

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

Environmental Assessment

**DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0041-EA
RIGHTS-OF-WAY UTU-90600, UTU-90601, UTU-90602
Ultra Resources Inc. Interconnect Proposal for:
Access Road, Gas and Water Pipelines, Power Line**

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

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Finding of No Significant Impact

DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0041-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts (per Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0041-EA), I have determined that the proposed action will not have any significant impacts on the environment and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Signatures:

Approved by:

/s Jerry Kenczka

1/29/2015

Jerry Kenczka

Date

Assistant Field Manager,
Lands and Minerals

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DECISION RECORD

Decision

It is my decision to approve Ultra Resources Inc., applications for the following Rights-of-Way:

- UTU-90600 (Road)
- UTU-90601 (one 12–inch gathering pipeline and one 4–inch operational natural gas pipeline)
- UTU-90602 (two 6–inch waterlines)
- Power Line 7.2kV to be applied for at a later date by Moon Lake Electric

The proposal is to construct, operate and maintain a new 90 foot wide x 1,614 foot long, 3.33 Acre Inter-connect corridor, between the existing Three Rivers Federal 3–53–820/ 3–54–280 wells on Public lands, and the Three Rivers 2–15–820 / 2–25–820 state wells on SITLA land, and to proceed as set out in the Proposed action of the Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-UT-G010–2015–41–EA) subject to the Plan of Development, stipulations, compliance and monitoring. This decision applies to BLM-administered lands only.

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

The proposed new corridor will be constructed on Public land within the following legal description: SLM, UT T. 8 S., R. 20 E., Sec. 3, N½SE¼.

The interconnect route has been proposed primarily to reduce heavy traffic along Uintah County maintained 8000 South road, where numerous traffic related issues have arisen in an area where a handicapped child resides. The proposed power line would facilitate the electrification of all production within Section 35 (BLM), section 36 (State of Utah), T7S., R20E., SLM and Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLM reducing overall project related emissions and natural gas consumption for production equipment.

The proposed pipelines in the new corridor(1,614 in length) will all be buried in one trench, with a 30 foot width . The remaining 4,400 feet of pipelines, will all be buried in the previously disturbed authorized 30 foot width, of Rights-of-Way UTU-89182 and UTU-89603, to the tie in point.

The power line is a 3–phase, 7200 volt distribution line to be installed by a third party power line installer within a 30 foot width in the new corridor. (Moon Lake Electric will submit application (at a later date) for the power line right-of-way).

Compliance, Monitoring, Stipulations

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

Stipulations:

- 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.
- Ultra will submit their site specific reclamation plan within 30 days of start of construction.

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 Plan and the associated decision(s):

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 proposed action is also consistent with the Uintah County General Plan as amended (2012). The Uintah County General Plan contains specific policy statements addressing public land, 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.

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.

Rationale / Authorities / Public Involvement

The decision to authorize the new 90-foot wide inter-connect corridor to join the Three Rivers Federal 3-53-820/3-54-280 wells and the Three Rivers 2-15-820 / 2-25-820 state wells, 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 Ultra Resources, Inc. desire to construct the corridor.

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

Ultra Resources Inc. proposes to construct, operate, maintain a new 90-foot wide x 1,614 foot long inter-connect corridor to join the Three Rivers Federal 3-53-820/3-54-280 wells and the Three Rivers 2-15-820 / 2-25-820 state wells, reduce overall truck traffic within the project area, and increase overall production because of lower pipeline pressures. Also to facilitate the electrification of all production within Section 35 (BLM), section 36 (State of Utah), T7S., R20E., SLM and Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLM by reducing overall project related emissions and natural gas consumption for production equipment.

Alternative B: No Action

Under the No Action alternative, BLM would not approve the proposed 90 foot wide corridor on public lands. The no action alternative effectively constitutes denial of the Proposed Action. This alternative was not selected because it would not respond to the applicant's need for the corridor to join the Three Rivers Federal 3-53-820/3-54-280 wells and the Three Rivers 2-15-820 / 2-25-820wells, reduce overall truck traffic within the project area, increase overall production because of lower pipeline pressures, and facilitate the electrification of all production within Section 35 (BLM), section 36 (State of Utah), T7S., R20E., SLM and Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLM, reducing overall project related emissions and natural gas consumption for production equipment.

The authority for this decision is pursuant to Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 195) and pursuant to Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat.2776: 43 U.S.C. 1761).

The proposed action was posted to the public BLM E-Planning website with its assigned NEPA number on December 10, 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.

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.

Authorizing Official:

/s/ Jerry Kenczka

Jerry Kenczka
Assistant Field Manager, Lands and Minerals

1/29/2015

Date

Chapter 1. Environmental Assessment

Introduction

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This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to analyze the potential impacts of Ultra Resources, Inc. proposal to construct, operate, and maintain a new 90-foot wide x 1,614 foot long inter-connect corridor to join the Three Rivers Federal 3-53-820/3-54-280 wells and the Three Rivers 2-15-820 / 2-25-820 state wells, reduce overall truck traffic within the project area, increase overall production because of lower pipeline pressures, and to facilitate the electrification of all production within Section 35 (BLM), section 36 (State of Utah), T7S., R20E., SLM and Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLM by reducing overall project related emissions and natural gas consumption for production equipment.

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.

1.1. Identifying Information:

1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project:

DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0041-EA

1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:

Salt Lake Meridian

T. 8 S., R. 20 E., Sec. 3, N½SE¼.

For map of the project area refer to Appendix B.

1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Lead Office - Vernal Field Office

170 South 500 East

Vernal Utah 84078

1.1.4. Identify the lease, serial, or case file number:

Case File number: UTU-90600, UTU-90601, UTU-90602

1.1.5. Applicant Name:

Ultra Resources, Inc.

1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:

The BLM's need is to consider approval of the applications for Ultra Resources, Inc. request to construct the new 90-foot wide x 1,614 foot inter-connect corridor, in accordance with Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, as amended through September 1999, (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761) and pursuant to Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 195). 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.

1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

During preparation of the EA, public involvement consisted of posting the proposal on the e-planning NEPA website. No public comment or inquiries were received. The proposed action was reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists. For a list of all resources considered, refer to Appendix A.

Notification letters were not mailed. Ultra Resources Inc are the existing right-of-way holders on public lands in the proposed project area.

Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

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2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:

This EA focuses on the Proposed Action, as well as, the No Action Alternative. No unresolved conflicts were identified that required the consideration of another alternative.

PROPOSED ACTION

Ultra Resources, Inc. proposes to construct, operate and maintain a 90 foot wide interconnect corridor to include a road, buried pipelines and power line. The corridor would be constructed between the existing Three Rivers Federal 3-53-820 / 3-54-820 wells on Public lands, and the Three Rivers 2-15-820 / 2-25-820 on State lands. The interconnect route has been proposed primarily to reduce heavy traffic along Uintah County maintained 8000 South where numerous traffic related issues have arisen in an area where a handicapped child resides. The interconnect route would also reduce overall truck traffic within the project area through reduced road length, and increase overall production because of lower pipeline pressures. The proposed power line would facilitate the electrification of all production within Section 35 (BLM), Section 36 (State of Utah), T7S, R20E, SLB&M and Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLB&M by reducing overall project related emissions and natural gas consumption for production equipment.

The requested interconnect corridor crosses the N½S½, Section 3, T8S, R20E, SLB&M, Uintah County, Utah. Federal surface use across BLM managed surface is being applied for at this time through the right-of-way (ROW) process with a separate application being submitted for the corridor across SITLA surface. Construction of the corridor will only utilize the minimum surface required for the safe installation of the road or utilities with surface disturbance of the entire ROW corridor not required.

The proposal consists of one, new 90-foot wide corridor, 1,614 feet in length, approximately 3.33 acres of new surface disturbance, as shown on Appendix B map.. The corridor will consist of:

- access road, 1,611 feet in length with a 30 foot width
- Pipelines: 1,614 feet in length / 30 foot width. The pipelines will continue for an additional 4,400 feet all within the previously disturbed 30 foot wide right-of-way authorized under UTU-89182 and UTU-89603. Total length of the pipelines is 6,014 feet.
- (1) 12-inch or less, steel, natural gas gathering
- (2) 6-inch flex-pipe, produced water pipeline
- (1) 4-inch flex-pipe operational gas pipeline
- Overhead power line: 1,606 feet in length / 30 foot width.

Table 1 below reflects the actual disturbance by individual facility.

Table 1 – Proposed Action for the Section 3 Interconnect Corridor

Table 2.1.

Facility with ROW Dimensions	Disturbance Length(feet)		Disturbance (acres)	
	BLM	SITLA	BLM	SITLA
Access (30' X 1,659')	1,611	48	1.11	0.03
Pipeline (30' X 6,014')	1,614	73	1.11	0.05

Power line (30' X 1,626')	1,606	20	1.11	0.01
Total			3.33	0.09

Road Construction

A road would be constructed within the new 30-foot wide access road corridor as shown on the attached Topo B map. The proposed access road corridor consists of entirely new disturbance (1,659 feet). The access road would be constructed between the proposed pipeline and power line. The BLM segment of the access corridor would be approximately 1,611 feet in length and begin on the east side of Right-of-Way UTU-89184, and traverse to the east line of Section 3, T8S, R20E, SLB&M on federal surface where it will tie into an existing road in Section 2 of SITLA land.

A cattle guard is proposed with this application with a locking Powder River style steel gate installed where the access road crosses the existing fence between federal and state surface in sections 2 and 3. The fence presently exists to control hunting access onto United States Fish and Wildlife Service leased lands as part of the Ouray Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). *Ultra will be required to keep the gate locked per Ouray National Wildlife Refuge agreements to control access onto the Refuge lands.*

Roads would be constructed and maintained to an appropriate standard, no higher than necessary, to accommodate drilling and completion equipment access in a safe manner, as described in the Surface Operating Standards and Guidelines for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development, Fourth Edition (BLM and USFS, Revised 2007) and BLM Handbook 9113- Roads Manual.

Aggregate for road surfacing would be obtained from private lands in conformance with applicable regulations. Aggregate would be of sufficient size, type, and amount to allow all weather access and alleviate dust. Following interim reclamation, the running surface width could vary from 18 to 20 feet, but would typically be 18-foot wide throughout the project area with safety, site distance, grade, topography, anticipated traffic flow, and visual resource management concerns being factors in the actual width determination.

Road construction would include clearing and grubbing of brush, windrowing of topsoil, seeding of all disturbed areas outside of the running surface, and installation of a cattle guard and locking gate. Culverts and side drainages are not anticipated with surface water following along the road surface to drainage structures on the connecting existing roads. Road maintenance would be performed, as needed, to ensure safe travel and control dust.

Re-vegetation of road ditches and cut and fill slopes would help stabilize exposed soil and reduce sediment loss, reduce the growth of noxious weeds, reduce maintenance costs, maintain scenic quality and forage, and protect habitat. To ensure successful growth of plants and forbs, topsoil would be stripped and stockpiled during road construction and re-spread to the greatest degree practical on cut slopes, fill slopes, and borrow ditches prior to seeding. The average road grade would be 4% or less.

Pipeline Construction

Total length of all proposed pipelines would be 6,014 feet.

1,614 feet would be constructed within the *new* proposed 30-foot wide pipeline corridor (1.11 acres of *new* surface disturbance) as shown on the attached Appendix B map.

The remaining 4,400 feet would be laid within previously disturbed surface, of approved ROWs UTU-89182 and UTU-89603. All four lines will be buried in one trench, beginning in section 2, to the tie in point of authorized pipelines UTU-89170 and UTU-89171, on the west line of section 3.

The pipeline corridor would include the installation of (one) 12-inch or less steel natural gas gathering pipeline, (two) 6-inch flex-pipe produced water pipelines, and (one) 4-inch flex-pipe operational gas pipeline. All four lines would be buried in the same trench at the time of installation. The proposal includes any necessary associated infrastructure (valves, meters, pigging facilities, etc.). The pipeline corridor would parallel the existing road disturbance along its entire length.

The pipeline would serve to transport natural gas, produced water, completions water and operational gas to and from the state section production wells (Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLB&M) and any future wells that may be drilled in the immediate area. Produced natural gas would be transported west to existing Ultra operated compression and gas treating facilities before being transported by QEP Field services to regional markets. Produced water would also be transported west from the state section 2 to existing Ultra operated central tank batteries and disposal wells located in on nearby state owned surface (Section 16, T8S, R20E, SLB&M). Operational gas would comprise treated dry natural gas the flows from existing compression and treating facilities (Section 16, T8S, R20E, SLB&M) for use at the individual federal and state well sites.

Adjacent well pads and the proposed access road would be utilized for staging allowing the disturbed width to be kept at the minimum necessary to construct the 1,614 foot new corridor. The pipeline would be buried unless conditions encountered during excavation required that the pipeline be surface laid. All project activities in the area would follow published procedures specified by the BLM as well as other applicable BMP's and guidelines.

Completion of the buried pipeline installation would result in full-reclamation of the ROW corridor during the life of the associated pipelines. Incidental disturbance to the corridor for maintenance activities would be reclaimed as soon as practical during the life of the corridor.

Power line Construction

The proposed power line corridor would provide electrical service to the existing production within Section 35 (BLM), Section 36 (state), T7S, R20E, SLB&M and Section 2, T8S, R20E, SLB&M. Regional power to this area would allow connection to existing on-lease well authorizations to Ultra that presently contain a power line corridor provision but a power line has not been installed. Following electrification of this production area existing natural gas fired engines would be removed decreasing produced natural gas consumption and overall project related emissions. The power line would involve a 3-phase, 7200 Volt distribution line installed by a third-party power line installer within a 30-foot wide corridor. The power line corridor would consist of a federal segment approximately 1,606 feet in length and traverse between the Ultra maintained Three Rivers Federal 3-53-820 / 3-54-280 corridor and the east line of Section 3, T8S, R20E, SLB&M on federal surface.

The power line would parallel the proposed access road and pipeline corridors in their entirety. The power line would be installed and maintained immediately adjacent to the access road corridor and opposite the pipeline corridor. Additional power line construction activities, such as guide wire installation, may occur within the 30-foot ROW corridor, but following interim reclamation, surface disturbance would remain on average, approximately 10 feet for the length of the power line corridor.

Power poles would typically be 40-foot tall and located every 300 feet along the power line corridor. The power lines would be installed approximately 10 feet from a road's edge. Installation and operation of all power lines would be to current industry standards and constructed to prevent raptor electrocution. Existing vegetation along power line routes would not be cleared except at power pole locations.

Right-of-Way Corridor Location

Ultra proposes to install the access road, pipeline and power line corridor across the N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$, Section 3, T8S, R20E, SLB&M, Uintah County, Utah.

The proposed surface disturbance and vehicular travel would be limited to existing access roads and the proposed corridors.

Purpose and Need for the Facility

The interconnect route has been proposed primarily to reduce heavy traffic along Uintah County maintained 8000 South where numerous traffic related issues have arisen in an area where a handicapped child resides. The interconnect route would also reduce overall truck traffic within the project area through reduced road length, minimize truck traffic in an area of known Burrowing Owl nests and increase overall production because of lower pipeline pressures.

Furthermore the power line proposed in this application will allow electrification of a large production area presently burning produced natural gas reducing natural gas consumption and overall project emissions. This route is the shortest distance that provides the most resource protection while minimizing impacts along the entire route.

Additional Components of the ROW

Alternate corridor routes were considered and deemed unsatisfactory given that the route is the shortest distance between existing infrastructures. Activity proposed in the immediate area of the project is routine inspection and maintenance of the corridor and associated well and the ongoing oil and gas activities of Ultra and other operators with interests in the area. The anticipated life of the project corresponds to the life of the producing wells the corridors would service and is anticipated to be approximately 30 years.

Installation activities associated with the proposed corridors are anticipated to take approximately one month to complete and would include blading and grading of the proposed ROW. The corridor has been proposed to make the best use of existing disturbance and parallel existing roads where practical. No existing facility upgrade or removal is proposed with this application.

Associated infrastructure for the access road includes traffic control signs, pipelines would include valves, pigging and metering facilities and the power line would include guy wires and raptor protection devices that would be installed as needed along the three segments within the approved 90-foot right-of-way width. Staging areas are proposed on existing well pads in the immediate area with no new surface disturbance on federal surface proposed for staging area use. Surface disturbance and vehicular travel would be limited to existing access roads. Members of the project workforce would commute from surrounding towns and cities.

Equipment needed to construct the corridor would include, dozers, motor grader, track excavators, transport trucks, backhoes, side booms, water trucks, pole 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.

Government Agencies Involved

The proposed ROW is located on federal surface under the management of the Bureau of Land Management and State of Utah surface under the management of the SITLA with surface use pending. No additional agency would be applied to in association with this application.

Additional Details

Appropriate erosion and sedimentation control structures would be incorporated into the corridor.

Dust control measures would be implemented as necessary.

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:

Ultra 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 areas would be power-washed on a weekly basis.

Weed control would be conducted through an Approved Pesticide Use Plan from the BLM and would occur the first growing season after project completion.

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, removed, 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 Ultra 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.

Stabilization, Rehabilitation and Reclamation:

Reclamation efforts for the proposed corridor 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.

Reclamation

Following BLM published Best Management Practices the interim reclamation would be completed within 90 days of completion of the access, pipeline and power line corridor, weather permitting, as required by the Green River District Reclamation Guidelines and the submitted Ultra 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 the BLM. Reclaimed areas receiving incidental disturbance during the life of the project 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.

Operations and Maintenance

Ultra would be responsible for all maintenance activities associated with the corridor. All maintenance activities would be confined to the proposed 90 foot wide requested ROW width.

2.2. No Action Alternative

Under this action, BLM would not approve the new proposed 90 foot wide inter-connect corridor for the road, pipelines, and power line.

2.3. 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.

2.4. Conformance With BLM Land Use Plan

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.

2.5. Relationships To Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans

This EA was prepared by the BLM in accordance with NEPA of 1969 and in compliance with all applicable regulations and laws passed subsequently, including the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and U.S. Department of Interior requirements and guidelines, as listed in the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1.

The proposed project is consistent with the Uintah County General Plan 2012-as amended. The Uintah County General Plan contains specific policy statements addressing public land, multiple-use, resource use and development, access, and wildlife management. In general, the plan indicates support for development proposals such as the proposed action through the plan's emphasis on multiple-use public land management practices, responsible use and optimum utilization of public lands resources. The County, through the Plan, supports the development of natural resources as they become available, as new technology allows.

Chapter 3. Affected Environment:

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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 found in Appendix A. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in Chapter 4.

3.1. Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

The invasive species, cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*), russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*), and halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) are 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 Indain ricegrass(*Achnatherum hymenoides*), four wing saltbush(*Atriplex canescens*), rubber rabbitbrush(*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), winterfat(*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), prickly pear cactus sp. (*Opuntia sp.*), and scarlet globemallow(*Sphaeracea coccinea.*).

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Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:

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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.

4.1. Proposed Action

4.1.1. Invasive Plants/Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation

The Proposed Action would disturb approximately 3.33 acres of soils and vegetation.

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

Direct impacts to soils include mixing of soil horizons, soil compaction, short-term loss of topsoil and site productivity, and loss of soil/topsoil through wind and water erosion. Loss of soil/topsoil in disturbed areas would reduce the revegetation 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.

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.

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.
- Ultra will submit their site specific reclamation plan within 30 days of start of construction.

4.2. No Action

4.2.1. 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 this inter connect road, pipeline and power line. Current land use trends in the area would continue, including increased industrial

development, increased traffic, and increased recreation use for hunting, bird watching, and sightseeing.

4.3. Cumulative Impacts

4.3.1. 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 the 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 3.33 acres of new surface disturbance. The No Action alternative would not result in an additional accumulation of impacts.

Chapter 5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

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Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
	Archaeological Resources	No historic properties affected by undertaking. Tribal consultations completed under the Chapita Wells/Stagecoach EIS. SHPO Consultation completed 6/20/2014 (No Historic Properties Effected).
	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.

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Chapter 6. List of Preparers

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Table 6.1. List of Preparers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document
Margo Roberts	Realty Specialist	Project Lead
David Gordon	Natural Resource Specialist/ Environmental Scientist	Chapters 3 & 4: Soils and vegetation

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Chapter 7. Acronyms

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AO Authorized Officer

BLM Bureau of Land Management

DR Decision Record

EA Environmental Assessment

EIS Environmental Impact Statement

ENBB Environmental Notification Bulletin Board

FLPMA Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

FONSI Finding of No Significant Impact

ID Interdisciplinary

NEPA National Environmental Policy Act

RFA Reasonably Foreseeable Action

RMP Resource Management Plan

ROD Record of Decision

ROW Right-of-Way

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Appendix A. Interdisciplinary Checklist

Project Title: new 90-foot wide inter-connect corridor

NEPA Log Number: DOI—BLM—UT—G010—2015—0041—EA

File/Serial Number: UTU-90600, UTU-90601, UTU-90602

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.

Determina-tion	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	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. No standards have been set by EPA or other regulatory agencies for greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is still in its earliest stages of formulation. Global scientific models are inconsistent, and regional or local scientific models are lacking so that it is not technically feasible to determine the net impacts to climate due to greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions associated with this action and its alternative(s) would be negligible.	Stephanie Howard	12/10/2014
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	12/10/2014
NP	Cultural: Archaeological Resources	No historic properties affected by undertaking. Tribal consultations completed under the Chapita Wells/Stagecoach EIS. SHPO Consultation completed 6/20/2014 (No Historic Properties Effected).	Jim McKenzie	7/15/2014

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
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.	Jim McKenzie	7/15/2014
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 data base layers.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014
NP	Designated Areas: Wild and Scenic Rivers	The proposed project is not in a Wild and Scenic Rivers area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014
NP	Designated Areas: Wilderness Study Areas	No Wilderness areas have been designated by the U.S. Congress on BLM lands in the VFO. The proposed project is not in a Wilderness/WSA area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014
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.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014
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	10/24/2014
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	No Fuels/fire management projects or needs present per VFO GIS data base.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014
NI	Geology/Minerals/ Energy Production	No geology and minerals would be adversely impacted. The road will help energy production.	Betty Gamber	12/18/2014
PI	Invasive Plants/ Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation	IP/NW: Proposed disturbance would provide suitable habitat for the establishment and spread of non-native plant species. Operator would control invasive species in all disturbed areas as discussed in Chapter 2. Soils: 3.33 acres of soil disturbance would occur during construction until reclamation is successful. Soils would be re-contoured and reseeded during reclamation. The locations would be reclaimed and monitored. Ultra will	Dave Gordon	1/8/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		<p>submit their site specific reclamation plan within 30 days of start of construction.</p> <p>Veg: 3.33 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 locations would be reclaimed and monitored. Ultra will submit their site specific reclamation plan within 30 days of start of construction.</p>		
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 right-of-way holders in the proposed project area are Ultra Resources, Inc. therefore no notice letters have been sent.</p> <p>Master Title Plats have been reviewed for conflicts with Public Water Reserves. No Public Water Reserves were identified in the project area per the Master Title Plats.</p> <p>Ultra would be required to keep the gate locked to control access onto the Refuge Lands (as per Ouray National Wildlife Refuge agreement with Ultra). The existing fence where the gate is to be installed controls hunting access onto the United States Fish and Wildlife Service leased lands as part of the Ouray Wildlife Refuge.</p>	Margo Roberts	12/10/2014
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)	The proposed project is not located within an identified Land(s) with Wilderness Characteristics' (LWC) area, as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	12/10/2014

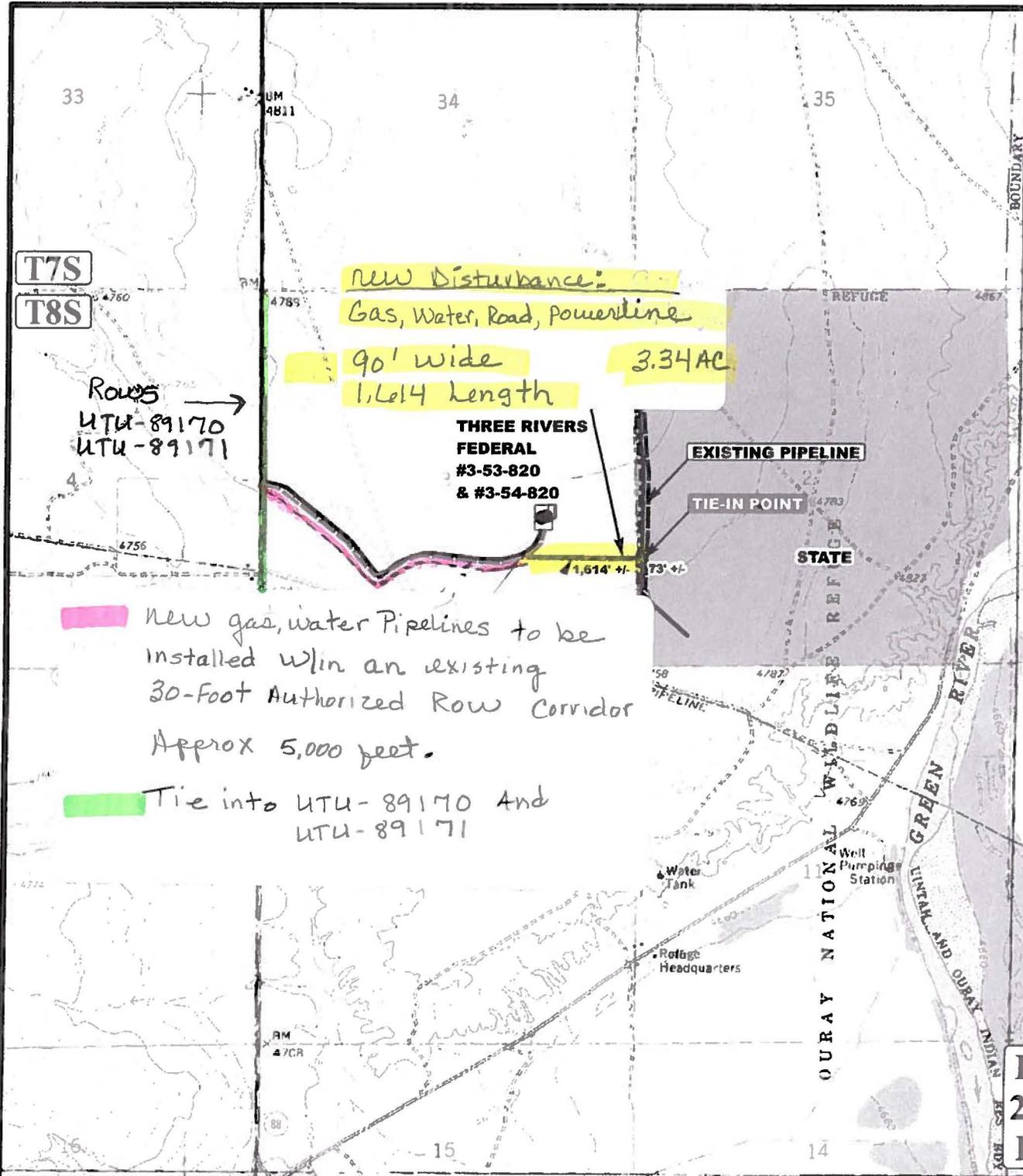
Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Livestock Grazing & Rangeland Health Standards	The proposed project is within the 12 Mile grazing allotment in one of the isolated tracts. The allotment is a fall winter and spring cattle allotment permitted for 2781 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) from October 1 to April 30. The proposed project should not affect the grazing allotment or have any large affects to rangeland health	Craig Newman	01/08/2015
NP	Paleontology	Uinta Paleo conducted the paleo survey. No scientifically important fossils were found.	Elizabeth Gamber	12/18/2014
NI	Plants: BLM Sensitive	Suitable habitat for sterile yucca (<i>Yucca sterilis</i>), a UT BLM sensitive plant species, is present in the Project Area. The species could inhabit sandy locations near the Proposed Action; however, no populations have been documented in the Project Area or vicinity. Given the exclusively clonal nature of the species, the potential for future establishment is negligible. Additional BLM Sensitive plant species are precluded based on soil, elevation, geography and plant population GIS data. Green River shale derived soils are not present.	Christine Cimiluca	1/5/2015
NI	Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate	Some suitable habitat for the threatened plant species Uinta Basin hookless cactus (<i>Sclerocactus wetlandicus</i>) and Pariette cactus (<i>Sclerocactus brevispinus</i>) is present in the Project Area. The Project Area is outside the 2013 potential habitat polygon established by USFWS for the 2 cactus species (approximately 0.09 mi at the closest point), per BLM GIS review. The nearest documented plant or population of the 2 cactus species is located approximately 0.62 mi from the Project Area. Potential for occurrence of the 2 cactus species in the Project Area is low, per review of U. of Wyoming habitat models. Therefore, the 2 species are unlikely to be impacted as a result of the Proposed Action. Suitable habitat for other federally threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate plant species is not present in the Project Area, per BLM GIS review and habitat models.	Christine Cimiluca	1/5/2015
NP	Wetlands/Riparian	The project is not located within a wetlands/riparian zone per the as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Dave Gordon	1/8/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Recreation	There is little OHV use and hunting associated within this project area. There is current oil and gas development within this project area. Therefore, recreation is not know to be an issue.	William Civish	1/12/2015
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.	Margo Roberts	12/10/2014
NI	Visual Resources	Proposed project is located within VRM Class III per VFO GIS data base. This project is allowed according to the Vernal RMP within a VRM Class III area.	William Civish	1/12/2015
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	12/10/2014
NP	Water: Floodplains	There are no documented floodplains in the Project Area per BLM GIS review and none are anticipated to be impacted as a result of the Proposed Action. No flood plain mapping per as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Dave Gordon	1/8/2015
NI	Water: Groundwater Quality	This is a surface action and groundwater would not be affected.	Elizabeth Gamber	12-18-2014
NP	Water: Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The proposed construction of the well pads, and roads, 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.	Dave Gordon	1/8/2015
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 2miles from perennial waters.	Dave Gordon	1/8/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NP	Water: Waters of the U.S.	Waters of the U.S. are not present per USGS topographic map and GIS data review.	Dave Gordon	1/8/2015
NP	Wild Horses	No herd areas or herd management areas are present within the proposed project area as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014
NI	Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including raptors)	In review of a field visit and district files the project area is located almost entirely in pre-disturbed areas and adjacent to an existing road. Approximately 3.34 acres of new disturbance would occur but is not anticipated to disturb nesting or nuptial periods for avian species given the existing disturbance and oil and gas maintenance operations within the area. In addition, there are no known raptor nests within 0.5 miles of the project area. In addition, the project area is not located within a Bird Habitat Conservation Area.	Brandon McDonald	12/15/2014
NI	Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated	In review of a field visit and district files the project area is not located within crucial habitat for any wildlife species. Occasionally, antelope and elk are observed migrating near the area; however, impacts are not anticipated to wildlife species.	Brandon McDonald	12/15/2014
NP	Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate	In review of a field visit and district files there are no threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate species (including their associated habitats) within or near the project area.	Brandon McDonald	12/15/2014
NP	Woodlands/Forestry	The proposed project is not within a woodlands/forestry area as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	10/24/2014

FINAL REVIEW:			
Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	/s/ Jessica Taylor	1/26/2015	
Authorized Officer	/s/ Jerry Kenczka	1/29/2015	

Appendix B.



NEW DISTURBANCE:
 Gas, Water, Road, Powerline
 90' wide
 1,161.4 Length
 3.34 AC

New gas, water Pipelines to be installed w/in an existing 30-foot Authorized Row Corridor Approx 5,000 feet.

Tie into UTU-89170 And UTU-89171

APPROXIMATE TOTAL PIPELINE DISTANCE = 1,687' +/-

LEGEND:

- Proposed new Pipelines w/in Existing 30' Auth Width
- PROPOSED PIPELINES (NEW)



ULTRA RESOURCES, INC.

SECTION 3 INTERCONNECT PIPELINE
 SECTION 3, T8S, R20E, S.L.B.&M.
 NE 1/4 SE 1/4