

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
White River Field Office  
220 E Market St  
Meeker, CO 81641

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

### *Gordon Engineering Access Road Renewal* DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0091-CX

#### **Identifying Information**

**Project Title:** Gordon Engineering Access Road Renewal

**Legal Description:** Sixth Principal Meridian,

T. 1S., R. 101W.,  
sec. 36, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
T. 2S., R. 101W.,  
sec. 1, Lot 8;  
sec. 2, Lot 5;  
sec. 3, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 4, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 9, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 10, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 11, E $\frac{1}{2}$ , S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 12, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ ;  
sec. 13, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 24, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 25, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 26, Lot 5, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 35, Lot 1, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
sec. 36, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ;  
Rio Blanco County, Colorado.

**Applicant:** Gordon Engineering Inc.

**Casefile:** COC34269

#### **Conformance with the Land Use Plan**

The Proposed Action is subject to and is in conformance (43 CFR 1610.5) with the following land use plan:

**Land Use Plan:** White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP), as amended by the White River Field Office Oil and Gas Development Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ROD/RMPA)

**Date Approved:** July 1997, amended August 2015

**Decision Language:** “Make federal oil and gas resources available for leasing and development in a manner that provides reasonable protection for other resource values.” (ROD/RMPA, page 2-34)

“Manage BLM public lands, including the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations, in a manner that balances the needs of oil and gas development with the management for other resources values. (ROD/RMPA, page 2-39)

Respond to internal and external requests for land use authorizations (e.g., pipelines, access routes, utility lines, communication sites, leases, and permits). (ROD/RMPA, page 2-39)

Emphasize efficient use of and colocation with existing ROWs to protect resources and resource uses. Consider the establishment of new ROW corridors to meet demand for oil and gas activities.” (ROD/RMPA, page 2-39)

## **Proposed Action**

### ***Project Components and General Schedule***

Gordon Engineering Inc. (Gordon) submitted an application for the renewal of right-of-way (ROW) grant COC34269 authorizing access roads to nine existing natural gas wells. This grant was issued to Gordon on October 28, 1983. The ROW is 60,771.95 feet, more or less, in length and 30 feet in width, containing 41.85 acres, all on BLM lands. There is no proposed construction or maintenance at this time. On October 27, 2013, ROW COC34269 expired, and this proposal would be to renew the grant for up to 30 years.

### ***BLM Required Terms and Conditions to Mitigate Impacts to Cultural and Paleontological Resources***

1. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The applicant will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The applicant, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will

be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.

3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the applicant must notify the AO, by telephone and written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), the operator must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
4. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically-important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.
5. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the applicant or any of his agents must stop work immediately at that site, immediately contact the BLM Paleontology Coordinator, and make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The BLM or designated paleontologist will evaluate the discovery and take action to protect or remove the resource within 10 working days. Within 10 days, the operator will be allowed to continue construction through the site, or will be given the choice of either (a) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for stabilizing the fossil resource in place and avoiding further disturbance to the fossil resource, or (b) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for mitigating impacts to the fossil resource prior to continuing construction through the project area.

### Categorical Exclusion Review

The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, E9: *“Renewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations.”*

The Proposed Action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
a) Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.		X
h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
l) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

## Interdisciplinary Review

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the White River Field Office interdisciplinary team on 7/7/2015. A complete list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the White River Field Office. The table below lists resource specialists who provided additional review or remarks concerning cultural resources and special status species.

Name	Title	Resource	Date
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	7/13/2015
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	7/17/2015
Matthew Dupire	Ecologist	Special Status Plant Species	8/18/2015
Keesha Cary	Realty Specialist	Project Lead	9/4/2015
Heather Sauls	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Compliance	9/17/2015

**Cultural Resources:** Various portions of the ROW have been covered by all or portions of up to nine Class III (100 percent pedestrian) inventories (Burney *et al.* 1979 compliance dated 1979, Burney and Wheeler 1979 compliance dated 9/5/1979, Conner 1994 compliance dated 8/3/1994, Conner and Kosarko 1977a compliance dated 9/22/1977, 1977b compliance dated 9/22/1977, Conner and Davenport 2005 compliance dated 7/12/2005, Creasman and Jennings 1977 compliance dated 1977, Metcalf 1979a compliance dated 5/13/1979, 1979b compliance dated 6/25/1979). Most of the inventories are considered too old for current Section 106 compliance purposes however, since no new ground disturbance is being authorized as a part of the ROW

renewal there should be no new impacts to any known cultural resources in the general area. Other entities also have ROWs over the routes involved and any indirect impacts to sites in the area from increased access to the area cannot necessarily be attributed to an individual ROW holder. Unlawful collection of artifacts will likely continue at the same rate as has been the case in the past but has not been possible to measure and categorize. The loss of artifacts has likely resulted in a loss of the artifacts and any contextual data that may have been associated with them. These losses are cumulative within the White River Field Office area.

**Native American Religious Concerns:** No Native American religious concerns are known in the area, and none have been noted by Tribal authorities. Should recommended inventories or future consultations with Tribal authorities reveal the existence of such sensitive properties, appropriate mitigation and/or protection measures may be undertaken.

**Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species:** There are no wildlife-related issues or concerns associated with the renewal of a ROW as the Proposed Action would not involve any additional surface disturbing activities.

**Threatened and Endangered Plant Species:** There are no threatened and endangered plant species concerns with this project. There is no special status plants or plant habitat in the vicinity of the proposed action and there will be no new surface disturbing activities.

**References cited:**

Burney, Michael S., Thomas J. Lennon and Charles W. Wheeler

- 1979 Archaeological Clearance survey for : Lateral A-1 (R/W 78911) and Associated Well Ties: NWX 9 (R/W 79008) NWX 19 (R/W 78493) 36 Alternate #1 (R/W 78921):  
Lateral A-2, (R/W 78918) and Associated well Tie: NWX 34 (R/W 78920)  
Lateral A-3 (R/W 79215) and Associated Well Ties: NWX 35 (R/W 78923), NWX 38 (R/W 78922), Bureau of Land Management, Craig District. Western Cultural Resource Management, Inc., boulder, Colorado. (79-19-08:

Burney, Michael S., and Charles W. Wheeler

- 1979 An Archaeological Clearance Survey of Various laterals, Well Ties, Access Roads, and a Microwave Relay Tower in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Western Cultural Resource Management, Inc., Boulder, Colorado. (79-19-14: OAH # RB.LM.NR1592)

Conner, Carl E.

- 1994 Cultural Resource Inventory Report on Four Proposed Cathedral Unit Federal Well Locations (#3-7, #13-11, #27-13, #35-2) and Related Access in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for KN Production Company. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (94-11: OAH # RB.LM.R240)

Conner, Carl E., and Virginia Kosarko

1977a Archeological Survey of Three Well Locations in Mountain fuel Big Horse Draw Unit. Historical Museum and Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (77-44-66: RB.LM.NR2373)

1977b Report of the Archeological Survey for Selected Northwest Pipeline well Sites and Pipeline in the Philadelphia Draw Area and in the Texas Creek Drainage. Historical Museum and Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (9/22/1977: OAHP # \*\*\*\*\*)

Conner, Carl E., and Barbara J. Davenport

2005 Class III Cultural Resource Inventory Report for Six Proposed Reroutes of the EnCana Meeker Pipeline in Rio Blanco County, Colorado for Trigon EPC. Grand River Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado. (05-11-10: OAHP # RB.LM.R830)

Creasman, Steven D. and Calvin H. Jennings

1977 Archeological Reconnaissance of the East Douglas Creek Gathering System, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Cultural Resource Management Report 17. Laboratory of Public Archaeology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. (77-03-10: OAHP # RB.LM.R228)

Metcalf, Michael D.

1979a Northwest Exploration C. Philadelphia Creek # 6, 20-29 Well Pads and Access. Powers Elevation Company, Inc., Eagle, Colorado. (19-14-05: OAHP # RB.LM.R150) C.D. 5/31/1979

1979b Mountain Fuel Resources Big Horse Draw Lateral System. Powers Elevation Company, Inc., Eagle Colorado. (19-14-09: OAHP # RB.LM.R150) C.D. 6/25/1979

## Mitigation

1. All applicable terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in the original ROW grant and any amendments shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect. No new construction is authorized.
2. At least 90 days prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the Authorized Officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. The inspection will result in the development of an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan submitted by the holder. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material; recontouring; topsoiling; or seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.
3. The holder shall conduct all activities associated with the operation and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.

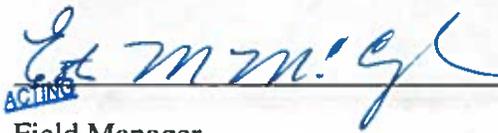
4. Any proposal involving additional surface disturbance outside of the existing right-of-way disturbance requires an application to the BLM for analysis and authorization. New stipulations for construction would be applied to projects subject to the regulations and policies existing at the time of authorization.
5. The holder shall monitor all disturbed and reclaimed areas through final abandonment for the presence of invasive, non-native, and/or noxious plant species. The holder will be responsible for eradication of noxious weeds that occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.
6. The holder shall notify the authorized officer at least 60 days prior to non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance in the right-of-way. A "Notice to Proceed" shall be required prior to any non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance on the right-of-way. Any request for a "Notice to Proceed" must be made to the authorized officer, who will review the Proposed Action for consistency with resource management concerns such as wildlife, big game winter range, paleontology, special status species, and cultural resource protection. The authorized officer may require the completion of special status species surveys or other resource surveys. Additional measures may be required to protect special status species or other resources.

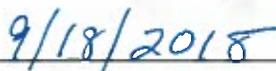
### **Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted**

Colorado SHPO, 1994, 2015

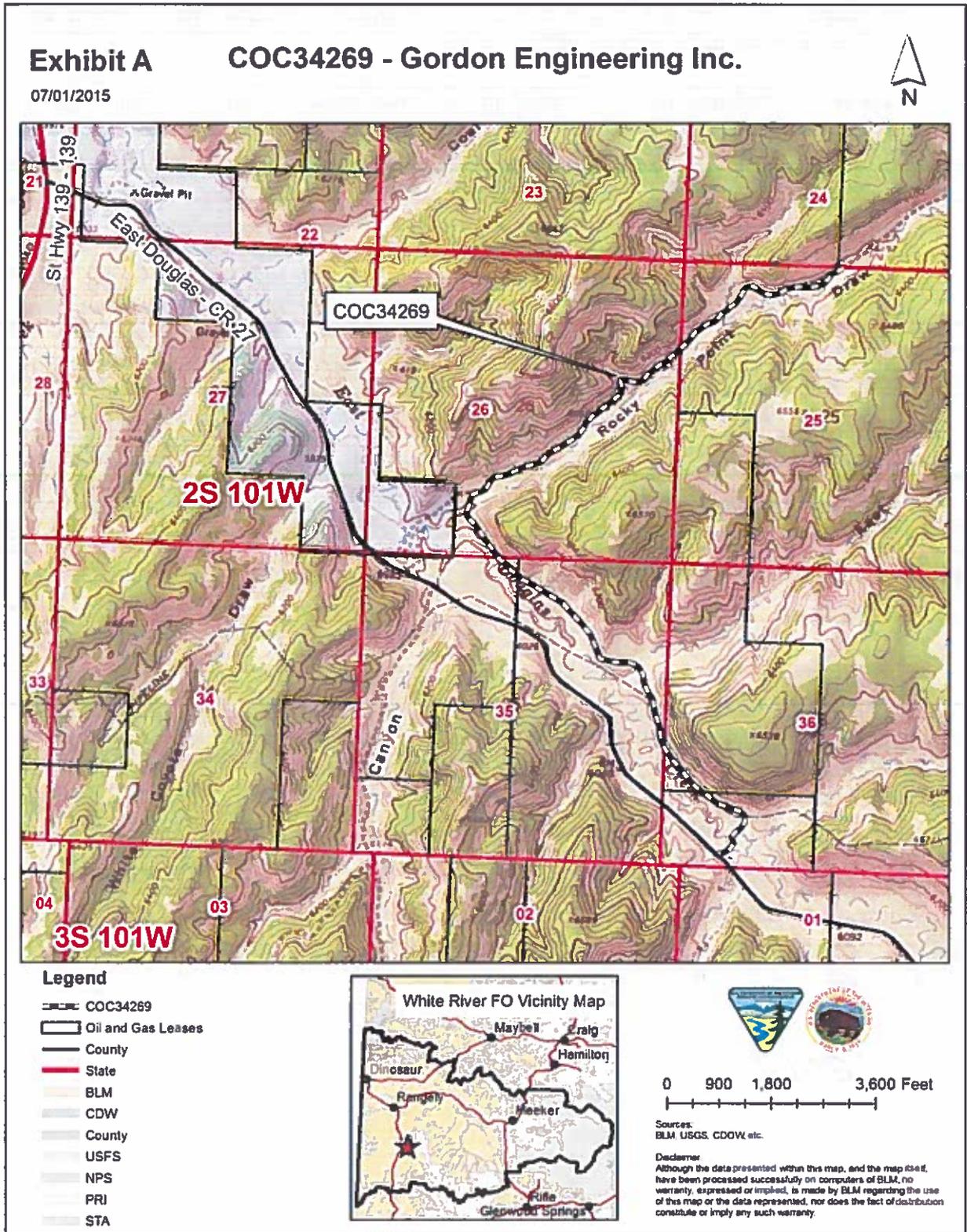
### **Compliance with NEPA**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E9. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ACTING  
Field Manager

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

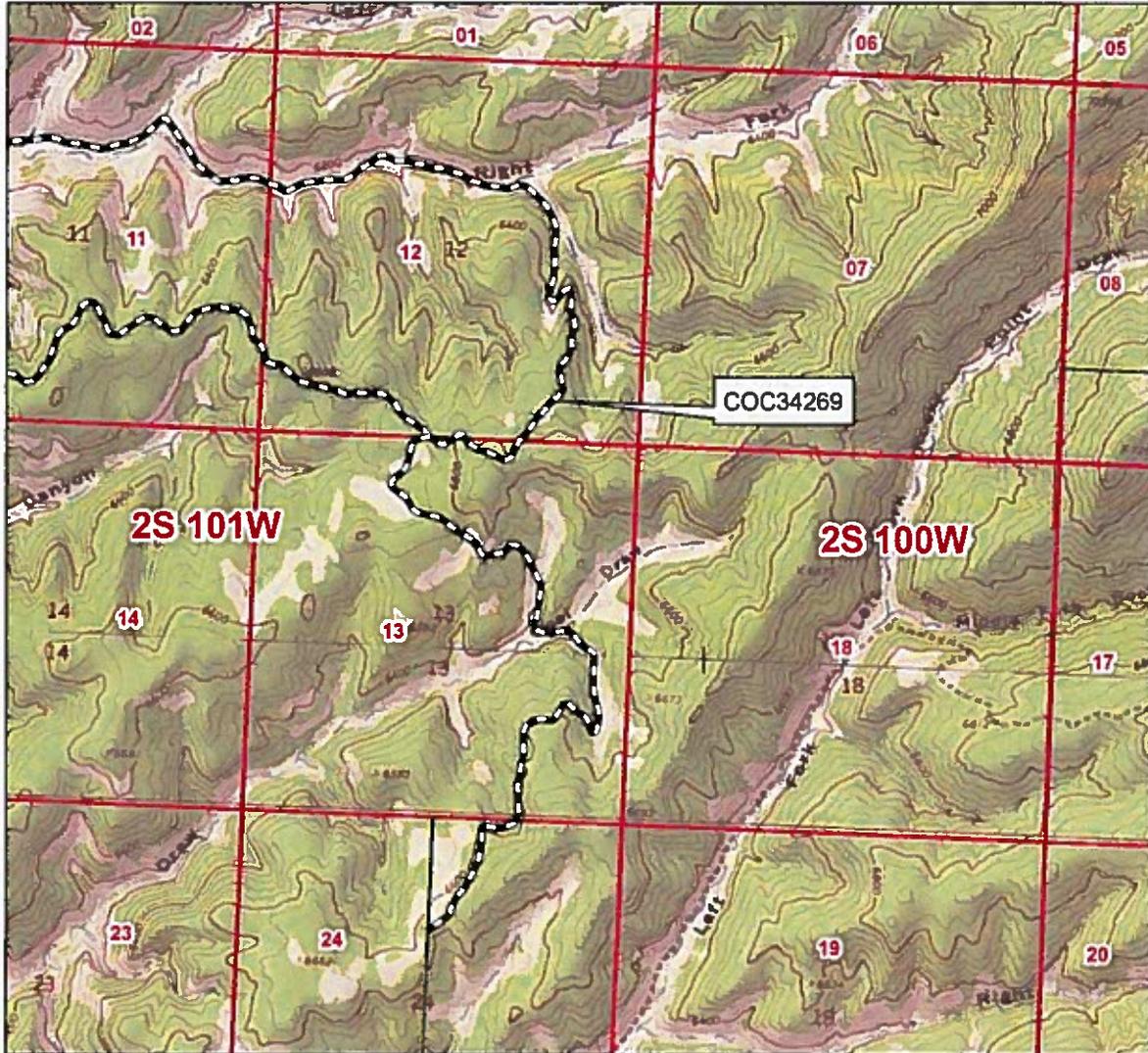
Appendix A. Figures



**Exhibit A**

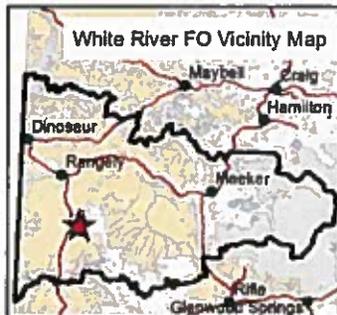
**COC34269 - Gordon Engineering Inc.**

07/01/2015



**Legend**

- COC34269
- Oil and Gas Leases
- County
- State
- BLM
- CDW
- County
- USFS
- NPS
- PRI
- STA



0 900 1,800 3,600 Feet

Sources:  
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

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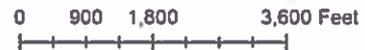
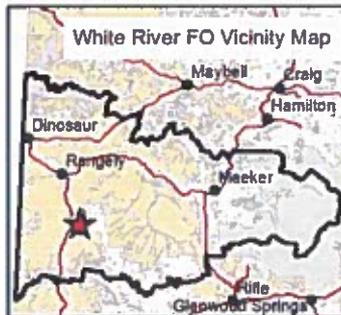
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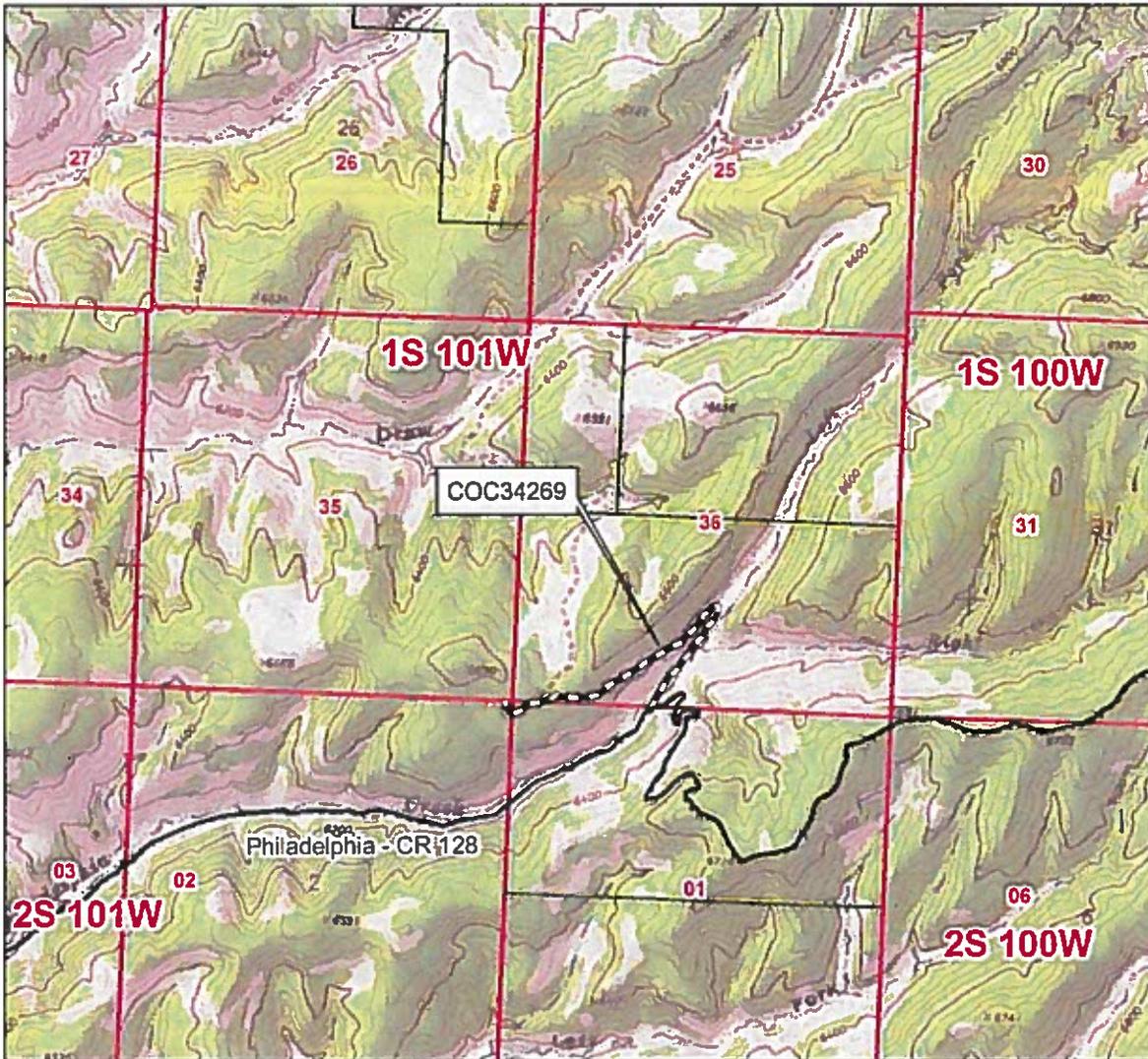
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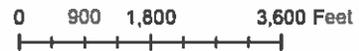
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07/01/2015



**Legend**

- COC34269
- Oil and Gas Leases
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Sources:  
BLM USGS, CDDW, etc.

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**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
White River Field Office  
220 E Market St  
Meeker, CO 81641**

## **DECISION RECORD**

### ***Gordon Engineering Access Road Renewal*** **DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0091-CX**

#### **Decision**

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action as described in DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0091-CX, renewing the COC34269 grant for a 30-year term.

#### ***Terms and Conditions***

1. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The applicant will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The applicant, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the applicant must notify the AO, by telephone and written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), the operator must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
4. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically-important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands.



5. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the applicant or any of his agents must stop work immediately at that site, immediately contact the BLM Paleontology Coordinator, and make every effort to protect the site from further impacts, including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The BLM or designated paleontologist will evaluate the discovery and take action to protect or remove the resource within 10 working days. Within 10 days, the operator will be allowed to continue construction through the site, or will be given the choice of either (a) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for stabilizing the fossil resource in place and avoiding further disturbance to the fossil resource, or (b) following the Paleontology Coordinator's instructions for mitigating impacts to the fossil resource prior to continuing construction through the project area.
6. All applicable terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in the original ROW grant and any amendments shall be carried forward and remain in full force and effect. No new construction is authorized.
7. At least 90 days prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the Authorized Officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. The inspection will result in the development of an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan submitted by the holder. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, and surface material; recontouring; topsoiling; or seeding. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.
8. The holder shall conduct all activities associated with the operation and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.
9. Any proposal involving additional surface disturbance outside of the existing right-of-way disturbance requires an application to the BLM for analysis and authorization. New stipulations for construction would be applied to projects subject to the regulations and policies existing at the time of authorization.
10. The holder shall monitor all disturbed and reclaimed areas through final abandonment for the presence of invasive, non-native, and/or noxious plant species. The holder will be responsible for eradication of noxious weeds that occur on site using materials and methods approved in advance by the Authorized Officer.
11. The holder shall notify the authorized officer at least 60 days prior to non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance in the right-of-way. A "Notice to Proceed" shall be required prior to any non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance on the right-of-way. Any request for a "Notice to Proceed" must be made to the authorized officer, who will review the Proposed Action for consistency with resource management concerns such as wildlife, big game winter range, paleontology, special status species, and cultural resource protection. The authorized officer may

require the completion of special status species surveys or other resource surveys. Additional measures may be required to protect special status species or other resources.

## **Compliance with Laws & Conformance with the Land Use Plan**

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision/Approved Resource Management Plan, as amended by the White River Field Office Oil and Gas Development Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment.

## **Public Involvement**

This project was posted on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 7/9/2015. No comments or inquiries have been received.

## **Rationale**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E9. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

## **Monitoring and Compliance**

On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by the BLM White River Field Office staff during and after construction. Specific mitigation developed in this document will be followed. The holder will be notified of compliance related issues, and depending on the nature of the issue(s), will be provided 30 days to resolve such issues.

## **Administrative Remedies**

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a Notice of Appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at White River Field Office, 220 East Market St., Meeker, CO 81641 with copies sent to the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet St., Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215, and to the Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals, 801 North Quincy St., MS300-QC, Arlington, VA, 22203. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals at the above address within 30 days after the Notice of Appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

**Signature of Authorized Official**

**ACTING** Ed M. M. G.  
Field Manager

9/18/2015  
Date

