

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

**Finding of No Significant Impact
NCRU 14-29 APD and ROW
WYW175700, WYW-165340, WYW-165340-01**

December 2015

PREPARING OFFICE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Worland Field Office



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Table of Contents

1. Finding of No Significant Impact	1
1.1. NCRU 14-29 APD and ROW	1
1.2. INTRODUCTION:	1
1.3. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:	1
1.4. Context:	1
1.5. Intensity:	2
1.6. Signed:	4

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Chapter 1. Finding of No Significant Impact

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1.1. NCRU 14-29 APD and ROW

DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2016-0002-EA

WYW175700, WYW-165340, WYW-165340-01

1.2. INTRODUCTION:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2016-0002-EA) for a proposed action to address one Application for Permit to Drill (APD) and associated Right-of-way (ROW) in Washakie County. This EA incorporates the Application for Permit to Drill, and the associated access, for the proposed action of drilling one well, as associated with Oil & Gas lease WYW175700 and access associated with rights-of-way WYW-165340 and WYW-165340-01. The underlying need for the proposal would be met while the Proposed Action allows the leaseholder to explore for, test the feasibility of future development, and develop oil and gas resources.

The project area consists of one well and associated access road.

NCRU 14-29 well:

SWSW section 29, T46N, R96W, 6th P.M., Washakie County, Wyoming

ROW Application:

T46N, R96W, sections 26 and 32, 6th P.M., Washakie County, Wyoming

T45N R96W, sections 5, 8, and 17, 6th P.M., Washakie County, Wyoming

DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2016-0002-EA is attached to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A No Action alternative and the Proposed Action alternative were analyzed in the EA.

1.3. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Washakie RMP/FEIS. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

1.4. Context:

The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 50 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

1.5. Intensity:

The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The proposed action would impact resources as described in the EA. Wildlife, recreation, cultural, vegetation, soils, and hydrological resources may be impacted. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to resource values were analyzed and applied as Conditions of Approval and Terms and Conditions. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the Worland Resource Management Plan (RMP).

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The proposed action was designed to mitigate for public health and safety. The drilling plan was reviewed for conformance with applicable Onshore Orders, addressing the use of appropriate blow-out prevention (BOP) equipment. Health and safety was also reviewed in the context of the presence of H₂S gas, which is expected to be encountered in the drilling of this well.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The historic and cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and potential impacts mitigated through conditions of approval attached to the selected alternative. The project is proposed in an area identified as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC). The Worland RMP has identified that these areas will be managed consistent with other resource use, and will not be managed to maintain their LWC characteristics. The following components of the Human Environment and Resource Issues are not affected because they are not present in the project area: park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial.

There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The actions in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 3 of the EA.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 3 of the EA.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A class III cultural resources inventory was completed for the direct area of potential effect (APE), which includes the proposed well pad and access road (BLM cultural project #010-2015-069). Approximately 129.99 acres were inventoried to determine effects to historic properties within the APE. Twelve sites, two multi-component and ten prehistoric, and 7 isolated resources, were identified in the APE. Two historic properties were identified within the indirect APE. The APE includes two prehistoric sites eligible for the NRHP under criterion D; all other cultural resources are not eligible. No historic properties were identified in the direct APE. Although not anticipated, the proximity of the property to the proposed surface disturbance increases the possibility of inadvertent impacts to the property in the indirect APE. Surface disturbance resulting from the proposed action may have an effect on known historic properties. Unknown cultural resources may be affected by surface disturbing activities. For the protection of known and unknown cultural resources site-specific and standard cultural stipulations apply and are included in the conditions of approval. Consultation occurred with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under the Wyoming State Protocol Agreement between the BLM and the SHPO (State Protocol).

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.

There are no Threatened and Endangered, or BLM Special Status Plant Species known to occur in the project area.

BLM Special Status Wildlife Species are known to occur in the project area. Mitigating measures reducing impacts to wildlife have been applied as conditions of approval to the Proposed Action. The proposed project area lies within the Oregon Basin sage-grouse core breeding area (priority habitat), and it is approximately 1.2 miles from the nearest Blue Mesa lek. A Density/Disturbance Calculation Tool (DDCT) assessment was completed for the project. DDCT results for the project are as follows: Total Disturbance = 1.09%, Project Disturbance = 0.07%, Density = 0.03/640 acres. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department reviewed the results of the DDCT, have concurred with the findings, and have made recommendations for sage-grouse protection which

have been incorporated into this EA as mitigation. No Threatened and Endangered wildlife species are known to occur in the area.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

1.6. Signed:

/s/ Amelia Pennington	12/16/2015
Acting on behalf of: Michael J. Phillips, Worland Field Office Manager	Date