

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

Environmental Assessment

**DOI-BLM-UT-G010-0154-EA
Section 27 to WV 16-inch
UTU-90482**

PREPARING OFFICE

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Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze QEP FS proposal (Section 27 to WV16–inch) to install a buried 16–inch main trunk pipeline to transport natural gas from existing and future gas wells. The pipeline would support QEP Energy Co. current and future producing gas wells in the Lower Mesa Verde formation in the Redwash field..

This 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. The EA assists the Bureau of Land Management (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 and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a statement of “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). A FONSI statement is a document that briefly present 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 (October 2008). If the decision maker determines that this project has “significant” impacts following the analysis in the EA, an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record may be signed for the EA approving the alternative selected.

Identifying Information:

Title, EA number, and type of project:

QEP FS

Section 27 to WV 16–inch

DOI-BLM-UT-G010–0154–EA

16–inch buried, natural gas, main trunk pipeline

Location of Proposed Action:

SLM, UT T. 7 S., R. 22 E., Sec. 26, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Lead Office— Vernal Field Office

170 S. 500 E.

Vernal Utah

435–781–4400

Identify the subject function code, lease, serial, or case file number:

Case file number: UTU-90482

Applicant Name:

QEP Field Services

Purpose and Need for Action:

The BLM's need is to consider approval of the application to install a buried Main Trunk Line, in accordance with pursuant to Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 185). BLM's purpose is to avoid or reduce impacts on sensitive resource values associated with the project area and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands.

Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

The proposed action was posted to the public BLM E-Planning website with its assigned NEPA number on May 8, 2014. To date, no questions or comments have been received. A public comment period was not offered due to the proposed action being similar in nature to other projects in the immediate area.

Issues identified by BLM Specialists are documented in Appendix A Interdisciplinary Team Checklist.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Description of the Proposed Action:

QEP Field Services (QEP FS) proposes to install a 16-inch natural gas pipeline, (cathodically protected) and will tie into an existing 16-inch pipeline authorized under right-of-way UTU-77725.

I. Description of the Facility: (e.g., pipeline and ancillary facilities, etc.)

This pipeline will transport natural gas from all current and future producing gas wells in the Redwash area. Projected throughput will be approximately 375 MMSCFD. This pipeline will be buried and will be a maximum of 16" in size. The pipeline will be located on BLM surface lands in Section 26, of Township 7 South, Range 22 East.

The pipeline will be a low pressure, cathodically protected, buried, up to 16" O.D. pipeline (wall thickness as required per Code, grade X42/X52). The MAOP for the line is 275 psig.

The pipeline would all be located on BLM surface. The pipeline is approximately 1403 feet in length with a permanent 50 foot width, an approximate 1.61 acres.

An additional temporary construction area of 50 feet wide (20' spoil- 30' working side) the full 1,403 length of the pipeline, is requested for a total of 100 foot width for construction, comprising approximately 3.22 acres of new surface disturbance. The 3.22 acres of new surface disturbance will be reclaimed within 60 days after construction.

The pipeline will operate year round and the right-of-way is requested for a term of 30 years with options to renew for as long as needed.

Upon receipt of all necessary approvals, pipeline construction will commence in the summer months of 2014 and construction will take approximately 4 weeks.

All permanent, above-ground facilities, valves and metering, not subject to safety requirements, will be painted a flat non-contrasting color (Covert Green) which is harmonious with the surrounding landscape as specified by the BLM. (The above ground facilities are referenced under pipeline specifications #7 (a) (b) (c) (d)).

II. Facility Purpose and Need

QEP Energy Company (QEP Energy) recently started a program to drill and complete wells in the Lower Mesa Verde formation in the Redwash field. The development will include well pads throughout their acreage that will significantly increase the volume of natural gas needing to be transported from the field. The majority of the gas will flow from west to east; however, some of the gas can flow from east to west.

The proposed pipeline will serve as the main trunk line for the field and is required to transport gas from the pads to field compression and dehydration.

The proposed pipeline will operate at low pressure; therefore, a large line is required to support the projected volumes. In addition, installing a larger trunk line will reduce the chance or number of additional parallel lines that might otherwise be required in the future to adequately transport this gas.

Ancillary Right-Of-Way and Permits

Access into the proposed pipeline project will be from existing highways and roads. All construction and vehicular traffic will be confined to the right-of-way corridor or designated county and/or BLM roads unless otherwise authorized and approved by the regulating agency or landowner. No new access roads will be required for the construction of the project. Approvals will be obtained from the BLM for the use of existing roads during construction. Authorized roads will be rehabilitated to pre-construction conditions after construction activities are complete, unless otherwise specified by regulating agency or landowner.

QEP FS will submit to Uintah County a Right-of-Way Encroachment Application along with the pipeline crossing plan and profile for every county road crossing and will pay the appropriate permit fee for each.

Any associated building, zoning, and utility crossing permits will be secured from the appropriate regulatory agency prior to pipeline construction.

Engineering Surveys

All alignment maps, site specific details, and design drawings associated with the above mentioned project are available for review at QEP FS' Redwash office located at 418 East Main Street, Vernal Utah upon request.

QEP FS will protect all survey monuments, witness comers, reference monuments, and bearing trees within the right-of-way against disturbance during construction, operations, maintenance, and rehabilitation. If any monument corner or accessory is destroyed, obliterated, or damaged during construction, operation, or maintenance, QEP FS will have a registered surveyor restore the disturbed monument, comer or accessory using surveying procedures found in the "Manual of Surveying Instruction for the Survey of Public Lands of the United Sates" 1973 edition. QEP FS will record such survey in the appropriate county and send a copy to the appropriate BLM office.

Design and Engineering:

The design and engineering will be completed by QEP FS personnel or an Engineering Contractor supervised by QEP FS engineering staff.

Inspection:

QEP FS will be employing experienced and qualified pipeline inspectors to monitor and ensure the quality of the pipeline installation. Status reports will be available upon request by the authorized officer. QEP FS will also be using a pipeline contractor with experienced personnel and specialized equipment making this project as cost effective and as non-intrusive as possible.

Pipeline Specifications:

1. A 100' wide construction phase right-of-way will be necessary
2. Design Codes
 - a. Pipeline is designed in accordance with ASME B31.8
 - b. Pipe purchased will be PSL2 pipe manufactured in accordance to API 5L— "Specification for Line Pipe"

3. Mainline Pipe Specifications (depending on location):

a. *16" O.D., wall thickness as required per Code, Grade X42/X52

4. Road crossing pipe (unimproved public roads and/or roads, highways, or public streets with hard surfaces):

a. NON-cased crossings

b. *16" O.D., wall thickness as required per Code, Grade X52

5. Pipe will have a minimum of 14-16 mils Fusion Bond Epoxy (FBE) coating

6. Buried Depths:

a. Mainline pipe will have a minimum of 36" of cover

b. River/Road/Railroad crossings will have a minimum of 48" of cover under the ditch and 72" of cover under the road/river/railroad

7. Above-ground facilities (risers, valves, pig receivers and launchers, etc.)

a. (1) 16" Launcher and (1) 16" Receiver will be constructed and placed on the line

b. A minimum of one (1) mainline block valves will also be installed actual locations have not yet been determined

c. Lateral tie-ins will be installed - actual locations have not yet been determined

d. Any above ground facilities near any established right-of-way will have permanent barricade guards, especially equipment around or near roads, to prevent any damage from vehicle accidents. The guards will be structurally sound, with a minimum 6-inch diameter pipe, cement filled and anchored. Above ground facilities will not be placed or built under any existing power line utilities.

*16" or appropriately sized equipment if smaller O.D. pipe is used

Flood Plain Specifications:

The proposed pipeline does not cross any major washes.

Archaeological Specifications:

An independent archeology study has been completed by Aros Archeology. A determination of "no historic properties affected" pursuant to section 106 is proposed for this project. The recommendations and determinations can be found in their final attached Report dated December 13, 2013.

Paleontological Specifications:

An independent paleontological reconnaissance survey was completed by Outlaw Engineering. The recommendations and determinations found in their final attached report, dated December 9, 2013 are that no paleontological restrictions be placed on this project.

Vegetation & Wildlife Specifications:

A Bio (T&E) survey was completed by OUTLAW Engineering Inc. The recommendations and determinations dated December 4, 2013 can be found in their final attached report. QEP FS will comply with all recommendations.

Road Specifications: Not applicable

Power Line Specifications: Not applicable

Communication Site Specifications: (pertain to non-linear sites) Not applicable

Fencing:

The integrity of existing fences will be maintained at all times. Any existing fence to be crossed by the pipeline will be braced and tied off before cutting the wire. At any temporary fence crossing, a wire gate will be placed at the opening during the construction phase. At any permanent fence crossings, a cattle-guard will be installed on concrete bases and a 16-foot steel powder-river type gate will be placed next the fence brace post adjacent to the cattle-guard. The fencing, braces, gate, cattle-guard and bases will be installed in accordance with instructions from the BLM.

Construction of the ROW Facility:

Flagging and Staking the ROW:

Centerline and exterior staking will be used along the pipeline route as stated in 43 CFR..

Clearing/Grading of ROW and Construction Procedures:

Any clearing or grading will be done as follows.

a) Utilizing industry available mechanical equipment, contractor shall build a suitable ROW necessary for safe pipeline construction activities. Contractor will use all reasonable means to limit the amount of disturbed acreage from the grading activities. The area of spoil pile storage from trenching, including the trench area and pipeline stringing paths, will be graded to provide for a safe working platform/environment throughout the length of the pipeline. Areas beyond that stated above will be graded as needed when a safe working platform/environment needs to be established. Excess grading for the purpose of vehicle and equipment travel along easily navigable terrain will be prohibited.

b) 6" of topsoil will be removed and stockpiled on edge of ROW where required to complete the work safely.

c) Subsoil will be removed and stockpiled next to topsoil to accommodate any leveling needed.

d) Trenching of 6 feet deep and 48-inch wide will commence utilizing industry available mechanical equipment for excavation/backfilling operations. Should contractor and company representative determine explosives are needed to excavate rock ditch areas; contractor will take every precaution to protect the public, wildlife and its personnel from injury or harm which might arise from the use of such explosives. Contractor shall exercise extreme care and shall use methods satisfactory to Company representative and the authorized officer that will not cause damage to persons or property. Blasting mats or other effective means will be used to prevent rock from being scattered over the ROW and adjacent property. The handling, transporting, storage and use of explosives will comply with all applicable laws, regulations and order of proper authorities.

- e) A track hoe with a vacu-lift attachment will be used for pipe stringing on the working side.
- f) Once the pipe has been strung and lined up, the welding operation will commence.
- g) All welding will be conducted in compliance with the American Petroleum Institute (API) Standards 1104, "Welding of Pipelines and Related Facilities."
- h) Following welding operations, the welded areas will be sand blasted and coated.
- i) The pre-coated pipe will be lowered into the ditch.
- j) After lowering the pipe into the trench, a shaker bucket will be used for padding the pipeline and backfilling. No material/borrow sites are anticipated for the construction of the pipeline.
- k) Subsoil and topsoil will be replaced back to original contour.
- l) The pipeline will be hydrostatically tested per code at 400 psig for 8 hours, or as required per final engineering design.
- m) Reseeding and any erosion barriers needed will be installed after pipeline is tested.
- n) Equipment proposed on the pipeline project is as follows:

10 each Pickup Trucks

6 each Welding Trucks

4 each Tractor Trailer

6 each Two-Ton Trucks iv.

1 each seed driller and Tractor

4 each Backhoes and/or Track hoes

2 each Side Boom

1 each Maintainer (Blade)

1 each Water Truck

1 Each 5 Ton Skid Truck

2 each Dozer Caterpillar

Earthwork: Not applicable

Structure Installation: Not applicable

Stabilization, Rehabilitation, and Vegetation: QEP FS reclamation plan attached

Operation and Maintenance of the Facility:

Some operational opening and closing of valves and blowing down of laterals will be required. Annual leak surveys, valve greasing and inspections will be performed in the spring/summer/fall months.

QEP FS will work with the BLM to remediate any problems that might arise from the construction of this new pipeline.

Termination and Abandonment:

QEP FS does not foresee any reason to terminate or abandon this pipeline before its term would expire. QEP FS has proven its ability to terminate and successfully reclaim its pipelines and ROWs in the past and continues to be able do so.

Miscellaneous Information Needs

Waste Disposal

1. Garbage and other refuse materials will be placed in a trash cage, the contents of which will be disposed of in the nearest legal landfill.
2. Portable toilets will be furnished by contractors and all waste will be hauled to and disposed of in an approved treatment facility.

Traffic Control Plan: Not applicable in this remote area

Safety Plan for Employees, Contractors, and General Public:

QEP FS' Employee Safety Plan will be adhered to by all associated with this project (Available upon request).

Fire Prevention Plan:

QEP FS' Fire Prevention Plans will be adhered to by all associated with this project. (Available upon request). If construction would take place during fire season QEP FS would utilize precautionary measures if necessary to eliminate any fires.

Spill Prevention Plan:

QEP FS' Spill Prevention Plans will be adhered to by all associated with this project. (Available upon request)

Temporary Use Permit: (TUP)

A temporary construction width of 50' x 1403 feet in length (located outside of the permanent 50 foot right-of-way) which will be utilized during the along the entire length of the right-of-way will be required for construction.

Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail:

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, BLM would not approve the right-of-way application for the 16-inch buried main trunk line to support the transportation of natural gas. QEP FS would not be allowed to install the pipeline on Federal lands.

Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail:

There were no other alternatives identified aside from the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives that would meet the purpose and need of this project.

Conformance

The proposed action would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 2008). The RMP/ROD decision allows ROWs on public lands in accordance with the Realty Decisions. It has been determined that the proposed action and alternative(s) would not conflict with any decisions throughout the plan.

Affected Environment:

This chapter presents the potentially affected existing environment (i.e. the Physical, biological, social, and economic values and resources) of the impact area as identified in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in Chapter 4.

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils, and Vegetation

The invasive species, cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) is present at these locations.

The soils are a sandy clay loam. Soils in the Project Area tend to be shallow and well drained.

The vegetation in the Project Area consists of fairly short shrubs, grasses and some forbs. Species include Little Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis*), shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugata*), Gardner saltbush (*Atriplex gardneri*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), needle and thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*), prickly pear cactus sp. (*Opuntia sp.*), galleta grass (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), Mormon tea (*Ephedra viridis*), Slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), Scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*).

Environmental Effects:

4.1 NO ACTION

This chapter describes the direct and indirect impacts that would be expected to occur upon the implementation of the considered alternative. It also discloses the expected cumulative impacts, which are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

The BLM would not approve the right-of-way for the proposed buried 16-inch natural gas pipeline (Main Trunk Line) in the Red Wash area, to support the transportation of Natural Gas from existing and future wells.

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils, and Vegetation

In addition to the applicant committed measures outlined within QEP's reclamation plan, the Plan of Development for this project, the below mitigation measures would reduce the risk of establishment or spread of non-native invasive plant species.

The Proposed Action would disturb approximately 3.22 acre of soils and vegetation. The portions of the disturbed area that would not be utilized for maintenance would be subject to interim reclamation. If interim reclamation is successful, direct long-term impacts to vegetation would not occur. If interim reclamation is not successful, the entire area could remain disturbed for the long term. Long-term impacts to vegetation are expected for the life of the project..

Additional direct impacts to vegetation are primarily associated with clearing of vegetation during construction. Indirect impacts to vegetation resources include the invasion and establishment of introduced, undesired plant species. The severity of these invasions would depend on the success of reclamation and revegetation, and the degree and success of noxious weed control efforts.

The area's poor soil reclamation potential, has made successful reclamation efforts challenging. BLM field inspections indicate that short-term impacts may be more accurately portrayed as long-term impacts. However, most of these issues should be addressed in the BLM approved Questar Exploration and Production Company Uinta Basin Division Reclamation Plan. A copy of this plan is on file at the BLM Vernal Field Office.

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.

Mitigation

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

Cumulative Impacts

Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils, and Vegetation

The CIAA for soils and vegetation is the boundary of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Greater Deadman Bench Oil and Gas Producing Region . The Greater Deadman Bench Oil and Gas Producing Region project area is located 20 miles south of Vernal, Utah.

The project area encompasses approximately 3.22 acres of land within Uintah County. The project area is located in Section 26, of Township 7 South, Range 22 East. The town of Vernal is approximately 26 miles north of the project boundary. The foreseeable activity for the QEP FEIS is the drilling of up to 1,239 new wells. Future total area of disturbance due to oil and gas activity for the FEIS project area is approximately 98,785 acres.

Soil erosion would be increased due to the disturbance associated with oil and gas activities in the area. Each acre of disturbance adds to a cumulative effect by increasing erosion and destroying native vegetation, and through the invasion of undesired plant species. In general, soils in the Uinta Basin are very thin, slow to develop, and difficult to reclaim because of the arid climate and lack of organic material.

Direct surface disturbances to vegetation indicated by past, present, and reasonably foreseeable developments are primarily attributable to oil and gas development and vegetation management by various federal agencies. Oil and gas development, however, would continue to degrade local habitat by direct disturbance and slow reclamation of disturbed areas. Surface disturbance within the CIAA would be approximately 98,785 acres. The Proposed Action would add approximately 3.22 acre of surface disturbance. The No Action alternative would not result in an accumulation of impacts.

Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

[Describe consultation efforts here.]

Table 1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Erin Goslin	Archaeological Resources	A consultation letter was sent to State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on July 18, 2012 recommending a “no historic properties effected” determination. BLM received their concurrence to our determination on July 31, 2012
Erin Goslin	Native American Religious Concerns	Tribal consultation was conducted under the Greater Deadman Bench EIS in 2008. No Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) are identified within the APE. The proposed project will not hinder access to our use of Native American Religious sites.
UBTA-UBET Communications	Mailed notification letter of the proposed project that would be installed adjacent to existng Telephone Line authorized under UTU-0-145324.	No issues or comments on the proposed project have been received.
Moon Lake Electric Association	Mailed notification letter of the proposed project that would be installed adjacent to existng power line authorized under UTU-90482.	No issues or comments on the proposed project have been received.

References

BLM. 2008. Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Greater Deadman Bench Oil and Gas Producing Region Project, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal District Office.

Interdisciplinary Checklist

APPENDIX A:

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST

Project Title: QEP FS Section 27 to WV 16-inch (Buried 16-inch, Natural Gas Pipeline)

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0154-EA

File/Serial Number: UTU-90482

Project Leader: Margo Roberts

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	<p>Emissions will occur from vehicles in the project area, but those impacts will be short term & transitory so they will not be detectable by monitors or models.</p> <p>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.</p>	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NP	BLM Natural Areas	The proposed project does not fall within the boundaries of a BLM Natural Area as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS layers database.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NP	Cultural: Archaeological Resources	Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.16(y) this project is considered to be an undertaking. The area of potential effect (APE) is defined as the polygon presented in the right-of-way application. MOAC conducted a 100% pedestrian inventory of the project area. No cultural material was identified within the project area. A consultation letter was sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on July 18, 2012 recommending a "no historic properties effected" determination. We received their concurrence to our determination on July 31, 2012.	Erin Goslin	5/16/2014
NP	Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	Tribal consultation was conducted under the Greater Deadman Bench EIS in 2008. 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.	Erin Goslin	5/16/2014
NP	Designated Areas: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	The proposed project does not fall within the boundaries of an ACEC per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS layers database.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NP	Designated Areas: Wild and Scenic Rivers	The proposed project is not in an Wild and Scenic Rivers area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS layers database.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NP	Designated Areas: Wilderness Study Areas	The proposed project is not in an Wilderness/WSA area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS layers database.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NI	Environmental Justice	No minority or economically disadvantaged communities or populations would be disproportionately adversely affected by the proposed action or alternatives.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NP	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.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	The proposed activities may have an impact due to the increased chance of promoting invasive species; primarily Bromus tectorum. Bromus tectorum may become established through soil disturbance and may increase fire frequency in those areas. Applying the Green River District Reclamation Guidelines to any surface disturbing areas should prevent additional hazardous fuels.	Blaine Tarbell	5/20/2014
NI	Geology/Minerals/Energy Production	There will be no adverse impact to geology and minerals. The pipeline will help energy production.	Elizabeth Gamber	5/13/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
PI	Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation	<p>IP/NW: Proposed disturbance would provide suitable habitat for the establishment and spread of non-native plant species.</p> <p>Operator would control invasive species in all disturbed areas as discussed in the QEPFS approved reclamation plan.</p> <p>Soils: 3.22 acres of soil disturbance would occur during construction until reclamation is successful. Soils would be recontoured and reseeded during reclamation. The routes would be reclaimed and monitored in accordance with the Questar Exploration and Production Company Uintah Basin Division Reclamation Plan on file with the Vernal Field Office of the BLM. Locations would be seeded with the seed mix approved by the BLM Authorized Officer.</p> <p>Veg: 3.22 acres of initial vegetation disturbance/removal. Upon construction completion, the disturbed area would be reseeded and re-contoured to the approximate natural contours. This would reduce the effects of the disturbance when the seeding becomes established. The routes would be reclaimed and monitored in accordance with the Questar Exploration and Production Company Uintah Basin Division Reclamation Plan on file with the Vernal Field Office of the BLM. Routes would be seeded with the seed mix approved by the BLM Authorized Officer.</p>	Kevin Sadlier	6/2/2014
NI	Lands/ Access	<p>The proposed area is located within the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan area, which allows for oil and gas development with associated road and pipeline right-of-ways. Current land uses, within the area identified in the proposed action and adjacent lands, consist of existing oil and gas development, 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.</p> <p>The existing right-of-way holders in the project area have been notified of the project.</p> <p>Master Title Plats have been checked for conflicts with Public Water Reserves. There are no PWR's in the project area.</p> <p>Uintah County Transportation Map shows the project is adjacent to Class B and D Roads.</p> <p>Applicant Committed Measures: Permits from Uintah County will be obtained.</p>	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)	The proposed project is not located within an identified Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC) area, as per the Green River District – Vernal Field Office GIS Data Layers.	Margo Roberts	5/6/2014
NI	Livestock Grazing & Rangeland Health Standards	Due to the fact that this projects is a underground pipeline and will not effect any above ground range improvements or livestock grazing on the Split Mountain Grazing Allotment. Mitigation for above ground disturbance is addressed in the reclamation section.	Marcus White Bull	7/16/2014
NP	Paleontology	No fossils were found (Outlaw Eng, Dec 9, 2013)	Elizabeth Gamber	5/13/2014
NI	Plants: BLM Sensitive	There are no known BLM Sensitive plants in the proposed action, and no known Green River shale outcrops using most recent VFO GIS data layers. <i>Astragalus hamiltonii</i> resides on specific and narrow soils found approximately 2 miles northwest, and this population is the nearest known BLM Sensitive plant area. The potential for <i>Yucca sterilis</i> to reside on sandy inclusions throughout the field office exists, however, no known populations are mapped from this area. <i>Astragalus equisolensis</i> habitat is known from within one-half mile of the proposed action, however the area was surveyed for BLM Sensitive plant species on Nov. 22 and 26, 2013 and no plants or habitats were located, therefore direct or indirect effects to BLM sensitive plant species would not be expected to be present using current data sets and were confirmed with field survey by the proponent.	Maggie Marston	06/11/2014
NI	Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate	There are no Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate federally listed upland or riparian plant species or habitats known within this region of the Vernal Field Office as confirmed by VFO GIS and UNHP data layers. Although a potential soil polygon exists in GIS for <i>Schoenocrambe argillacea</i> , habitat assessment has not been completed, and is the species is highly unlikely based on the nearest known population shown as approximately 22 miles southwest. <i>Sclerocactus ssp.</i> USFWS polygon occurs slightly greater than 2 miles south, however the area was surveyed and habitat was assessed for all TEPC plants on Nov 22 and 26, 2013, therefore no direct or indirect effects to federally listed plant species therefore, would not be expected to be present using current data sets.	Maggie Marston	06/11/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Plants: Wetland/Riparian	The project is not located within a wetlands/riparian zones per the Vernal Field Office GIS data layers. Small ephemeral drainages may feed the Green and White River systems during flashy storm events, however these are largely unsuitable for perennial riparian vegetation. No riparian areas were found during survey on November 22 and 26, 2013 by the proponent.	Maggie Marston	06/11/2014
NI	Recreation	Primary proposal is along the Glen Bench road. This is in a heavily developed minerals extraction area, where industry is the primary use. No impacts to recreation will occur.	Jason West	5/20/2014
NP	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.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NI	Visual Resources	Proposed project is located within VRM Class IV per VFO GIS data base, the action would be allowed under class IV objectives	Jason West	5/14/2014
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.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NI	Water: Floodplains	No flood plain mapping per VFO GIS Data Base	Kevin Sadlier	6/2/2014
NI	Water: Groundwater Quality	Groundwater will not be adversely impacted. Groundwater is likely present deeper than the 3 ft below ground surface that the pipeline will be buried.	Elizabeth Gamber	5/13/2014
NI	Water: Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The proposed construction of the pipeline, would alter the topography of the area to a small degree. It is not expected that surface water or stormwater would be created to the level of concern for Clean Water Act Section 402 (stormwater) review. In addition federal law has exempted energy development from stormwater requirements.	Kevin Sadlier	6/2/2014
NI	Water: Surface Water Quality	Surface Waters: The only potential for the proposed project to negatively impact water quality would be increased potential for chemical spills or increased disturbance to surface soils which could cause soil erosion. This would not be expected to occur in a way that would be a relevant impact to surface waters. The site is in an upland area and more than 3 miles from perennial waters.	Kevin Sadlier	6/2/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Water: Waters of the U.S.	Waters of the U.S. are not present per USGS topographic map and GIS data review. The proposed project would not impact any drainage where a high water mark can be distinguished, drainages which regularly run water, or wetlands/riparian areas, per onsite.	Kevin Sadlier	6/2/2014
NP	Wild Horses and Burros	The proposed project area is not within an identified Wild Horses and Burros area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Data Base.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014
NI	Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including raptors)	The project area will impact approximately 1.6 acres of migratory bird foraging habitat. There are no known raptor nests within 0.5 miles of the project area. Project activities are not anticipated to migratory birds to where 'take' would occur. It is likely that migratory birds would occupy other adjacent suitable habitats during project activities.	Brandon McDonald	5/27/2014
NI	Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated	In review of district files and a field visit there is no special status species including their associated habitats within the area. In addition, the BLM does not identify crucial habitat for big game species.	Brandon McDonald	5/27/2014
NP	Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate	In review of district files and a field visit there is no threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate animals species including their associated habitats within the project area.	Brandon McDonald	5/27/2014
NP	Woodlands/Forestry	The proposed project is not in an Woodland/Forestry area per Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS layers database.	Margo Roberts	5/7/2014

FINAL REVIEW:			
Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	<i>Kelly Burfome</i>	07-24-2014	
Authorized Officer	<i>Jeff J...</i>	08-3-2014	

Decision Record
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-00154-EA
UTU-90482

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vernal, Utah

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Chapter 1.

It is my decision to approve and authorize QEP Field Services (QEP FS) Right-of-Way UTU-90482, proposal to install up to a 16-inch, buried, low pressure, natural gas pipeline and ancillary facilities and cathodic protection to support QEP Energy's current and future producing gas wells in the Red Wash Area, and to proceed as set out in the Proposed Action of the Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0154-EA) subject to the applicant committed Environmental Protection Measures, Stipulations, Compliance and Monitoring. This alternative is hereafter called the Selected Alternative. This decision applies to BLM-administered lands only.

I have determined that authorizing this selected alternative in in the public interest, and will minimize impacts so that no undue disturbance will occur.

The pipeline will be constructed on Public Lands within the following legal description:

SLM, UT, T. 7 S., R. 22 E., Section 26, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The approximate length of the pipeline is 1,403 feet with a 50 foot permanent width, approximately 1.61 Acres. A temporary construction width of 50 feet the full length of the pipeline, approximately 1.61 Acres, is requested for approximately 4 weeks. Total new disturbance for the project is approximately 3.22 acres

The pipeline will include Cathodic protection (specific site has not been determined), permanent above ground facilities (risers, (1) 16" pig receiver, (1) 16" launcher, (1) main block valve etc).

All permanent above ground structures not subject to safety will be painted a harmonious flat non-contrasting color (Covert Green) as specified by the BLM.

The above ground permanent facilities subject to safety will have permanent barricade guards (6-inch diameter pipe, cement filled and anchored) placed around them.

The line will transport natural gas from all current and future producing gas well pads to field compression and dehydration. The line will support QEP Energy Companys drilling program in the Redwash Field.

1.1. Compliance, Monitoring, Mitigation

Compliance and monitoring checks will be conducted in accordance with BLM regulations.

Mitigation Measures:

(1)All vehicles and equipment shall be cleaned either through power washing, or other approved method, if the vehicles or equipment are brought in from areas outside the Uinta Basin, to prevent weed seed introduction. Operator will control invasive species in all disturbed areas as discussed in the QEP FS approved reclamation plan.

1.2. Plan Conformance and Consistency

The selected alternative has been reviewed, and found to 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.

The selected alternative 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 become available as new technology allows.

Alternative B-No Action:

This alternative was not selected because it would not respond to the applicant’s need to transport natural gas. No other alternatives were considered.

1.3. Compliance with NEPA

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.

1.4. Rationale / Authorities / Public Involvement

The decision to authorize the 16–inch (or smaller) buried natural gas pipeline, ancillary facilities and cathodic protection, 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 QEP FS desire to construct the buried pipeline.

Identification of issue(s) for this assessment was accomplished by considering any resources that could be affected by implementation of one of the alternatives.

Issues identified by BLM Specialists are documented in Appendix A Interdisciplinary Team Checklist.

Alternatives Considered

Alternative A — Proposed Action

QEP FS proposes to construct a buried 16–inch, natural gas pipeline, ancillary facilities and cathodic protection, to allow for the transportation of natural gas within the Red Wash Area.

Alternative B — No Action

Under the No Action alternative, BLM would not approve the ROW grant. QEP Field Services Company would not be allowed to construct and lay the buried 16–inch (or smaller), low pressure, natural gas pipeline, ancillary facilities, and cathodic protection on federal land. The transportation

of natural gas to sales for existing and future activities could be restricted by the lack of the infrastructure. The no action Alternative effectively constitutes denial of the Proposed Action.

“The authority for this decision is contained in Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 185),

The proposed action was posted to the public BLM E-Planning website with its assigned NEPA number on May 8, 2014. To date, no questions or comments have been received. A public comment period was not offered due to the proposed action being similar in nature to other projects in the immediate area.

1.5. Appeal or Protest Opportunities:

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.

1.6. Authorizing Official:


Jerry Kenczka
Assistant Field Manager, Lands and Minerals

AUG 07 2014

Date

Finding of No Significant Impact

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Chapter 1.

DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2014-0154-EA

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 the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

1.1. Mitigation Measures:

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 brought in from areas outside of the Uinta Basin, to prevent weed seed introduction.

1.2. Signatures:

Approved by:



Jerry Kenczka
Assistant Field Manager,
Lands and Minerals

AUG 07 2014

Date