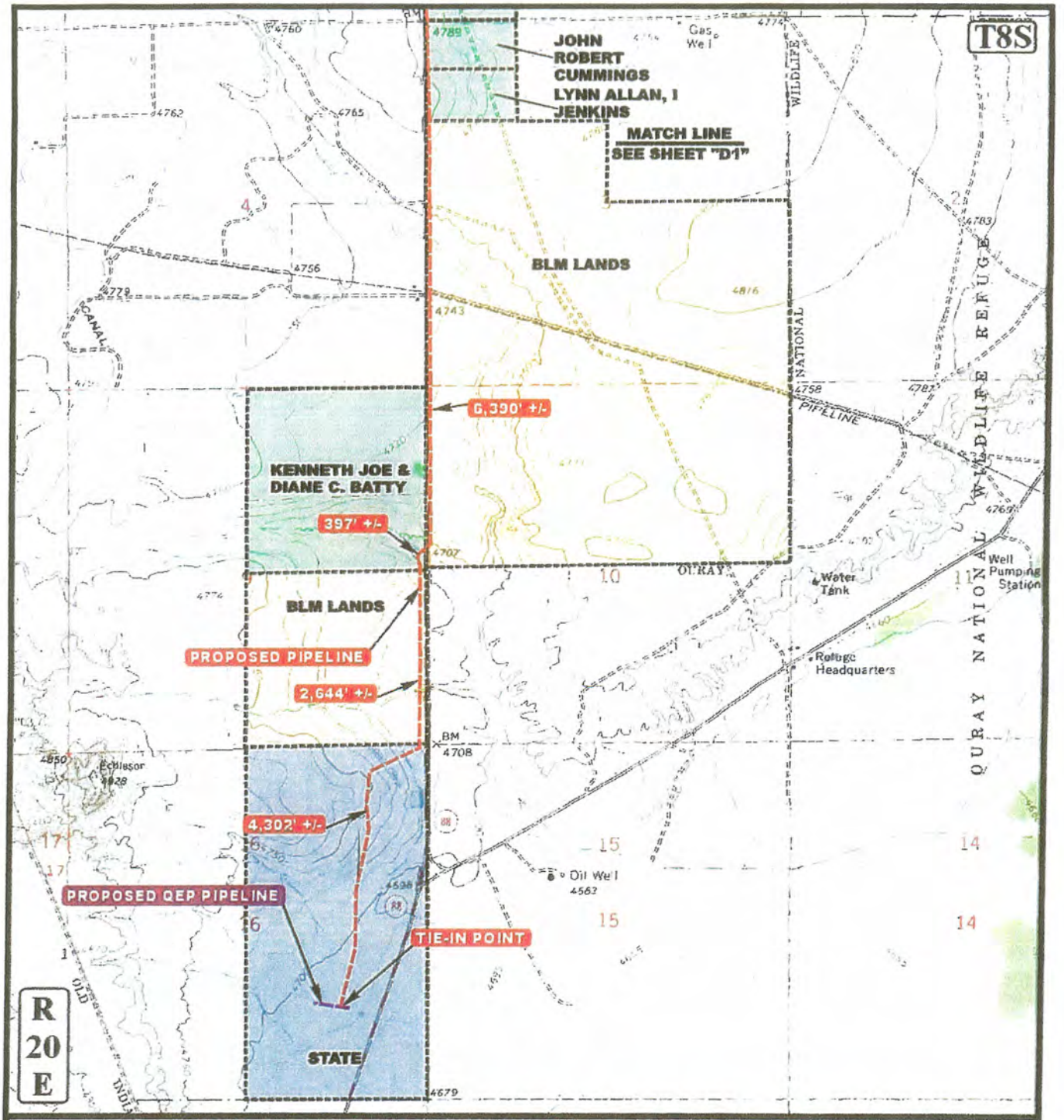
N

AXIA ENERGY

THREE RIVERS #36-11-720
SECTION 36, T7S, R20E, S.L.B.&M.
805' FNL 601' FWL

Uintah Engineering & Land Surveying
85 South 200 East Vernal, Utah 84078
(435) 789-1017 * FAX (435) 789-1813

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP	04 MONTH	11 DAY	12 YEAR	D1 TOPO
SCALE: 1" = 2000'	DRAWN BY: A.T.	REV: 06-15-12 C.I.		



APPROXIMATE TOTAL PIPELINE DISTANCE = 40,433' +/-

LEGEND:

PROPOSED PIPELINE

PROPOSED PIPELINE (SERVICING OTHER WELLS)

N

AXIA ENERGY

THREE RIVERS #36-11-720
SECTION 36, T7S, R20E, S.L.B.&M.
805' FNL 601' FWL

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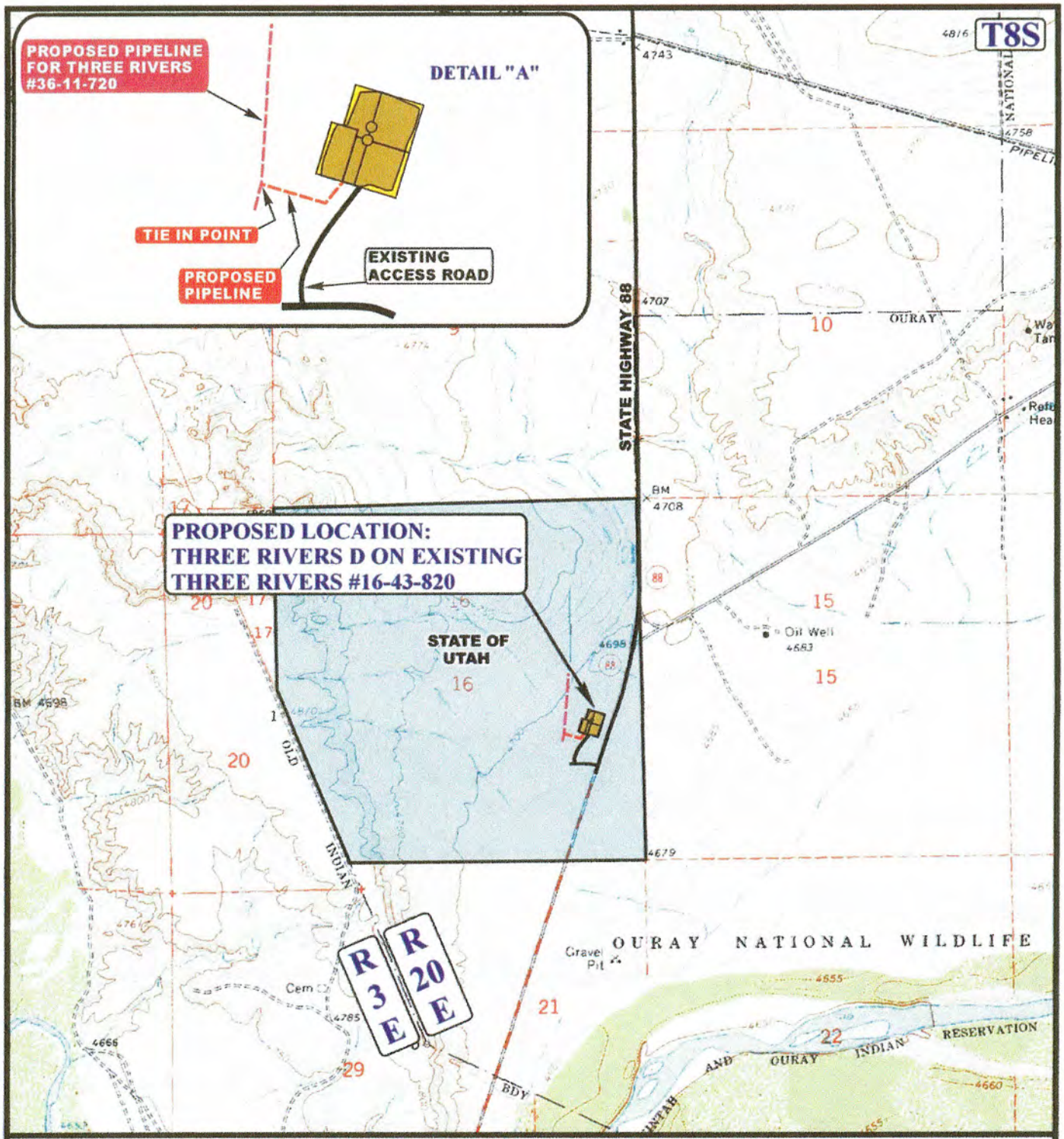
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP	04 MONTH	11 DAY	12 YEAR	D2 TOPO
SCALE: 1" = 2000'	DRAWN BY: A.T.	REVISED: 06-15-12		



APPROXIMATE TOTAL PIPELINE DISTANCE = 390' +/-

LEGEND:

EXISTING ROAD

PROPOSED PIPELINE (SERVICING OTHER WELLS)

PROPOSED PIPELINE

N

AXIA ENERGY

THREE RIVERS D ON EXISTING
THREE RIVERS #16-43-820
SECTION 16, T8S, R20E, S.L.B.&M.
NE 1/4 SE 1/4

Uintah Engineering & Land Surveying
85 South 200 East Vernal, Utah 84078
(435) 789-1017 * FAX (435) 789-1813

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP	03 MONTH	29 DAY	12 YEAR	D TOPO
SCALE: 1" = 2000'	DRAWN BY: J.L.G.	REV: 03-08-13 A.T.		